

SOUTHERN BAPTIST
TEXAN

OCTOBER 2023 | VOL. 22 | NO. 10



MOVING THE MISSION FORWARD

Fort Worth pastor gives
of himself—literally—to save the
life of one of his staff members

They came for NASA.
They stayed for Jesus.
Lives are being changed.

Nueva plantación hispana
en San Ángelo ya busca
plantar más iglesias

SBTC ANNUAL MEETING SPECIAL INSERT: PAGES 6-11



Fall, football, and cooperation

I love the fall. The heat begins to fade and cooler weather moves in. Leaves begin to change colors and, of course, football season begins. Every week there is football for me to watch from Thursday through Monday night.

This season there has been a lot of buzz around the trade of Aaron Rodgers, one of the best quarterbacks in the NFL. He is a four-time league MVP and a future Hall of Famer who was traded to the New York Jets this past offseason.

What does Aaron Rodgers have to do with anything? Well, he made his Jets debut on Sept. 11. The entire stadium was filled with anticipation as he took the field for the first time with his new team. Jets fans believed their new superstar would make them immediate Super Bowl contenders.

However, something unexpected happened. In the first quarter, Rodgers left the game with a season-ending injury. A season of hope and expectations now seems to be lost because of the status of their superstar who they felt would lead them to victory.

This is the tragedy of putting expectations on one player instead of the entire team. If that player goes

down, it causes you to lose hope. You see, the best way to build a strategy for winning is not to build around one, but rather, all 11 on the field.

The same is true with cooperation between churches. There are no superstar churches—only local churches seeking to reach their communities with the gospel. That's the beauty of a network like the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. We have an entire team of churches working together to move the ball down the field, or better yet, the gospel across Texas. We truly execute better when we are doing this as a team.

The SBTC is a network of more than 2,700 churches that love the mission God has given us. We operate together to reach Texas and impact the world. We give together, go together, grow together, send together, plant churches together, and so much more. We do it so effectively because we cooperate to do it together. When one is down, we have so many others to pick them up. When one is experiencing success, we have so many others to celebrate with them. We know it takes all of us working together around doctrinal and missional unity.

I have never in my life been more grateful for a network of churches as I am today for SBTC churches. We know God has given us a clear mission field. We know He has strategically placed each church in Texas where it is for such a time as this. I pray we sense the magnitude of the opportunity God has given us and suit up together every day as a team of churches and advance the mission together. The time is now, the need is great, and the opportunity is in front of us. Let's do this together!

Let me encourage you to attend our 2023 SBTC Annual Meeting being held at Cross City Church in Euless Nov. 13-14. It is going to be an incredible time as we celebrate 25 years of ministry together in Texas. I hope to see you there. I love you and am honored to serve you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Nathan Lorick".

Dr. Nathan Lorick
SBTC Executive Director



Engage.
Encourage.
Equip.

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 10 OCTOBER 2023

Nathan Lorick, Executive Director
Joe Lightner, Associate Executive Director
Jayson Larson, Editor
Lightner Creative, Design/Layout

Correspondents:

Mark Dance
Gary Ledbetter
Erin Roach
Jane Rodgers
Arlene Sanabria
Dusty Smith

The Southern Baptist Texan is the official magazine of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, P.O. Box 1988, Grapevine, Texas 76099-1988. Toll-free 877-953-7282, Phone 817-552-2500, Fax 817-552-2520. Email: jlarsen@sbtexas.com

Obituaries, memorials, and classified advertisements listing items and services for sale will be published at a cost of 30 cents per word with a minimum of \$10. Copy is limited to 100 words and must be submitted within three months of death or event. Submit information to jlarsen@sbtexas.com and mail check for full amount.

Have you subscribed to the Texan?

Scan QR code or visit texan.digital/subscribe



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

ONLINE texan.digital

TWITTER [@sbtexan](https://twitter.com/sbtexan)

FACEBOOK [sbtexan](https://facebook.com/sbtexan)



What's Inside

FROM THE EDITOR **2**
Gift cards are great, but these things will really bless your pastor

25 YEARS OF ANSWERED PRAYER 3
A conversation with past SBTC presidents
Chris Osborne & Nathan Lino

LONE STAR SCOOP 4

2023 ANNUAL MEETING
FORWARD
PHILIPPIANS 3:13

Messengers to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Annual Meeting will gather for a powerful time of prayer, worship, and fellowship at Cross City Church in Euless on Nov. 13-14.

PAGES
6-11

A BLESSING, TO GIVE AND TO RECEIVE 12
Fort Worth pastor bestows priceless gift by donating kidney to staff member

BUDDING HISPANIC PLANT IN SAN ANGELO IS ALREADY LOOKING TO PLANT MORE CHURCHES 16

NUEVA PLANTACIÓN HISPANA EN SAN ÁNGELO YA BUSCA PLANTAR MÁS IGLESIAS 18



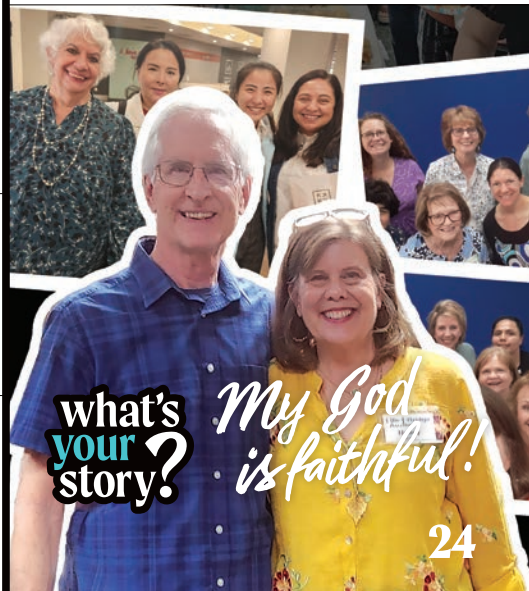
A LOFTY CALLING 20
Families who planted Houston church came for NASA, stayed to spread the gospel



ERIC D. SHIN



23



PASTORAL WELLNESS FEELING LONELY, PASTOR? YOU'RE NOT ALONE. 28



Gift cards are great, but these things will really bless your pastor

It's October, a month when many churches observe Pastor Appreciation Month. That means there will soon be hundreds of gift cards and thank you notes stuffed into envelopes faster than you can say "Pumpkin Spice Latte." There's nothing at all wrong with this. I can think of far worse things that could happen to a pastor than having a three-month supply of Whataburger gift cards in his desk drawer.

But there are other ways you can show the pastor or pastors in your life appreciation. Consider blessing your pastor in these ways:

Take ownership

When I think about our Southern Baptists of Texas Convention pastors—most of whom lead small, rural churches—I think about men who are overloaded and, frankly, more prone to do things themselves than ask for help. That's why it blessed my heart so much when, as a pastor, I'd hear stories of church members caring for and meeting one another's needs. It made me feel like all the weight of caring for people wasn't just on my shoulders.

Want to show your pastor appreciation? Ask him if you can make a follow-up call to one or two of the people who visited your church this past Sunday. Go see someone in

the hospital who needs a visit. Help him carry the burden of caring not only for your members, but the people who wander into your church every week looking for answers and help. You can't imagine what a gift this will be to your pastor.

Protect his boundaries

As a first-time lead pastor, I thought it would be noble to let our members and guests know I would always—always—be available to them. What I meant was, "Hey, if you find yourself in crisis at 2 a.m., call me and I'll be there as soon as I can." What a small fraction of them heard was, "Hey, when you're driving your semi and bored at 4 a.m., give me a call and we can talk college football!" It didn't take long for me to realize I needed to adjust the expectations I had set for myself.

Want to show your pastor appreciation? Beat him to the punch when it comes to respecting his boundaries. Remember that he's got a wife and kids who have schedules of their own and a dog and bills and all the things you've got—in addition to caring for people in the church. Be patient and understanding when he doesn't immediately answer your emails and texts. Keep in mind he may struggle to get two consecutive days off in the same week, and if he does, he's likely going to try to take those days on a Friday, Saturday, or Monday.

Honor his family

God doesn't call individuals into ministry. He calls entire families, and each member of a called family experiences the pressures of ministry. So whenever and however you honor your pastor—be it gift cards or words of gratitude—remember to honor his family as well. Even a simple acknowledgement of the entire family's service to the church will go a long way toward warming your pastor's heart and making him feel appreciated not just this month, but all year long.

25 years

of answered prayer

with Chris Osborne & Nathan Lino

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 leading up to the meeting, 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 presidents Chris Osborne (2003-2005) and Nathan Lino (2015-2017).

What were some of your earliest prayers for the SBTC?

I thoroughly enjoyed my time as president and there was one particular thing I prayed about. We were committed, and still are, to the idea of the inerrancy of Scripture and its vast importance in the lives of the churches. My prayer was that as we stood strongly in this vein, that we not become a people who moved from that into silly legalism. I did not want us to become, as Jesus said, people who “strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.”



OSBORNE

What is your prayer for the next 25 years of the convention?

It is still my prayer for us that we remain solid on the Bible without going beyond its teaching into areas that will bind us to wrong-headed ideas. I loved and still love this convention and have the highest hopes for it in the future.

What were some of your earliest prayers for the SBTC?

I prayed for our state convention plant to make it—for God to give Dr. [Jim] Richards [the SBTC’s first executive director] wisdom and perseverance, our convention money, and spiritual protection from the enemy. Our convention started with a convention planter literally running the convention from the front seat of his car. I prayed the new plant would become a convention that made it long term.



LINO

How have you seen God answer your prayers regarding the convention?

As some church plants become far more than we could ever dream or imagine, so did the convention that Dr. Richards planted. That we are a convention of 2,700 churches with a budget of \$28 million facilitating the scope and scale of ministry we see today is a miracle of Jesus Christ.

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

My big prayer during my presidency was to see a wave of under-40s pastors actively engage our convention.

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

I pray that seeking the manifest presence of the Lord is a primary priority of our convention. Our churches are in need of revival and our state is in need of spiritual awakening. Our secular culture is turning on the Lord and the mission of the church in ways that are catching us unprepared. The only hope of the church in fulfilling our mission during the next 25 years is that we are filled with the manifest presence of our Lord Jesus Christ.



TBHC TO MARK 500TH ADOPTION WITH CEREMONY

Texas Baptist Home for Children will soon mark its 500th adoption, TBHC President Jason Curry told the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Executive Board during its August meeting in Grapevine. A special celebration focusing on adoptions is planned at TBHC's Waxahachie headquarters on Nov. 16—just before Ellis County's official Adoption Day recognition and two days before National Adoption Day on Nov. 18.

By the time of the November celebration, the actual 500th adoption will have already taken place, said Scott Arthur, TBHC development supervisor, who noted that the festivities will honor all the adoptive families thus far.

"We are celebrating numbers 1 to 500," said Arthur, adding that the November event will also mark the kickoff of the "For the Future 500" campaign to take the organization forward.

—TEXAN STAFF



WILDFIRES, STORMS SEND SBTC DR CREWS INTO THE FIELD TO SERVE

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Disaster Relief feeding crews deployed in Jasper, preparing meals for first responders and the community following August's Shearwood Creek wildfires. About a dozen SBTC DR volunteers from Hillcrest Baptist Church in Jasper met their community's needs, producing 100-150 meals per day over a three-day period from Aug. 24-26.

Wildfires near the Panhandle town of Lefors, which caused the evacuation of that community and school district on Sept. 8, also prompted the deployment of the SBTC DR Quick Response Unit from Pampa to serve first responders and volunteers.

Two SBTC DR chainsaw crews deployed to Tennessee the week of Sept. 10, said Scottie Stice, SBTC DR director. The volunteers assisted survivors of summer windstorms in an ongoing recovery effort. A future deployment to Maui may also occur, but SBTC DR help has not been requested at this time.

Meanwhile, West Brownsville Baptist Church continues its border ministry, with volunteers preparing almost 3,400 meals supplied by SBTC DR in August. The gospel was presented 2,882 times that month with 631 professions of faith seen by Pastor Carlos Navarro and his church members.

—JANE RODGERS



SEVERAL TEXANS NAMED TO SBC COOPERATION GROUP

NASHVILLE Addressing "things we have never done before" in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention will permeate discussions of those who will present a report next June that could reassert or redefine what constitutes a church to be in friendly cooperation with the SBC, said President Bart Barber.

A 20-member Cooperation Group was named by Barber in September and came about from a motion at the 2023 SBC Annual Meeting in New Orleans that placed the group's formation in Barber's hands. Jared Wellman, pastor of Tate Springs Baptist Church in Arlington, will serve as chair.

Other members include Matt Henslee – associational missionary, Collins Baptist Association in McKinney; Jason Paredes, lead pastor, Fielder Church in Arlington; Jim Richards, executive director emeritus, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention; and Juan Sanchez, senior pastor, High Pointe Baptist Church in Austin. Tony Wolfe, executive director-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention who formerly served as the SBTC's associate executive director, will also serve on the group.

—BAPTIST PRESS

MOVE CONFERENCE ATTRACTS GROWING NUMBER OF YOUNG ADULTS

McALLEN BT Church hosted its third annual Move Conference on Aug. 25-26. More than 200 young adults attended—an increase of 40 percent from last year. The aim of the conference is to help adults ages 18-29 navigate life's big challenges.

Guest speakers and breakout leaders focused on topics including discipleship, faith in the workplace, mental health, finances, career mapping, social media as ministry, and studying Scripture. One breakout session offered resume-building and interview tips, while another focused on spiritual disciplines and practices.

"I really believe this year we were challenged and encouraged to pursue Jesus to experience holiness more realistically," said a conferencegoer named Angelo. "I definitely left refreshed and excited to seek out revival in my every day."

"I wasn't expecting the presence of the Lord to be there so quickly or be so strong, but Friday, as soon as worship started, I could feel Him and it was powerful," added Jessica, another attendee.

—JANE RODGERS

ABILENE CHURCH SEES ENROLLMENT CONTINUE TO RISE AT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

ABILENE When Abilene Classical Academy opened its third school year this fall at South Side Baptist Church, it did so with a growing number of students.

Enrollment at the school, which follows a three-day-a-week model and welcomes students pre-K through eighth grade, has swelled from 60 students to 125, said Blake White, South Side Baptist Church's lead pastor. White said the school has its own 501c3 designation and is tuition-driven, but the church also gives support.

Article XII of the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 regarding education inspired the founding of Abilene Classical, White said. The school also met a local niche by being "robustly biblical" and "classically-oriented," he added.

"We are coming alongside parents: Christ-centered, classical, collaborative," White said.

—JANE RODGERS

NEW CERTIFICATES NOW EARNING

5.15% APY*
7-MONTH TERM

5.40% APY*
13-MONTH TERM

Fund the Kingdom through investing
in Church Expansion Certificates.

Apply today at 844-351-8804

2023 ANNUAL MEETING
FORWARD
 PHILIPPIANS 3:13

'I've never been more encouraged or excited'

KAUNITZ REFLECTS ON TWO-YEAR SBTC PRESIDENCY, THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THE PRIMACY OF PRAYER

Todd Kaunitz, lead pastor of New Beginnings Baptist Church in Longview, will conclude two terms as president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention at the convention's Annual Meeting in November. Kaunitz recently

spoke with Texan Editor Jayson Larson about how he has seen God move not only in the convention, but in himself, through a laser focus on prayer and a continued commitment to the Great Commission.

Prayer has been a focal point during your time as president. What do you know about prayer today that maybe you would say you didn't know about it even a year ago?

TK: On a personal level, I feel like in many ways I'm learning how to pray for the first time. Even though I'm three years into this new prayer journey, I feel like the Lord is just showing me more and more about what it looks like to be a person whose posture of life is in submission to Him in prayer. From the pastoral side, I've learned so much. I've been humbled by the number of pastors I've been able to cross paths with, to be able to watch their prayer lives, and hear them talk about prayer. It's been amazing to network with and learn from like-minded pastors who prioritize leading corporate prayer in their churches. I had no idea before this journey what I was missing personally and what our church was missing. I never want to go back to doing life and church without prayer being the highest priority.

During your service as president, you, Nathan Lino (senior pastor at First Baptist Church Forney), Jason Paredes (lead pastor at Fielder Church in Arlington) and Nathan Lorick (SBTC executive director) began working together to host prayer retreats for pastors. How have you seen God use those retreats in the lives of those pastors and their churches?

"I am praying we will see a movement of the gospel that advances the Great Commission across our state and around the world and that we would see the greatest gospel movement in the history of the church."

—TODD KAUNITZ

TK: What we've seen is a hunger in the hearts of our SBTC pastors to allow prayer to be more incorporated into their daily lives and into the body life of their church. What I've witnessed through these prayer retreats is how God has knitted our hearts together with these pastors.

I mean, the stories we are hearing through these retreats are so similar—stories of brokenness, of getting to the end of ourselves, of finding that what we've been missing all along is intimacy with Jesus and more of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and churches. We're learning that what was lacking in our ministries wasn't programs or strategies, but the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit. We have heard story after story from pastors who have experienced personal spiritual renewal and who are implementing prayer as the ministry of first importance at their local church. They are leading their churches to become churches that are built upon prayer.

The 2023 Annual Meeting is fast approaching. What are some of the victories we are going to be able to celebrate, and what are some of the challenges that lay ahead?

TK: One of the things we are looking forward to at this year's Annual Meeting is that it's our 25th anniversary, so we get to celebrate the great work God has done. We get to honor 25 years of fruitful ministry, fruitful partnership. But what I'm most excited about is, we're going to get a chance to dream about the future. Dr. Lorick, the SBTC staff, and a group of pastors and leaders from all over the state have been working on a fresh mission statement and strategy that we get to run toward over the next 25 years. I think it's going to be a great balance of celebrating God's work in the past and anticipating His work in the future. There are so many great things happening.

As far as challenges, we've got to make sure we're keeping the main thing, the main thing. We're a big family, and just like any other family, there's different expressions of how we walk in the shared values we have. As we gather and make business decisions and mission decisions, it's critical that we make sure we're holding tight to the commonalities we share as a family and not get distracted by some of the differences

that are more peripheral or non-essential to the gospel movement we have been called to together. I think keeping that central is going to be key for us moving forward.

There's been so much controversy and uncertainty at the national SBC level that has created a lot of discouragement in pastors—and I am one of those pastors. But the closer I get to our state convention, the more encouraged I am. I've seen key leaders in our convention who have different positions on various topics that could be divisive, but these leaders are talking through some of these tough issues with humility and grace and in a way that brings us closer together rather than driving us apart—it just encourages me so much. I've never been more encouraged and more excited about what's happening at the state level. To see the partnership we share with theologically conservative churches that are passionately committed to the Great Commission, that's a very special gift God has given us and we shouldn't take it for granted. We should count it a privilege to be a part of such a great state convention that is so unified and so missionally focused.

What will your prayers for the SBTC look like over the next 25 years?

TK: There are three key things I'm praying for our state convention. Number one is that we would become a praying convention. I know that historically, God has had given us leadership that believes in prayer and that believes prayer should be primary for us. I pray that in the future, we will see a prayer movement that would usher in revival and spiritual awakening and that the power of God would be unleashed. Number two, I pray the Holy Spirit would unify us, that we would stand together in our core doctrines and in the missional calling we have—that we would do that without wavering regardless of what culture says or does.

Thirdly, as we pray together and stand unified, I am praying we will see a movement of the gospel that advances the Great Commission across our state and around the world and that we would see the greatest gospel movement in the history of the church. That's what I've been praying for these past two years, and that's what I'll continue to pray for in the days ahead.

2023 ANNUAL MEETING FORWARD

PHILIPPIANS 3:13

SBTC TO MARK 25 YEARS OF ANSWERED PRAYER AT ANNUAL MEETING

This year's Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Annual Meeting will be a celebration of what was, what is, and what is to come.

The theme for the Annual Meeting is Forward—a concept rooted in Philippians 3:13. As such, there will be exciting conversations about the future of the SBTC in conjunction with a celebration of how God has blessed the convention over the past 25 years.

Included in those celebrations will be a reception marking 25 years of answered prayer for the SBTC on Monday, Nov. 13, from 9-10:30 p.m. at the site of the Annual Meeting, Cross City



Church in Euless. Additionally, a video will be shown commemorating how God has worked through the SBTC over the past quarter-century during a portion of the two-day event.

SBTC Executive Director Nathan Lorick said the Annual Meeting will not only be a time for prayer, worship, and fellowship, but an occasion for convention leadership to begin “unrolling a new vision for some exciting days in the future.

“We are excited about all that God has done,” Lorick said, “but we are anticipating a bright future as God continues to bless the churches of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.”

GREAT HILLS' FORSHEE TO BE NOMINATED FOR SBTC PRESIDENT

Gregg Matte, senior pastor of Houston's First Baptist Church, has announced his intention to nominate Danny Forshee, lead pastor of Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin, as president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention at its Annual Meeting in November.

Forshee has served as lead pastor at Great Hills for more than 13 years and as president of the Danny Forshee Evangelistic Association for nearly 20 years. From 2018-2020, he served as chairman of the SBTC's Executive Committee.

Forshee said he would be honored to serve as SBTC president “if God so wills. ... I believe in the SBTC and the tremendous good we are able to accomplish as we work together. I am grateful to God for the impact our convention makes for the glory of God and the expansion of the gospel.”

Matte describes Forshee as “a visionary leader with tremendous energy,” adding that his hard work



and commitment to his family and church exemplify qualities the convention needs in a president.

“I’m excited to nominate Dr. Danny Forshee as the next SBTC president because Dr. Forshee has a passion for the Lord and for the work of the church,”

Matte said. “He has served faithfully in our state convention and his church for years. He has the grit and grace to lead us well. As an author, former professor, amazing pastor, and gifted leader, along with SBTC experience and a generous heart, Danny is the right man for this role in this time.”

Great Hills gave \$233,730.08 through the Cooperative Program in 2022 and \$244,799.41 in 2021.

Forshee holds a doctoral degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, where he has served as a professor.

Forshee and his wife, Ashley, have three grown children and four granddaughters.

SBTC RESOLUTIONS AND EXHIBITOR QUALIFICATIONS

Resolutions give convention messengers an opportunity to express consensus on a current issue. While resolutions are non-binding on convention churches, they do add substance to current conversations in Baptist life and the culture at large. Any member of an SBTC church may submit a resolution to the resolutions committee for consideration. The committee considers these proposed resolutions when preparing resolutions to present to messengers at the Annual Meeting.

The 2023 resolutions committee will receive proposed resolutions from Wednesday, Sept. 20, to Wednesday, Oct. 18.



A proposed resolution must include your name, church membership, phone number, and email address. Please review the format of previous SBTC resolutions at sbtexas.com/resolutions. All proposed resolutions should be emailed to Jenna Griffis at jgriffis@sbtexas.com.

HANDOUTS & MATERIALS

Only SBTC ministries and approved exhibitors may hand out material to the messenger body on the premises of the Annual Meeting.



ANNUAL MEETING *Meals*

MONDAY

Chinese Pastor Network Lunch

12:00 pm

Missional Ministries Dinner

4:45 pm

Church Health & Leadership Dinner

4:45 pm

Young Pastors Network Dinner

The Pastor & Preaching

4:45 pm

25-Year Anniversary Reception

9:00 pm

TUESDAY

Women's Ministry Breakfast

Savoring the Peace of Jesus in a Chaotic World

7:30 am

SBTC Disaster Relief Taco Truck

7:30 am

Seminary Breakfasts

Register on seminary website

7:30 am • Southwestern, Southern, New Orleans

President's Lunch Panel

Five Markers of a Mobilized Church

12:00 pm

Regenesis Lunch Panel

Church Revitalization

12:00 pm

Space is limited.
Register today.
sbtexas.com/am23



2023 ANNUAL MEETING **FORWARD**

PHILIPPIANS 3:13

ANNUAL MEETING HOTELS

Marriott DFW Airport South

4151 Centreport Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76155
817-358-1700

\$159 (all room types)

Rooms must be reserved by Oct. 23.

Residence Inn DFW Airport West

2000 State Highway 121
Bedford, Texas 76021
817-354-2222

\$137 (all room types)

Rooms must be reserved by Oct. 20.

Group Rates

Specify SBTC for group rates
when making hotel reservations.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

Hotel cost assistance is available for
senior pastors with financial need.
sbtexas.com/annual-meeting/hotel-grant-request

CHILDCARE

Available to those who pre-register.
sbtexas.com/annual-meeting/childcare

QUESTIONS?

Email aminfo@sbtexas.com or call 817-552-2500
sbtexas.com/am23



AT A GLANCE

Messengers to the Southern
Baptists of Texas Convention
Annual Meeting will gather
for a powerful time of prayer,
worship, and fellowship at
Cross City Church in Euless
on Nov. 13-14.

Cross City Church

1000 W Airport Fwy
Euless, Texas 76039

Main Sessions

Monday evening 6:30-9 p.m.
Tuesday morning 9-11:30 a.m.
Tuesday afternoon 1:30-4 p.m.

Spanish Session

Cross City Church, Euless

Sunday

4:30 p.m. Special Family Program
5:30-6:30 p.m. Fellowship
6:30-8:30 p.m. Spanish Session

Monday

10 a.m. Breakout 1
11 a.m. Breakout 2
12 p.m. Lunch and Panel Discussion

REUNIÓN ANUAL 2023 AVANZANDO

FILIPENSES 3:13

SOTO, LÍDER BAPTISTA DE PUERTO RICO, PREDICARÁ EN LA SESIÓN EN ESPAÑOL DE LA REUNIÓN ANUAL 2023

Las congregaciones de habla hispana de todo Texas se reunirán el 12 y 13 de noviembre en la Iglesia Cross City en Euless para la Sesión en español de la Reunión Anual 2023 de la Convención de los Bautistas del Sur de Texas. El tema de la sesión en español de este año es Avanzando, basado en Filipenses 3:13.

La sesión comenzará el domingo, 12 de noviembre, a las 4:30 p.m. con una Presentación Familiar a cargo del plantador de iglesias y comediante, Teddy Pérez. A las 5:30 p.m. se ofrecerá una comida ligera y la sesión principal comenzará a las 6:30 p.m. Luis Soto, director ejecutivo de la Convención de Iglesias Bautistas del Sur de Puerto Rico, será el orador principal. En el 2022, la SBTC anunció que había entrado en una asociación ministerial de varios años con la convención de Puerto Rico para ayudar a fortalecer a sus pastores e iglesias. Se espera que Soto hable sobre esa asociación y de cómo los pastores de Texas pueden participar, durante uno de los dos talleres programados para el lunes.

Además del taller de Soto el lunes a las 10 a.m., se ofrecerá un segundo taller a las 11 a.m. para animar y desafiar a los pastores. Luego de los talleres, se



Luis Soto, director ejecutivo de la Convención de Iglesias Bautistas del Sur en Puerto Rico, será el orador principal en la Sesión en español de la Reunión Anual de la SBTC el domingo, 12 de noviembre. FOTO COMPARTIDA

celebrará un panel durante el almuerzo que cerrará la sesión en español de la Asamblea Anual a partir del mediodía. El tema del panel es Avanzando en el Ministerio. Los panelistas incluirán a Willie Hernández, pastor de la Primera Iglesia Bautista en Gregory, quien también sirve como estratega del campo de la SBTC; Moisés Gómez, pastor en español de la Primera Iglesia Bautista en Irving; y Scottie Stice, director de Ayuda en Desastres de la SBTC.

Para más información, visite sbtexas.com/am23.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MOTION

Messengers to the 2023 SBTC Annual Meeting will be asked by the Executive Board to amend the effective date for affiliated churches stated in the constitutional interpretation motion approved by the messengers in 2022 by extending the date from January 1, 2024, to January 1, 2025.

The following is the motion from 2022 with the proposed amendment shown by strikethrough and underline:

"... that the SBTC, for purposes of affiliation, interpret the language in the SBTC Constitution, article IV, section 1, to refer not only to the titles of senior pastor or lead pastor, but to any role designated by the noun, "pastor," with the proviso that this new interpretation take effect regarding presently affiliated churches January 1, ~~2024~~ 2025."

* This statement constitutes second notice of this motion.

A BLESSING, TO GIVE AND TO RECEIVE

Fort Worth pastor bestows
priceless gift by donating
kidney to staff member



Randal Lyle

FORT WORTH

Rudy Kebreau and Randal Lyle are bound by far more than their mutual faith and pastoral calling these days. Lyle, senior pastor at Meadowridge Community Baptist Church, gave Kebreau, his next generation and children's pastor, a priceless gift this summer when he donated a kidney to his friend and associate.

It was an unlikely match made this side of heaven that even astounded transplant doctors who rarely, if ever, see perfect matches between Anglo donors and Haitian-American recipients. Yet, after extensive testing, Lyle met all the markers for donating a kidney to Kebreau.

"God gave me good health and God brought us together," said Lyle, 52. "We want the Lord to be glorified in this. He put it all together."

The pastor sees the transplant process as an object lesson for his congregation. "We are a multi-ethnic church," Lyle said. "I think it was a testimony that, in a sense, we are all the same. The issue was never anyone's background or skin color or anything."

From Boston to the Metroplex

Kebreau, 48, never expected to leave his native Boston for Texas. But God called and Southwestern Seminary beckoned, so he and his family moved to Fort Worth.

Rudy Kebreau, Meadowridge Community Baptist Church's next generation and children's minister, loves kids. He is pictured here with a young member of the church's congregation. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

“THE CHURCH HAD BEEN PRAYING FOR RUDY AND TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO HELP HIM. DONATING A KIDNEY WAS NOT ON MY RADAR.”

—RANDAL LYLE

Lyle visited Kebreau's hospital room following the successful procedure. Kebreau is continuing to recover following the transplant and hopes to be back at work soon. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**



Kebreau, his wife, and two daughters started attending Meadowridge a decade ago, during his last semester in seminary. Lyle had been the pastor about nine years at that point and Meadowridge was blooming again following a revitalization effort started 10 years prior with the assistance of Wedgwood Baptist Church.

“Everyone [in the family] liked the different departments,” Kebreau recalled about the church. “We decided to make it a home. ... We came for the church.”

Soon the church came calling for Kebreau, when Meadowridge's children's minister left. Kebreau, who by then had completed a Master of Arts in Christian school education at Southwestern, had to be persuaded to apply for the job.

“I put in my resume just so everybody would leave me alone,” Kebreau said with a chuckle. “The Lord just did what He was going to do.” Kebreau came on staff in March 2014 and was an immediate blessing, Lyle said.

“It was the Lord's providential timing,” Lyle said. Little did he or Kebreau understand then just how providential the timing was.

‘Why would I not help?’

Kebreau, who through a variety of circumstances had lost insurance coverage while in seminary, had let his diabetes go unchecked for years. His ankles began swelling and his blood pressure became dangerously elevated. Consultation with a nephrologist revealed Kebreau's kidneys were failing.

It seemed like the worst news possible. Kebreau had lost his mother to kidney failure years before. He reluctantly went on home dialysis and was placed on a transplant list at Texas Health Fort Worth. The Kebreaus received the impression it would take years for Rudy to get a kidney.

“The church had been praying for Rudy and trying to figure out how to help him,” Lyle said. “Donating a kidney was not on my radar.” Yet from time to time, he wondered if he could donate.

“Whatever God blessed you with is to bless other people,” Lyle said. “I knew my good health was for more than going to the gym.”

At the same time, Lyle was reading *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, a book by 18th century English theologian William Law, a man who influenced George Whitefield and John Wesley. As part of his thesis, Law exhorts wealthy Christians to use their gifts for God's glory.

Lyle realized that exhortation had deeper implications. “It's as if the Holy Spirit prompted me, ‘You've got an extra kidney,’” he said. “If I have an extra kidney and a brother who needs help, why would I not help?”

Lyle's wife, Samantha, “didn't bat an eye” when the pastor gave her the news.

“OK, if that's what God is telling you to do, go ahead,” she urged.

Lyle submitted the online transplant application and the transplant center contacted Lyle, who was soon undergoing psychological and physical testing and counseling required for potential donors.

“I felt healthy,” he said. “But I didn't know if I could pass the test. They drew lots of blood. They checked for



“I FEEL GREAT.”

—RUDY KEBREAU

every disease known to man, did chest x-rays, heart exams, kidney tests, organ tests.”

Not only did the test results come back fine, but Lyle matched every marker needed to be Kebreau’s kidney donor.

The two pastors learned the good news in late March 2023 and announced it to the church in April. At Kebreau’s insistence, they set the date for the procedure for late June, after Meadowridge’s vacation Bible school and following his daughter’s high school graduation in May.

On June 28, Lyle endured a laparoscopic procedure to detach the healthy kidney, although the actual kidney removal necessitated a larger abdominal incision. Two surgeons were present, one to remove the kidney and the other to supervise the preparation and transplant of the kidney to Kebreau, leaving him with a total of three kidneys (the original kidneys are not removed in transplants).

Making every day a ‘kidney day’

So far, Kebreau’s recovery has gone well. He recently had his dialysis port removed, takes anti-rejection medicines, and must stay in relative isolation at home until December. He hopes to be permitted to go back to his office at church on days when the facilities are empty even sooner.

“I feel great,” Kebreau said.

For Lyle, the recovery has also continued smoothly. He was not allowed to lift anything over 10 pounds for six weeks; it was about eight weeks until he could run again. He has lingering tightness from the abdominal incision but is otherwise back to normal.

Normal, but changed.

During his brief hospital stay, nurses and techs would come in. Many expressed astonishment that he had donated a kidney to a person who was not a relative.

“Seeing their reaction, I realized that every day needs to be a kidney day for me,” Lyle said. “I need to be thinking, ‘How do I show the love of God in such a way that it’s a big deal to someone else?’”

Lyle learned he was only the second living kidney donor so far in 2023 at Texas Health. He told the transplant team he would be happy to talk to others about what to expect.

He said he would do it “100 times again” if he could, advising people to “slow down [and] figure out how to let your light shine before men.”

And make every day “a kidney day.”

“I NEED TO BE THINKING, ‘HOW DO I SHOW THE LOVE OF GOD IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT’S A BIG DEAL TO SOMEONE ELSE?’”

—RANDAL LYLE



THANK YOU, *Pastors*

Local church ministry in an increasingly post-Christian culture is often challenging, confusing, and tiresome. That's why Midwestern Seminary wants to recognize you this year during Pastor Appreciation Month. Whether you're a lead pastor, associate pastor, lay leader, or a staff member at your church, Midwestern Seminary thanks you for your commitment and faithfulness to the local church.

At MBTS, we believe what Jesus purchased is precious, that's why we've made it our purpose. We exist *for the church*; that includes you and the church you lead.

During October, we want to encourage and edify you through a variety of free resources and giveaways.

Learn more. mbts.edu/pastors



for the Church

MIDWESTERN
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MULTIPLICATION MINDSET

Budding Hispanic plant in San Angelo is already looking to plant more churches

SAN ANGELO

Santiago Machado's path to following Christ and pastoring Centro Cristiano Beraca was a dark and difficult one.

He grew up in a household where everyone, including his mother, practiced witchcraft. When he turned 16, he began serving in the military in his native Cuba, where he encountered many problems—including a wreck in a military truck that crashed because of his negligence. He survived the wreck but was sentenced to three years in military prison.

Machado describes his life at that point in very simple, sobering terms: "Very bad in every way."

That is, until Jesus showed up in Machado's life in a most unexpected way.

At the beginning of his incarceration, Machado asked a friend to go to his home and tell his mother what had happened to him. The friend did as he was asked and returned to report Machado's mother had given her life to Christ after hearing the gospel a month earlier. Not only that, but the friend told Machado he had also given his life to Jesus after hearing the gospel from Machado's mother.

Upon hearing the testimony of his friend, and how Jesus had changed his mother's life, Machado—in an act of desperation—decided to give his life to Christ, as well. He began reading the New Testament his friend

gave him and, before long, started seeing God working in the circumstances of his life.

'God had plans for me'

Fifteen days into Machado's imprisonment, the prison director took 50 prisoners in a large truck to perform hard labor. As the prisoners returned from the job, Machado and another inmate were asked by a captain to put a flashlight in the back of the truck because it was getting dark. While the two men made their way to the back, the truck was hit by another vehicle. Many in the vehicle were killed, including the captain.

"The vision of the church is not to remain static. We have to raise up missions and churches. This is our passion."

—SANTIAGO MACHADO

Machado crawled out of the truck and fell onto the road. He was found by emergency workers just outside the vehicle, conscious but in shock. "I could speak," Machado said, "but I felt that God was telling me not to speak. My lips were sealed."

Machado did not speak for the next three months—not in the hospital, and not when they released him back to the prison. Because prison officials did not know what to do with him since he wasn't speaking, they returned him to his military unit. After 20 days back with his unit, a doctor declared Machado unfit to continue in the military, so he was released from his service. As Machado sees it, God worked a miracle that day. Out of a three-year prison sentence, he served only 15 days.

"God had plans for me," Machado said.



Living in the Lord's service

Returning to his mother's home, Machado began to serve the Lord in the church. He would go with his mother to share the gospel in their community, fueling his passion for seeing lost people saved. It was at this church Machado met his wife, Irene, beginning a family that includes two children and a marriage that is 35 years strong and counting.

The Machados were eventually sent as missionaries to Punta Brava in Havana for three years, beginning in 1986. He would go on to pastor eight churches and start 15 home study groups. Eight of those groups sprouted into churches that are still operating.

In 2012, Machado received an offer to pastor a church in San Angelo, Texas—which he accepted. But as the years passed, he began to sense the Lord calling him to plant a new church focused on missions and evangelism—two things very close to his heart. Sensing God moving him in a new direction to become a planter, Machado stepped out in faith and left his church and the financial security it provided. That's when he met Edgar Trinidad, pastor of Kairo Christian Center in San Angelo.

As Machado and Trinidad got to know each other, they discovered they had a shared vision for planting a church in San Angelo. Trinidad eventually proposed a partnership that would allow Machado to serve as a volunteer associate pastor at Kairo while learning more about planting a church. Machado accepted the challenge.

Santiago Machado (shown below with his wife, Irene, next to a picture of the church) felt God leading them to plant a church in San Angelo. The Lord has led them to a fruitful ministry that is reaching out to the community. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**

A new plant, a new path

Machado worked under Trinidad's leadership for two and a half years. His training included work with Send Network SBTC, a church planting partnership between the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and the North American Mission Board. After Machado was certified as a planter by the convention, he and Trinidad began exploring a location to plant. The Lord directed them to North San Angelo, where Trinidad's church was able to purchase a building that would house the new plant.

The first service at the new church, Centro Cristiano Beraca, was held Oct. 1, 2022. As the church nears its one-year anniversary, 25-30 people are now attending on Sundays.

"God has given us many strategies" to reach the community, Machado said. For example, Centro Cristiano Beraca opens its doors to feed the community every week. It provides an opportunity for the church to meet physical needs and minister to people spiritually, Machado said. The gospel is preached before food is served—something that has led 20 people to make decisions to follow Jesus or be baptized.

And though it is still a young church, Centro Cristiano Beraca is already looking to raise up the next generation of planters so the gospel mission can move forward.

"The vision of the church is not to remain static," Machado said. "We have to raise up missions and churches. This is our passion."



UNA MENTALIDAD DE MULTIPLICACIÓN

Nueva Plantación hispana en San Angelo ya busca plantar más iglesias

SAN ANGELO

El camino de Santiago Machado para seguir a Cristo y pastorear el Centro Cristiano Beraca fue oscuro y difícil.

Creció en un hogar donde todos, incluida su madre, practicaban la brujería. Cuando cumplió 16 años, empezó a servir en el ejército en su natal Cuba, donde se encontró con muchos problemas, incluyendo un accidente en un camión de combate que se estrelló debido a un descuido de su parte. Sobrevivió al accidente, pero fue condenado a tres años de prisión militar.

Machado describe que su vida en ese momento se encontraba “muy mal en todos los sentidos”.

Hasta que Jesús apareció en la vida de Machado de la forma más inesperada.

Al principio de su encarcelamiento en la prisión militar, Machado le pidió a un amigo que fuera a su casa y le contara a su madre lo que le había ocurrido. El amigo hizo lo que se le pidió y volvió para informar a Machado de lo que había averiguado: que su madre había entregado su vida a Cristo después de escuchar el Evangelio un mes antes. No sólo eso, sino que el amigo le dijo a Machado que

él mismo había entregado su vida a Jesús después que la madre de Machado le compartiera el evangelio.

Al oír el testimonio de su amigo y cómo Jesús había cambiado la vida de su madre, Machado –en un acto de desesperación– decidió entregar también su vida a Cristo. Comenzó a leer el Nuevo Testamento que le había dado su amigo y, en poco tiempo, empezó a ver a Dios obrando en medio de sus circunstancias.

Dios tenía planes para mí

A los quince días de su encarcelamiento, el director de la prisión llevó a 50 presos en un gran camión a realizar trabajos forzados. Cuando los presos regresaban del trabajo, un capitán pidió a Machado y a otro preso que pusieran una linterna en la parte trasera del camión porque estaba oscureciendo. Mientras los



dos hombres se dirigían a la parte trasera, el camión fue embestido por otro vehículo que iba a muy alta velocidad. Murieron muchos de los que iban en el vehículo, incluido el capitán.

Machado se arrastró fuera del camión y cayó en la carretera. Los equipos de emergencia lo encontraron fuera del vehículo, consciente, pero en estado de shock. “Yo podía hablar”, dijo Machado, “pero sentía que Dios me decía que no hablara. Mis labios estaban sellados”.

Machado no habló durante los tres meses siguientes, ni en el hospital ni cuando lo devolvieron a la prisión. Como los oficiales de la prisión no sabían qué hacer con él porque no hablaba, lo devolvieron a su unidad militar. Después de 20 días en su unidad, un médico declaró que Machado no estaba apto para seguir en el ejército, por lo que fue dado de baja. Machado declara que Dios obró un milagro aquel día. De una condena de tres años de prisión, sólo estuvo 15 días.

“Dios tenía planes para mí”, dijo Machado.

Vivir al servicio del Señor

Al volver a casa de su madre, Machado empezó a servir al Señor en la iglesia. Iba con su madre a compartir el Evangelio en su comunidad, lo que alimentó su pasión por ver a los perdidos salvados. Fue en esta iglesia donde Machado conoció a su esposa, Irene, comenzando una familia que incluía dos hijos y un matrimonio que lleva 35 años y sigue creciendo.

Los Machado fueron eventualmente enviados como misioneros a Punta Brava en La Habana por tres años, comenzando en 1986. Él pasó a pastorear ocho iglesias y a fundar 15 grupos de estudio en hogares. Ocho de esos grupos se convirtieron en iglesias que siguen funcionando.

En el 2012, Machado recibió una oferta para pastorear una iglesia en San Ángelo, Texas, la cual aceptó. Pero a medida que pasaban los años, comenzó a sentir que el Señor lo llamaba a plantar una nueva iglesia centrada en las misiones y la evangelización, dos cosas muy cercanas a su corazón. Sintiendo que Dios lo movía en una nueva dirección para convertirse en un plantador, Machado dio un paso de fe y dejó su iglesia y la seguridad financiera que le proporcionaba. Fue entonces cuando conoció a Edgar Trinidad, pastor del Centro Cristiano Kairo en San Ángelo.

A medida que Machado y Trinidad se fueron conociendo, descubrieron que compartían la visión de plantar una iglesia en San Ángelo. Trinidad finalmente propuso una asociación que permitiría a Machado servir como pastor asociado voluntario en Kairo mientras aprendía más sobre la plantación de una iglesia. Machado aceptó el reto.



Santiago Machado (foto junto a la iglesia con su esposa, Irene) sintió que Dios los guiaba a plantar una iglesia en San Ángelo. El Señor los ha guiado a un ministerio fructífero que está alcanzando a la comunidad. **FOTOS COMPARTIDAS**

Una nueva plantación, un nuevo camino

Machado trabajó bajo la dirección de Trinidad durante dos años y medio. Su formación incluyó el trabajo con Send Network SBTC, una asociación de plantación de iglesias entre la Convención de los Bautistas del Sur de Texas y la Junta de Misiones Norteamericanas. Después de ser certificado como plantador por la convención, Machado y Trinidad comenzaron a explorar un lugar para plantar. El Señor los dirigió al norte de San Ángelo, en donde la iglesia de Trinidad pudo comprar un edificio que albergaría la nueva obra.

El primer servicio en la nueva iglesia, Centro Cristiano Beraca, se celebró el 1 de octubre de 2022. A medida que la iglesia se acerca a su primer aniversario, entre 25 y 30 personas asisten ahora los domingos.

“Dios nos ha dado muchas estrategias” para llegar a la comunidad, dijo Machado. Por ejemplo, el Centro Cristiano Beraca abre sus puertas para dar de comer a la comunidad todas las semanas. Es una oportunidad para que la iglesia alimente a la comunidad no sólo físicamente dice Machado, sino también espiritualmente. Se predica el Evangelio antes de servir la comida, lo que ha llevado a 20 personas a tomar la decisión de seguir a Jesús y ser bautizados.

Y aunque todavía es una iglesia joven, el Centro Cristiano Beraca ya está tratando de formar a la próxima generación de plantadores para que la misión pueda seguir adelante.

“La visión de la iglesia no es permanecer estática”, dijo Machado. “Tenemos que levantar misiones e iglesias. Esa es nuestra pasión”.

A LOFTY CALLING



Families who planted Houston church came for NASA, stayed to spread the gospel

HOUSTON

Families who moved to the Clear Lake community of southeast Houston to start the U.S. space program more than five decades ago started something else that continues to impact the world: Clear Lake Baptist Church.

They met in homes for a while and sent mailers to the community to gauge interest—and they had a great turnout, said John Aaron Matthew, pastor of Clear Lake Baptist Church. “They have continued to minister here in the community and meet needs, to be a light for all these years,” he said.

Some of the founding members are still there, having retired from NASA or related

contractors IBM or Boeing, and newer generations of space program workers have come along. “It’s pretty fun to have these people as deacons and church members,” Matthew said.

One new member recently graduated from college and moved to Houston to work for Mission Control, and another church member has trained astronauts. The pastor is friends with the daughter of an astronaut who perished in the Challenger explosion.

When Matthew was on a trip to Israel with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention last year, his friend Bob Hines was the pilot on a SpaceX mission to the International Space Station.

“As I was posting pictures of what we were seeing from the ground, he sent me pictures of us from space and said, ‘Looks like you guys are having a great time,’” Matthew recounted.

“It’s cool to know that those who are working at the highest levels of science believe in God as our Creator and they are worshiping Him even from the space station and even as they’re working on these projects.”

—JOHN AARON MATTHEW

Popular opinion doesn't link science with God, but Matthew has heard countless testimonies of God's involvement from members dating to the beginning of the space program. Hines, for instance, was praying for people on earth while he was in the space station, Matthew said.

"It's cool to know that those who are working at the highest levels of science believe in God as our Creator and they are worshiping Him even from the space station and even as they're working on these projects," Matthew said. "Person after person at high levels at NASA have faith, and they are worshiping God, and they view what they're doing as part of using their gifts and abilities to glorify God. They see Him in creation all around."

A New Orleans native, Matthew graduated from Southwestern Seminary before working in college ministry with the Tennessee Baptist Convention and earning a Doctor of Ministry from Southeastern Seminary. Along the way, God drew his heart to church revitalization.

He discovered Clear Lake, which had been used by God to do great things but was in a season of decline, and God moved him there with his wife Emily and two children in 2015. At the time, the church was mainly senior adults and his 5-year-old and 3-year-old were two of about 10 children attending.

"We haven't seen fast, explosive growth, but as we've been faithful to preach and to pray and to love and to stay, we've seen God bring health and growth to our church in a meaningful way," Matthew said. "Our church is spiritually healthy, loving, and unified."

Attendance on Sundays ranges from 150 in the summer to 200 on a high attendance day, and the children's ministry has grown to about 40 kids, he said.

"It didn't happen overnight, but now we've got a leadership team of about 30 people that went to the Equip Conference and were encouraged," Matthew said. "It's a challenge to develop leaders, and it takes time, but we have new leaders stepping up and a growing ministry to young families."



(Top) John Aaron Matthew, pastor of Clear Lake Baptist Church in Houston, travels to India for a missions partnership in which he teaches biblical theology to support church planting. (Middle) The children's ministry at Clear Lake Baptist Church in Houston grew from about 10 kids in 2015 to 40 children most Sundays now. (Bottom) When Pastor John Aaron Matthew was in Israel last year, his friend in the Houston area was on the International Space Station and sent a photo of his view of Israel from space. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**



God used a love for reaching the nations to draw Matthew to Clear Lake. Houston is the most diverse city in America, he said, with more ethnic groups than any other city. Ministry to international students had been part of Matthew's college work, and the University of Houston campus in Clear Lake appealed to him.

Also, Matthew had a previous missions partnership in India, and he led Clear Lake to get involved. "As a small church that doesn't necessarily have a ton of resources, we still can make a Great Commission impact," Matthew said, adding that the church was introduced by the International Mission Board to a church planting network in India.

"We're able to fund monthly support for 10 church planting families among 10 different unreached people groups in India," he said. Matthew also travels occasionally to teach biblical theology to about 100 Indian church planters.

"We just got a report that this network of churches that we sponsor has shared the gospel with nearly 1.3 million people"

Clear Lake ministers to about 30 children every week through an afterschool program it started at a local elementary school.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

"When you invest in a church and you take time and you don't give up, you see fruit."

—JOHN AARON MATTHEW

and saw more than 158,000 decisions made for Christ, he said.

Locally, Clear Lake established a food pantry to feed the community. When COVID demands pressed beyond their ability to provide, they reached out to five other churches for help. Now Clear Lake partners with those churches to run an independent food pantry providing groceries for about 300 families per week.

The church also started an afterschool program in a local elementary school, ministering to about 30 children each week, said Matthew—who also serves as chairman of the SBTC's Texas Ethics and Religious Liberty Committee and on the leadership team of the convention's Young Pastor Network.

"When you invest in a church and you take time and you don't give up, you see fruit," Matthew said. "Fruit doesn't come quickly, typically. It takes years of tending and cultivation. But when you walk through difficulties, you get to be a part of experiencing the spiritual fruit that God brings in season."



OCTOBER 20, 2023

PREVIEW DAY

See Southwestern Seminary in person. Sign up at swbts.edu/preview.





ERIC D. SHIN



Eric D. Shin has served as senior pastor of Houston's New Life Fellowship since its beginning in 1997. Born and raised in Seoul, South Korea, Shin immigrated to the U.S. with his family at age 13, where they settled in New York City. He trusted Christ as Savior at 18, eventually forsaking plans for a legal career to attend seminary. In 1994, Shin and his family relocated to Houston, where he served at Seoul Baptist Church as youth pastor before founding New Life Fellowship, which follows a house church model. Shin served on the board of the SBTC from 2017-2022. He and his wife, Lynette, have three adult sons: Enoch, Caleb, and Josiah.

How does a house church model differ from traditional worship?

On any Sunday, 480-550 adults plus 180 children and 100 youth will gather to worship at New Life. All of these are part of our 86 house churches that meet on Fridays and Saturdays, also. Sunday is more like a typical contemporary church service with worship and a sermon 50-60 minutes in length. We also have Sunday lunch.

Most of our house churches consist of up to 12 adults plus children. When a house church reaches 12 adults, we multiply them into two. The house churches grow organically. People choose where to join to allow for autonomy and choice. We ask people to reach out and [invite] their own friends. It's all relational evangelism.

More people attend house church than Sunday worship. About 10 percent who come to our house churches are unbelievers. We call them VIPs, and we offer "receiving Jesus" meetings to those who are interested. We reach out to and welcome all unbelievers. We are stricter with Christians who hop around from church to church. We discourage that.

What is something you've been able to celebrate at New Life this year?

We have seen a lot of growth. Even COVID had no effect on us. We did go online for a few months, but house church attendance has steadily increased. We are seeing a lot of house churches multiplying these days.

What is a challenge facing the house church ministry?

We are seeing more house churches forming. It's not easy. It requires a paradigm shift. There are churches that are doing house churches in Dallas, Austin, across the U.S., Canada, South Africa, Kazakhstan, Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Japan, South Korea ... several hundred all over the world. ... I would like to mobilize our gifted church members to come up with resources including a website, videos, and teaching material to spread house church ministry as fast and far as possible.

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

Hold to the Scriptures. Study, pray, and seek God. The Bible is the ultimate and supreme authority. That will lead us to the place we need to go.

How can the other churches of the SBTC be praying for you?

Pray that I can stay the course that God has mapped out. Pray that New Life Fellowship will be used in spreading the New Testament church. Pray that other pastors will be exposed to the house church model.



My first English as a Second Language (ESL) student was named Claire. At that time, about 12 years ago, I was a volunteer with the Christian Women's Job Corps and we were asking a group of women what they wanted to learn. We got the usual answers pertaining to job skills until Claire said, "I want to learn English and I want to learn about God." I wasn't sure how I was going to help at the Job Corps, but when she spoke up, it was just like, "Oh yes, that's where I want to be."

So, it was a one-on-one semester with Claire, and then the next semester we had maybe five students and the next year, five or six. The program just kind of evolved until there were fewer people who needed job skills and there were more and more people coming in who needed ESL. So the coordinator at the time said,

◀ Nancy and
Wayne Gibbs

"We're going to change this to an ESL program." I worked as a volunteer teacher for a couple of years, until the coordinator retired. The program had no leader at that point, and I was about to retire from my job, so I was happy to step in and serve in that capacity.

I served as coordinator of the ESL program for the next nine years. At first, we were called Life Bridge and came under the umbrella of a ministry in Austin. Since then, we've become part of the Great Hills Baptist Church ministry. In 2022, when we became part of Great Hills' ministry, we had 159 people attend at some point and 93 regular attendees. We had another 30 to 40 who were learning online. The Great Hills transition has been huge for us.

And the wonderful thing was, these people were hungry for the gospel. We do one hour of Bible study and then about an hour and a half of English on top of that. Sometimes in the past, people would skip Bible study because it was the first hour and they would just come for the English. Last year, they were coming for the Bible. They were hungry to know more. In 2022, we showed "The Jesus Film" and Daniel Van Cleave, the pastor we worked with, wanted to have everybody in the same room hearing it in their own language at the same time. We worked it out so that we could show the movie on a big screen. Everybody was able, using their phones, to hear it in their own languages using earbuds. We had people listening in 12 languages at the same time.

It was so exciting because they got to hear in two hours, in their own heart language, what we'd been trying to teach all year long in English in bits and pieces. So, for everyone to hear the story of Jesus in their heart language was amazing. You could hear a pin drop in the room when they were watching this movie and there were gasps like, "Oh!" when Jesus rose from the dead.

We had decision cards in their own languages, and we had some who wanted to follow Jesus. We had others who wanted to know more. So, one of our Bible study teachers started a Bible study on Sunday mornings to answer their questions and help them explore the Bible. That same person is going to be starting an official ESL Sunday school [class] because there are people coming to the church wanting to have an ESL class on Sunday



mornings. We have just seen this hunger and a response to the gospel this last year like never before. God has been so faithful. Sometimes I just feel like I'm on this ride watching Him work—I'm just one little spoke in the wheel. God's doing this amazing thing that I just get to participate in and watch, and I praise Him mightily for all that He's doing.

I have made friends—lifelong friends—both with students and the teachers. I never expected that. There have just been so many blessings in addition to seeing the faithfulness of God. Last year, we started seeing more people

▲ ESL students watching "The Jesus Film" in their own languages using earbuds.

**what's
your
story?**



Want to share a story of what God is doing in your life or your church?

Scan the QR code or email jlarrison@sbtxas.com to tell us your story.

than ever before following the Lord. There was one young woman from Iran—and it's dangerous to become a Christian if you're an Iranian—who came running down the hall about five or six years ago saying, "Nancy, Nancy, I'm your sister." And I said, "What?" She said again, "I'm your sister," and she meant, "I'm your sister in the Lord"—that she had made a decision to follow Christ. You can't trade that for anything. It's just been the most wonderful journey.

I've recently retired as coordinator and now direct our online ESL program. My husband, Wayne, and I have five grandchildren scattered all over, so it came time to retire, and I realized I could still teach by Zoom from just about anywhere.

What's my story? My God is faithful! Greater is He who is in me than he that is in the world. The evil one will throw you curveballs, but the Lord always proves Himself greater.

Invest in What Matters. Invest in the Kingdom.



4.00% APY*
11-MONTH TERM

*Promos available through 10-31-23

4.25% APY*
15-MONTH TERM



Learn more at
[SBTEXASFOUNDATION.COM/CERTIFICATES](https://sbtxasfoundation.com/certificates)

Open an account with as little as \$2,500. Promotional certificates will auto-renew for a 3-month term at the current yield unless the client provides other instructions before renewal. Certificate investments are available to a qualified class of Texas churches, ministries, and individuals.

Church Positions

For the latest listings, visit texan.digital/church-positions

PASTOR

Cedar Springs Baptist Church in Rosebud is seeking a FT senior pastor. Resumes can be sent to baptistresumescs@yahoo.com.

West End Baptist Church in Beaumont seeks a FT or bivocational pastor. We are a financially secure, loving congregation that enjoys traditional worship. Email resume to webcbeaumont@gmail.com.

Calvary Baptist Church in Hamilton is seeking a FT lead pastor. Email resume to cbcsearchhamilton@gmail.com or call Derek Dittrich, search committee secretary, for more information at 312-835-4304.

Northside Baptist Church in Lamesa is seeking a FT or bivocational pastor. We are a financially secure, small congregation seeking a pastor who is committed to biblical authority, dedicated to prayer, and a text-driven expositor. Mail resume to Northside Baptist Church, 406 N. 12th, Lamesa, Texas 79331 or e-mail resume to northsidebaptistchurchlamesa@gmail.com.

Harmony Baptist Church in Weatherford is seeking a FT or PT senior pastor for a small but growing church. Seminary degree and pastoral experience preferred. Send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, 242 Harmony Rd., Weatherford, Texas 76087. E-mail: harmonybaptistchurch50@gmail.com. Web: harmonybc.org.

Plymouth Park Baptist Church in Irving is interviewing candidates for our FT senior pastor position. PPBC is dually aligned with both Texas conventions, as well as with the SBC. Please send your résumé to pastorsearch@plymouthpark.org.

Pine Drive Baptist Church in Dickinson is seeking a FT senior pastor to serve as the spiritual leader of our church. Please apply by sending an email to pinedrive.search@gmail.com.

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Texarkana is seeking a FT senior pastor. Church is located at 6601 Jones Lane, Texarkana, Texas 75503. Forward resumes to Debbi at dmjones00@windstream.net. Please include links to past sermons.

Harvest Point Church in Nacogdoches seeks a FT pastor/elder. Please find out more about our church and review our constitution at hpcnac.org before applying. Resumes must be received by Nov. 30 and include a letter of reference. Send to Pastor Search Team, 2708 South Street, Nacogdoches, Texas 75964.

IBC Groom is seeking a FT pastor. Groom is a small farming and ranching community located 42 miles east of Amarillo in the Texas Panhandle. Our church body is made up of all age groups. Please send your resume to groomfbcssearch@gmail.com. Resumes will be accepted until Nov. 15, 2023.

Pope City Baptist Church in rural Harrison County is seeking a FT senior pastor. Please send your resume to admin@popecitychurch.org.

IBC Magnolia is seeking a FT senior pastor who will provide a strategic vision for expanding ministries to our community. We have 600 in attendance in 2 worship services and 125 in attendance in our Spanish worship service. Send your resume to pastorsearch@mlbc.org. Learn more about us at mlbc.org.

Second Baptist Church in Amarillo is seeking a FT senior pastor. Mail resume to Second Baptist Church, 419 Buchanan St., Amarillo, Texas 79101 or email resume to sbcpsc@sbcama.org.

Peoples Church in Jacksonville is seeking a FT senior pastor. We are a nondenominational church family that values sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, heartfelt worship, sound biblical preaching/teaching, and building personal discipleship. Interested candidates may submit resumes to resume@peopleschurchtx.org.

Living Word Baptist Odessa 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. Send questions and resume to LivingWordBaptistOdessa@yahoo.com.

Western Hills Baptist Church in Wichita Falls is prayerfully seeking a FT pastor to replace our retiring pastor. Please email resume to whbcwfpastorsearch@gmail.com.

New Hope Baptist Church in St. Elmo is seeking a FT pastor with a shepherd's heart. Candidate will be a good communicator with a vision for growth who has a warm, friendly, approachable style. Seminary degree, pastor/church staff experience preferred. Located by Richland Chambers Lake, BMA church, no debt, strong financially. Send resumes to newhopebaptistchurch@windstream.net.

IBC Saratoga is seeking a FT/PT/bivocational pastor to preach, teach, and work alongside us as we strive to shine the light of the gospel and grow in numbers and strength. To learn more about our church, visit our website at fbcsaratogatexas.churchcenter.com. Send resume to pscfbcsaratoga@gmail.com.

Cornerstone Church, located at 2242 W. Lucas Rd. in Lucas, is seeking a FT senior pastor to bring the Word of God to the congregation on Sunday morning/evening and Wednesday evening and help members grow in worship and discipleship. Office: 972-727-3411. Cell: 214-882-8955. Office manager: Darlene Stephens.

IBC Rio Vista is accepting resumes for a FT pastor. We are a blue collar/country church and have a very strong Wednesday night children's ministry. This pastor needs to be willing to be a part of the community, including attending games, work days, etc. Email resumes to fbcrvsearch@gmail.com.

Springtown Community Fellowship in Springtown is looking for a bivocational lead pastor. The congregation is excited to find a biblically based minister to encourage the church to grow spiritually. Resumes can be sent to resumespringtowncncf@gmail.com.

Parkview Baptist Church in Lufkin is seeking a bivocational pastor to guide us with a vision to grow in service to God and our community. We are a small congregation located in the Pineywoods of East Texas with a big heart and love for others. Email resumes to pvbclufkinpastorsearch@gmail.com.

IBC Dawson is seeking a PT pastor. Submit your cover letter and resume to fbcdawsonstx@gmail.com. Submitting your resume indicates that you meet all of the biblical qualifications to be a pastor/elder, including belief in the authority and sufficiency of Scripture and an ability to communicate God's Word.

IBC Lorraine is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor to help grow a small evangelical church. Parsonage available (3/2) located next to church. Mail resume to PO Box 369, Lorraine, Texas 79532 or email to pampnp@windstream.net attention PST.

Northside Baptist Church in Mineral Wells is seeking a bivocational pastor. Parsonage w/utilities. Send resume to nsbcmwresumeyahoo.com.

North Oaks Baptist Church in Spring is seeking a FT or bivocational Spanish ministry pastor. Spanish speaking. Two years experience, two years theological education or pursuing theological degree. E-mail resume to eethridge@nobc.church.

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.

MUSIC

Redeemer Church of Lubbock is seeking a FT associate director of worship. Email resume to marci@redeemerlubbock.org.

Golden Baptist Church is seeking a PT minister of music to lead worship in Sunday AM service. Contact mepjneeley@gmail.com.

Pipeline Church in Hurst is seeking a PT worship leader, Sunday only position. We are a church experiencing revitalization. Contact Pastor Billy Taylor at 817-733-6405 or billygt@me.com.

Deer Park First Baptist in Deer Park is seeking a PT worship pastor to lead worship. If interested, please send a resume to Dpfbcssearch@gmail.com.

Coastal Oaks Church in Rockport is searching for a PT worship leader to lead us in a contemporary/modern worship context. Submit your resume to cirving@coastaloakschurch.org.

Windom Baptist Church is seeking a PT music leader. Send resume to WindomBaptist@gmail.com.

Cross View Baptist Church in Texarkana is seeking a PT worship leader. Send resume to rahiggins9220@gmail.com.

Cedar Valley Baptist Church in Elgin is seeking a PT music director to coordinate and lead the music for Sunday morning worship services, plus Easter and Christmas specials. Salary up to \$18,000/year depending on qualifications. Includes two days (Sundays) paid leave per fiscal year (October through September). Email resume to cvcpcsearch@outlook.com.

STUDENTS

IBC Howe is seeking a FT youth minister. Please send application to roger@fbchow.org. If you have any questions, please text 903-294-6496.

IBC Crane is seeking a FT student pastor or FT student and worship pastor combo. This is an exciting opportunity in a growing church. Email resume to chris@fbccrane.com.

IBC Granbury is seeking a FT student pastor. Email resume to bgee@fbcranbury.org.

Sherwood Baptist Church in Odessa is seeking a FT minister of youth to introduce young people to Christ, teaching them to become spiritually mature followers of Christ and equipping them to become disciple-makers. Send resumes to personnel@sherwood.church.

IBC Huntington is seeking a FT youth pastor to oversee our youth ministry and to serve as a pastor in our church. To apply, visit huntingtonfb.org/youthpastor.

IBC Queen City is seeking a FT youth minister. Submit resumes to youthpastorsearch@fbqc.org. Visit nextstep.sbtexas.com to view job posting and description.

Immanuel Baptist Church in Mineral Wells is seeking a PT youth minister. Please email resume to elizabeth@ibcmw.org.

Crossroads Church in Canton is seeking a youth ministry intern or resident. Focus on junior high. Email resume to frontdesk@crossroadscanton.com. Call 903-567-0800 or visit crossroadscanton.com.

IBC Coahoma is in search of a bivocational youth pastor. Email resume to rayseales52@gmail.com or phone 432-816-4950.

IBC Nixon is accepting resumes for the position of PT youth director. Housing and salary available. Please email resumes to Pastor Terry Davis at davismterry@gmail.com.

Plainview Baptist Church in Krum is seeking a PT youth minister to develop, organize, and direct our church youth program. Minimum requirements: high school or GED diploma plus two years relevant work or an associate's degree with one year of relevant work. Email resume and three reference letters to trustees@pbckrum.org.

Community Baptist Church in Crosby is seeking a PT youth leader for small group of teens. This will be a paid position. Email resume to pastor@cbccrosby.org.

CHILDREN

IBC Granbury is seeking a FT children's pastor. Email resume to bgee@fbcranbury.org.

IBC Katy is seeking a FT children's ministry director to cultivate and maintain the children's ministry for all events for K-5; support parents in their role; work well with director of preschool ministry and First Steps preschool; and be willing to take on other responsibilities within the church. Apply online at katysfirst.org/childrens-ministry-director-search.

New Beginnings Baptist Church (Gilmer campus) is looking for a FT preschool and special needs minister who will be responsible for providing leadership to the spiritual needs of preschoolers, those with special needs, & their families. They

must be a highly relational and prayerful team player and leader. Email resume to aowens@nbbctx.org.

COMBINATION

FBC Blue Ridge is seeking the man God would have to lead the music ministry as well as the youth ministry in our congregation. This is a full-time position. Send resumes to ipad@firstblueridge.org.

OTHER

Calvary Hills Baptist Church in San Antonio is seeking a FT associate pastor. Send resume to apsc.calvaryhillsbaptist@gmail.com.

FBC Forney is seeking a dedicated and detail-oriented FT or PT personal assistant to the executive pastor to join our staff. You will play a crucial role in assisting the executive pastor as he manages the day-to-day operations of the church. Email resume to jjordan@fbcforney.org.

Mobberly Baptist Church in Longview is seeking a FT visual content creator/media technician. Email resume to scottl@mobberly.org.

The Leon Baptist Association seeks a PT associational ministry consultant to lead our 12 member churches of Leon County in Central Texas on I-45 midway between Dallas and Houston. Contact Mark Gray at mark@clcfchurch.com or call 936-436-2016.

Lake Church in Arlington seeks a FT administration pastor. College degree, call to ministry & skill in administration, accounting, and financial planning required. Send resume to pmason@lakechurchdfw.org.

Lake Church in Arlington is seeking a FT worship/music pastoral resident for its 3-year program to train with the pastor to lead a church or ministry. For more information and to send resume, email pmason@lakechurchdfw.org.

Redeemer Church of Lubbock is seeking a FT family ministry director. Email resume to marci@redeemerlubbock.org.

FBC Lakeside is seeking a FT administrative assistant for data and communications. Responsible for maintaining the church database, ensuring a welcome atmosphere in the church office, and for coordinating the church calendar and communications. Send resume to jim@fblakeside.org.

FBC Lakeside is seeking FT associate pastor of administration to assist pastor with overseeing the church business by implementing strategic goals and vision as a key leader and growing current/developing new ministries. Ensure staffing, facilities, and programs are effectively aligned to best meet strategic goals. Email resume to jim@fblakeside.net.

Redeemer Church Lubbock is seeking a FT director of sending. For more information, call 806-318-0355. Email resume to info@redeemerlubbock.org. Website: redeemerlubbock.org.

The Servant House is seeking a PT associate pastor of life group/life group coach who will be responsible for implementing the TSH ministry goals set by the fellowship ministry pastor through organization, leadership, and direction of our life group ministry. Contact Pastor Will Langstaff Jr. at 214-289-8810 or email duffer4him@gmail.com.

FBC Lakeside is seeking a PT Little Learners preschool director to lead in spiritual/educational development of children enrolled in the Lakeside Little Learners Preschool from age 2 through pre-K. High school diploma or equivalent required. Training or education in child development and/or education strongly preferred. Email resume to jim@fblakeside.org.

FBC Forney is seeking a dedicated and detail-oriented business manager to join our staff. As the business manager, you will play a crucial role in helping manage the financial aspects of our church's operations while ensuring accuracy and compliance in financial reporting and record keeping. Email resume to jjordan@fbcforney.org.

Paid Classifieds

For the latest listings, visit texan.digital/church-positions

PASTOR

FBC Independence in Kansas seeks FT salaried senior pastor. Church has 155 Sunday worshippers, elder led, also has deacons/deaconesses. Founded 1872, debt free, good financial condition, many younger families. Staff includes FT salaried family pastor and two-thirds time administrative assistant. Candidate needs some senior pastor experience. Email resumes to pastorsearch@webmail.org or call Gary Follmer, elder, at 620-330-4906.

FBC Haynesville, located in rural north Louisiana, is seeking the next FT pastor that God has chosen for us. If interested, please mail your resume to First Baptist Church of Haynesville, 2021 Main Street, Haynesville, La. 71038, attention Pastoral Search Committee, or email to hfbpastorsearch@gmail.com.

YOUTH

FBC Ruston in Louisiana is seeking a FT youth pastor for a great opportunity leading a large youth ministry with lots of potential. Please send resume to Ed Colvin at ed@fbcruston.org or brenda@fbcruston.org.

FBC Bloomfield in Bloomfield, N.M., is seeking a FT student pastor to invest in future generations and their families. Resumes may be submitted to studentposition@fbcblloomfield.com.

COMBINATION

Calvary Baptist Church in Tishomingo, Okla., is seeking

a pastor whose primary responsibility will be to lead our youth, with secondary responsibilities as worship leader. For more information, call 580-371-9296 or 423-217-5570. Email resume to secretary@cbctish.org.

OTHER

Inglewood Baptist in Grand Prairie is selling a 2000 Dodge Ram 3500, 15 passenger van, gas, V8. Clean, good condition, mileage is 55,986. \$5000. Email Ralph Dumas at leeclasic55@hotmail.com.

Inglewood Baptist in Grand Prairie is selling a 2004 Ford E-450 24 passenger bus, V-10 gas. Very clean, good condition except rear A/C is not working. Mileage is 39,494. \$12,000. Email Ralph Dumas at leeclasic55@hotmail.com.

DO YOU NEED A PIANIST? Try piano accompaniment CDs and hymn DVDs from Worship Service Resources. Each song has an introduction and is easy to follow. Hymns, choruses, lyrics, gospel—hundreds of songs! Get a FREE DEMO and try before you buy! Call 877-977-6800 or visit wsrplanocds.com.

FBC Mansfield has a portable building (90'x25') for sale. Beige and brown trim color, concrete siding, used as youth ministry building. Two entrance doors on side and end entrance. Windows in unit. Insulated with lighting. Two HVAC units. Front and side entrance doors with entrance ramp and steps. \$19,500 OBO. Please direct inquiries to our facilities director at tray@firstmansfield.com or call FBC Mansfield at 817-473-1161.

Shaped by
Scripture.
Sent to Serve.

Undergraduate Degrees

Associate of Arts

B.A. Biblical Studies

B.A. Christian Ministry

B.A. Philosophy, Politics,
and Economics

B.A. Psychology

B.S. Education

Top 12% tuition affordability
among private, not-for-profit,
4-year colleges

(D.O.E. College Affordability &
Transparency Center)



CRISWELL.EDU

Feeling lonely, pastor? You're not alone.

Elijah had just had his greatest success in ministry when he crashed and burned.

You know the story, recorded in 1 Kings 18. Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to prove their god was the true one. They danced and called out for Baal to consume their offering. Elijah mocked them. Finally, Elijah rebuilt the altar of the Lord. Elijah poured water on the bull, so much so that a trench dug around the altar was filled. Then Elijah prayed for the Lord to demonstrate His power and fire fell and consumed everything, including all the water.

Elijah was enjoying a ministry high. Before his pulse settled, he also courageously took out all the false prophets.

But when he got word that Jezebel was after him, he fled like a whipped pup. He hid alone in the wilderness a full day's journey away, sat down, and said, "I have had enough!"

Some of you are there right now. Exhausted, afraid, and alone, you are thinking, "I have had enough!"

The truth is, almost every one of us has been there. A 2022 Barna poll shows that nearly two in three pastors either "sometimes" or "frequently" felt lonely or isolated in the prior three months.

I'm not sure isolation is unique to the ministry. Many men and women sitting in front of you each week feel lonely. What makes it unique for ministers is that pastors are surrounded by people constantly. I believe isolation and loneliness are among a pastor's most preventable challenges.

To be clear, it's not a recent phenomenon. Isolation has been challenging for decades, and although it was exaggerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's always been challenging. It's normal to feel isolated occasionally. For that matter, some seasons of life and ministry are better than others.

So, who can fix the situation?

You can.

Notice in 1 Kings 19 that Elijah flees Jezebel and then goes so far as to leave his faithful attendant behind in Beersheba. If you're lonely, actively find people inside and outside the church who can become your encouragers in the ministry. Find someone you can call, text, or visit with who restores and refreshes you.

Isolation is both dangerous and avoidable.

And before you say, "Well, I can't have friendships in the church because it can become awkward," let me tell you that the pain of isolation exceeds the awkwardness of staff friendships, member friendships, or friendships with other pastors in your community. The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and your local association exist to serve you and connect you and your wife with other pastors and ministry couples, so make time to attend a few events where you can both come and be refreshed.

People are cheering us on from every corner of our convention. So if you feel isolated, ensure you're not the person who runs off and isolates himself like Elijah did. Isolation is real, but it's one of the most preventable challenges a pastor may face.

If you are a pastor looking to connect to resources related to this article, contact Jeff Lynn, senior strategist for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's Church Health & Leadership department, at 877-953-7282 or email jlynn@sbtexas.com.

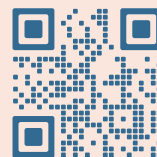


Mark Dance is director of pastoral wellness for Guidestone Financial Resources.



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



SHE STANDS WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

OCT. 6-7

sbtexas.com/shestands

OCTOBER

1	Cooperative Program Sunday
2-3	Pastors Masters Golf Tournament, Flower Mound
2	Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering (online)
6-7	Mujeres Firmes Conferencia, San Antonio
10	Evangelism Roundtable (online)
21	Intro to DR & Phase 1 Training, Leonard
23	Bivo Pastors Network Regional Gathering, El Paso



SBTC ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 13-14 Euless

sbtexas.com/am23

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

6	Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering (online)
11	Crossover Evangelism, DFW
12-13	SBTC Annual Meeting Spanish Session, Euless
13	Interim Pastor Equipping, Euless
30-12/2	Student Ministers Getaway, Austin



BIVO PASTORS NETWORK REMOTE GATHERING (ONLINE)

DEC. 4

sbtexas.com/bivo



IMB is supported by the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program. Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® is a registered trademark of WMU®, W165007 • ENGLISH



2023 ANNUAL MEETING **FORWARD**

PHILIPPIANS 3:13



Ed Johnson III



Todd Kaunitz



Gregg Matte



Juan Sanchez

NOVEMBER 13-14 Cross City Church, Euless

Register Today

To see a schedule and make
your hotel reservations visit:

sbtexas.com/am23

