

SOUTHERN BAPTIST



PRAY
GIVE
GO

'PEOPLE ARE HURTING'

MEETING JESUS IN AMERICA

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

East Texas church makes connections by going all-in on ministry to children

Winning the world for Christ together

I was so excited. It was the end of the summer in 2001 and I had just been called to serve as a student minister. I had no clue the road God would allow me to travel to get to the place I serve today.

This church was where I first heard about the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. It was where I began to understand what the Southern Baptist Convention is all about. It was the place my eyes were opened to the effectiveness of the Cooperative Program.

Fast forward four years. I was now a senior pastor just three months after turning 24 years old. As I began to lead, I had to really think through how we wanted to partner and do missions. Soon after I arrived, we uniquely affiliated with the SBTC and set our Cooperative Program giving at 10%. I knew we could reach our community, but my heart was to reach Texas and the world. I felt like the Cooperative Program gave our small rural church the greatest opportunity to partner with other churches, the SBTC, the International Mission Board, and the North American Mission Board to accomplish that task.

I know there is a lot of chatter on social media about the SBC and CP. I understand a lot of the frustrations

people have felt and expressed. I get it, I really do. However, by God's grace, I am in a unique position. I have the opportunity to travel all across Texas and the nation meeting with and ministering to SBC churches. I am constantly reminded that the overwhelming majority of Southern Baptists have the same heart—to reach the world for Christ. I am consistently encouraged at the focus of pastors and the people in the pews as I hear about their vision to reach their communities. It is always a joy to share with them stories of how God is using their CP investment to further His kingdom. It makes me so thankful for Southern Baptists' cooperation and partnership through CP.

I have four kids, and it is expensive! I am always looking for ways to maximize our dollars, especially in feeding my teenage boys. In the same way, I love this about the Cooperative Program: Where else can a dollar help put more than 3,700 missionaries on the field, plant 700-plus churches per year, and train 20,000 people who will serve as the next generation of pastors, missionaries, Sunday school teachers, staff members, and lay people? It is truly amazing that CP allows you to be in your local church and around the world at the same time. I consider it a blessing to have that kind of impact.

I know social media gets a bit crazy and creates a lot of unnecessary noise. However, beyond the reach of our thumbs and 140 characters, there are 47,000 churches filled with people who simply desire to see every person hear the gospel. Let's reengage with that reality and win the world together. I am so grateful for all the SBTC churches that cooperate to reach Texas and impact the world together through the Cooperative Program.

God is bringing the world to us. Let's reach those people together. I love you and am honored to serve you!



Dr. Nathan Lorick
SBTC Executive Director



Engage.
Encourage.
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God uses the smallest moments in the biggest ways



Several years ago, our daughter was offered a chance to run cross country and track at a small Christian university in Oregon, where we were living and serving the Lord at the time. Our excitement for our daughter was greatly dampened, however, when the school's business office informed us what our monthly out-of-pocket cost would be for her to attend—even after scholarships were applied.

Though we had prayed and asked God to provide an opportunity like this for our daughter, and watched Him open a door seemingly out of nowhere, the monthly payment was far more than we thought we could afford. It just didn't make sense on paper.

We decided to take our daughter on an official visit to the university anyway. So we made our way west across the Cascade mountain range, made the visit, and started our trek back to Central Oregon later that evening. On the way home, as we drove back through the mountain pass, I grieved about having to tell our daughter she wouldn't be able to attend this school.

Then a moment happened I know I will always remember. As I drove, God interrupted my silent pity party and confirmed my worst fears: trying to send our daughter to this school to pursue her dreams didn't make sense, at least to a human mind like mine. But if my wife and I were willing to blindly trust the same God who created the universe from nothing, He might do something our human minds couldn't imagine.

Right there on that mountain pass, I confessed my faithlessness to my wife and daughter and proclaimed that we would trust the work God had already been doing—even if it made no sense to move forward. Lord willing, I'll see that mountain pass again next spring as we fly over it on the way to watch our daughter graduate from that university.

What are the marks of a growing disciple of Christ? I'd submit to you that among all the disciplines you can put on the list, none is greater—or harder to measure—than faith growth. My faith grew on the mountain pass that day, and as God has continued the work He and He alone started, that faith has only strengthened. Yet even now, I've got so much more room to grow.

Why am I telling you this? Part of me wants to encourage you. Every ... single ... day we are faced with so much that can discourage and blind us to the work God is doing around us—including the work we've asked Him to do! Another part of me is painfully aware that we live in a complicated world filled with people who don't believe God exists at all and followers of Christ who struggle to sense the presence of God or the work of God in their lives.

That's why sharing these stories matters so much. They're so important, we dedicate a couple of pages in our magazine each month to allow you to tell your God stories in our "What's Your Story?" section. They serve as proof of a living and active God who loves us and who is working all things together for good—whether we understand how He is doing that or not.

What are the significant moments that have happened in your life? Why were those moments so meaningful to you? And as you can see it now, how did God change you through those moments?

Set your mind on these things, and when you figure them out, go and tell the people in your church. Go and tell your neighbor and the lady at the grocery store.

Go and tell the world.

25 years

of answered prayer

with Kie Bowman



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 president Kie Bowman (2019-2021).

What were some of your earliest prayers for the SBTC?

I was the new senior pastor of Hyde Park Baptist Church in Austin when I heard the SBTC was forming. The conservative resurgence at the national level was making huge strides, but so many of us felt like that wasn't the case at the state convention level. So honestly, my first prayer for the SBTC was a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God that it was beginning! Later, I thanked God that Jim Richards would be the leader. Those were exciting days of big challenges and really unbelievable growth, so there was a lot of praise and thanksgiving.

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

When I became more involved with the SBTC, it was not organizationally connected to the larger prayer movement I saw emerging everywhere. Nathan Lino's presidency was the first sign of a major focus on prayer I saw. ... Much later, I was a member of the search committee that brought Nathan Lorick as the new executive director. Lino and Todd Kaunitz were also on the committee, and by that time both had experienced major spiritual awakening in their churches. Both outpourings were directly associated with prayer. When we interviewed Nathan Lorick, he had connected with [The Brooklyn Tabernacle Pastor] Jim Cymbala and was passionate about prayer. This has been the biggest answer to prayer I've had for the SBTC. These men are making prayer a central part of the convention's identity and focus. I'm convinced it's evidence of God at work.

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

Serving as president of the SBTC was an honor and opportunity I will never forget. My presidency, however, was unusual for two reasons. First, I was president during the global pandemic when most of our churches were shut down or greatly restricted for a time. My prayers were constantly for our churches—many of them smaller with limited resources—and for the pastors carrying the leadership burdens we all carried. My prayers were also for our state convention leadership and our financial strength. Second, Jim Richards began confiding in me that he was seriously considering a transition process. That process was on my heart every time I prayed.

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

We live in a time of radical social change. Texas is a mission field with some of America's largest and most cosmopolitan cities. I pray the SBTC never loses the courage to build on our confessional foundations. Biblical inerrancy is always threatened by the gravity of a lost culture and the possibility of organizational mission drift. I pray we stay focused on reaching lost people, working together around our commitment to biblical inerrancy, and that we emerge as the premier leader in the growing prayer movement in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Being ready for baptism



Mrs. Dot became a Christian very late in life. Her conversion was the result of the faithful and steady witness of her nursing home roommate, who would invite Mrs. Dot to church each Sunday. She soon gave her life to Christ, but her subsequent baptism put all things practical to the test.

Mrs. Dot suffered from a long list of health problems, including a recent stroke. As a result, she was unable to speak, found it difficult to breathe, and was beyond fragile. That meant the methods many churches use for baptism—baptistries, horse troughs, or nearby bodies of water—were out of the question.

But there was one other option for Mrs. Dot: a church member's swimming pool. Several men hoisted Mrs. Dot—in her wheelchair—into the pool to be baptized. She insisted on being fully immersed despite her obvious health concerns.

Where there is water, there is a way.

Sometimes baptisms require you to be flexible, but you always need a plan. No matter the circumstances, here are a few practical considerations for pastors and church leaders to consider when planning for a baptism:

- Who will be doing the baptizing? Will it be the pastor, youth minister, father, or the person who led them to Jesus? For Mrs. Dot, it took a group of people.

- What will the baptism candidate wear? Some wear robes, others do not. Wherever your church culture leads in this regard, make sure baptism attire is modest—especially when it gets wet. Some people prefer to wear swimwear beneath their clothing when they are baptized. That's

always OK. Be sure your church keeps clean towels on hand and maybe even some generic shorts and T-shirts (leftover T-shirts from church events are great for this). You'd be surprised how often people forget to bring a towel and a change of clothes.

- Ask the baptism candidate ahead of time if they are afraid of water. You're welcome.

- Walk them through the process when you meet to explain the meaning of baptism. Show the candidate where to place their hands as they are lowered into the water. Encourage them to invite family and friends to witness their baptism.

- Some baptistries have a built-in stool. This makes it easier to baptize someone taller or stouter than you. Stools can also help when baptizing someone who has a hard time kneeling down or getting up. Having a good, strong deacon or helper nearby is a good idea. It might keep someone from slipping or being embarrassed if they cannot easily be raised up. Considering things like this ahead of time will help ensure the baptism will be exciting and joyful, not a time for someone to be embarrassed or get hurt.

- Heat the water if you can. Not too cold, not too hot. Likewise, lake baptisms in January might not be as fun as they would be in July.

- Enlist the help of men and women in your church to help with all the tasks involved in carrying out a baptism. Their help in preparing the water, towels, and more will free you up to focus on the candidate.

- Bear in mind that while you can have baptisms during any part of your worship service, you might need time to change clothes before and after.

Pragmatically speaking, it's totally fine to think outside the box as you approach baptisms—so long as we aren't thinking outside of the Bible.



Adam Matthews, a member of the SBTC's Young Pastors Network, serves as senior pastor at Nolan River Road Baptist Church in Cleburne.

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Texas
OFFERING

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highlight some of the
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A WAY TO MINISTER TO PEOPLE IN THEIR GREATEST MOMENTS OF CRISIS AND NEED

A GREAT STATE, A GREATER NEED

Texas is a state of 30 million people. Of those, 20 million are lost and without Christ. Half of those, 10 million, are Hispanic—a population that has grown exponentially in the Lone Star State over the past few decades. With the population expected to continue to swell, the need to plant more churches is all the more critical.

In 2021, Send Network SBTC was formed as a church planting partnership between the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and the North American Mission Board. The partnership has strengthened church planting efforts in Texas through a process of assessing, training, caring for, and coaching planters. The collaboration has helped extend the years of support a planter can receive, as well as provide his family with one full year of free health insurance—a common barrier for planters with families. Planters are also receiving an initial deposit into a retirement account through Guidestone.

Since the partnership was formed, Send Network SBTC has deployed an increasing number of church planting catalysts

“We love Texas, but as great as Texas is, it also has a great need for Jesus.”

—JULIO ARRIOLA, DIRECTOR OF SEND NETWORK SBTC

into the field across Texas, opened new assessment retreat centers in locations including Dallas and Houston, and started church planting residencies across the state. As a result, the numbers of planters assessed and churches planted are encouragingly on the rise.

All of this was made possible through Reach Texas giving.

“We love Texas,” said Julio Arriola, director of Send Network SBTC, “but as great as Texas is, it also has a great need for Jesus. Planting churches is still the most effective way to reach people with the life-giving message of Jesus—the gospel.”

PLANTING WITH THE LORD’S LEADING

Over Ochoa | Iglesia Vida Victoriosa, Tioga

While living in his home country of Colombia, Over Ochoa sensed a call from God to plant a Hispanic church in America. He assumed it would take years of working through the complicated process of being granted residency in the U.S.

Instead of many years, it took one.

After planting Iglesia Vida Victoriosa in the small North Texas town of Tioga—an effort supported through Reach Texas giving—he and his wife, Cristina, planned to knock on hundreds of doors to tell people about Jesus and invite them to church. Their plans were frustrated when COVID shut most of those doors.

Once again, God had a different plan.

While eating at a restaurant in a nearby town, the Ochoas met Juanita Lopez, a waitress. They began sharing the gospel with her and, over time, she made the decision to trust Jesus as her Lord and Savior. Juanita not only began attending Iglesia Vida Victoriosa, but telling her co-workers about Jesus. Many of them came to faith and joined her at the church. “Sometimes we get too focused with preaching to crowds,” Ochoa said, “but with one person coming to Christ, we can see multitudes [saved] because that one person can bring many more.”



Juanita Lopez (middle) met the Ochoas at a restaurant where she works. The Ochoas have grown close not only to Juanita, but many of the people she has guided to the church through her own faith journey.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Today, around 45 people attend the Iglesia Vida Victoriosa. Meanwhile, the Ochoas have not only continued to lead the church, but assist the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention with preparing other planters to go into the field so they, too, can watch God do exceedingly and abundantly more than anybody could ever ask or think.

LIVE, LEARN & LAUNCH

Much has been written and gloomy statistics abound regarding the spiritual disconnect that often happens when students graduate high school and move on to the next season of their lives.

SBTC Collegiate sees the potential for something greater—an opportunity to not only bridge that gap to keep young people connected to Jesus and His church, but also to develop and launch the leaders of tomorrow.

Texas has more than 450 colleges and universities that host nearly 2 million students. While these students make up a small percentage of the Texas population, SBTC Collegiate believes they can have a great impact.

SBTC Collegiate annually uses Reach Texas funds to help churches prayerfully empower, equip, network, and mobilize college students to live on gospel mission regardless of their context. One of the main venues where this happens is Roundup, a three-day collaborative event that draws college

students and collegiate ministers from across Texas and beyond. Roundup has grown from having five churches in attendance in 2015 to 66 churches in 2023.

Earlier this year, SBTC Collegiate collaborated with a church to host a conference aimed at discipling and equipping college students to reach people on their campuses. About 250 students from multiple states attended.

As SBTC churches have continued to faithfully give, it has allowed SBTC Collegiate to inspire and equip students to go. Since 2016, three college ministers connected to the collegiate ministry have obeyed the call to plant churches in college towns, and grants have been given toward events that have seen hundreds saved.



MORE THAN 450 COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES



2 MILLION
STUDENTS

WILLING TO GO, WATCHING IT GROW

Justin Smith | New City Church, Austin

After seminary, Arkansas native Justin Smith worked in college ministry at his church in Waco. He'd always considered himself more of a sender than a church planter.

The Lord used relationships built, in part, through the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's Roundup conference to propel Smith and his family into church planting. Roundup—which is funded through Reach Texas giving—is an annual event that equips collegiate ministries to reach students with the gospel, develops them into leaders, and sends them into strategic kingdom locations.

Smith attended his first Roundup in May 2017 after being invited by Mitch Tidwell, SBTC's collegiate associate. In early 2020, Tidwell connected Smith with Redeemer Church in Lubbock, which has planted more than 20 churches with a focus on collegiate contexts. Smith was in Redeemer's church planting residency system from January 2020 until December 2021.

With help from Redeemer and others, Smith and his team launched New City Church in June 2022. New City began meeting in Smith's home in January 2023 and is now starting home groups in several parts of Austin—including near the University of Texas campus.



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

"We are new," Smith said, "but 35 people are consistently involved and we are growing every week."

Smith said Send Network SBTC's funding, care, community, and resources have been invaluable. "Send Network SBTC is funding a majority of our ministry budget and made it possible for us to do things that many church plants don't get to do in their first years," Smith said.

FROM HEARTACHE TO HOPE

Those who have personally experienced disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, and floods can testify to the overwhelming sense of anger, fear, and loss such incidents leave in their wake.

Volunteers who respond to assist in the aftermath can testify that such tragedies can lead to some of the greatest opportunities to tell people about Jesus Christ.

For the past two decades, SBTC Disaster Relief has ministered to people in crisis, meeting physical needs while seizing upon opportunities to share the gospel. Since its inception, SBTC DR has become one of the largest—and busiest—DR teams in the nation. After much prayer in the early years of the convention, leaders sought an organized, effective, gospel-centered process to respond to hurting people. The Lord opened the door for a ministry funded through the Reach Texas offering that now consists of 90 units across the state of Texas. SBTC DR has trained more than 6,000 people to respond to disasters of all types.

Over the past five years, SBTC DR has averaged nearly 20,000 meals prepared annually during various disasters and crises. At

the same time, thousands of people have placed their faith in Christ through SBTC DR efforts.

SBTC DR also sends volunteers into the field for other types of crises, including mass shootings where volunteers and chaplains have made themselves available not only to victims and their families, but to first responders who carry a burden that is hard for many to understand.

Said SBTC DR Director Scottie Stice: “We praise God for the support for SBTC DR that the churches of the SBTC are faithful to provide.”



SBTC DISASTER RELIEF

90

Texas units ready to deploy

6,000

people trained

20,000

meals prepared annually on avg.

HELPING THE HURTING—FAST

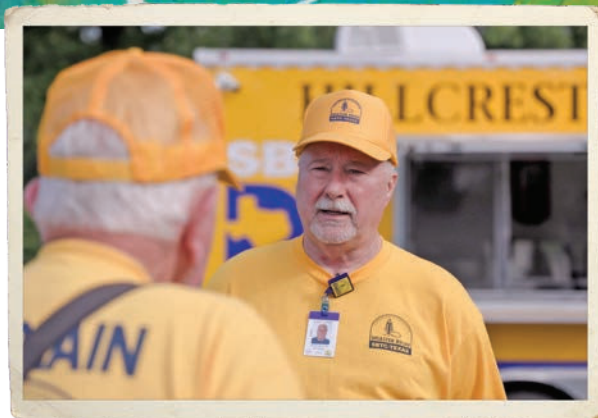
Hillcrest Baptist Church | Jasper

Hillcrest Baptist Church in Jasper has long been active in SBTC Disaster Relief, sending chaplains, assessors, and a shower and laundry unit with volunteers to meet needs. The church's DR ministry is now poised to expand with the addition of a quick-response mobile kitchen unit (QRU) made possible in part by Reach Texas funds.

QRU feeding volunteers can prepare up to 700 meals per day during a disaster. The QRU's mobility makes rapid response possible during emergencies. Hillcrest acquired a food truck a few years ago for mission projects. Veteran SBTC DR chaplain Wayne Barber, a church deacon and chairman of Hillcrest's DR committee, suggested the unit's use be expanded to include SBTC DR.

The truck came equipped with a commercial griddle, stove, and oven but lacked items needed to be fully operational during a disaster deployment. Using Reach Texas funds, SBTC DR outfitted the Hillcrest QRU with industrial-grade pots, pans, cooking utensils, and a coffee maker, plus a basic food supply.

“When the QRU rolls out to serve during a disaster, it does so with three days' worth of meals ready to prep,” said Scottie Stice, SBTC DR director. “When the unit and volunteers deploy, Reach



Hillcrest Baptist of Jasper has, with Reach Texas funds, outfitted its food truck for disaster relief work. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

Texas funds cover their travel and other expenses in the field, too,” he added. SBTC DR Phase 1 and 2 training sessions, held at Hillcrest in March to credential volunteers for DR work, were also funded by Reach Texas.

“When we're deployed, we know people are hurting. Hopefully, we can go and give them a little bit of relief,” said Hillcrest member and SBTC DR volunteer Ray Rodriguez.

REACHING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

The gospel message hasn't changed, but over the past quarter-century, the SBTC has equipped its churches to bring the good news to people everywhere in an ever-changing culture.

Our network of churches has stood strong on an unwavering commitment to biblical fidelity and an insistence that the gospel go forth across Texas and beyond. To accomplish this, the Lord has used cooperative efforts funded through Reach Texas.

Funds given through this offering have helped churches meet people where they are, resulting in countless gospel presentations and professions of faith. Reach Texas giving has provided SBTC churches with Bibles, evangelism tracts, training, and many other resources in multiple languages. Last year alone, many of these resources were used to help more than 6,000 people come to Christ along the Texas border.

The SBTC has been on the forefront of bringing Jesus' saving message into digital spaces using tools such as its 1Cross app, which offers brief videos to help people share the gospel in nearly 70 languages. The app has been downloaded more than

200,000 times and used to help people across the globe come to faith in Christ. The convention has also partnered with the North American Mission Board to develop curriculum and host statewide trainings for Who's Your One? Advancing the Movement, which aims to assist churches in building an evangelistic culture so they can reach their communities for Christ.

We have seen God faithfully answer our prayers and cannot wait to see what He does through our cooperative efforts over the next 25 years.

▶ SBTC's 1Cross App is on the forefront of bringing Jesus' saving message into digital spaces.

70
Languages

200,000+
Downloads



JESUS IS THE ONLY ANSWER

Eliyah Shira | Arlington Chinese Bible Church

Eliyah Shira, who pastors Arlington Chinese Bible Church, said many Asians immigrate to the U.S. to pursue wealth, make a better life for their families, and to gain significance among loved ones.

Those pursuits, he said, fall short of the biggest blessing they can receive in America.

"Hard work is natural for this group of people," Shira said. "Money is their pride and [identity], but... Jesus is the answer they have been searching for. He is the only answer for their longing."

Shira and his church have been working hard to reach not only the Chinese population around them, but individuals from multiple people groups who have come to the Dallas-Fort Worth area. In December 2022, Arlington Chinese Bible Church hosted an Indian outreach. Fifteen people attended the event, which was assisted by funds given through the Reach Texas offering.

Reach Texas funds were also given to help provide a scholarship to sponsor a FIRE (Forging Integrated Relationships in Evangelism) Initiative intern from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to help the church reach Indian students at The University of Texas at Arlington. The FIRE Initiative aims to leverage the SBTC's relationships with professors and students at



Many Asians in Texas come looking for prosperity. Arlington Chinese Bible Church wants to show them Jesus is who they're really searching for.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Southern Baptist academic institutions to increase collaboration in missional ministries through its affiliated churches.

Shira said his church averages about 60 adults in attendance each week, but notes that its "heart for missions is huge."

"Our Indian outreach ministry is very new," Shira said. "We are still talking and taking baby steps. We thank the SBTC for its support in outreach efforts."

INTRODUCING KIDS



TO THE KINGDOM

By Erin Roach | Texan Correspondent

SHARING THE MESSAGE OF JESUS WITH CHILDREN IS A HALLMARK OF FBC JEWETT'S MINISTRY

JEWETT

Each Wednesday for many years, vans from First Baptist Church in Jewett have been in the pick-up line at the local elementary school, ready to whisk students away to a place where they would be loved, cared for, and taught God's plan for their lives.

In fact, the practice was better known to the community than to the new pastor at one time. Seven years ago, Allen Crosby had only been at the church a few weeks when he received a call from the school asking where the vans were.

Surprised, the pastor replied, "We're on the way!" He quickly learned how much locals in the town of 1,000 depended on the ministry that began through the church's Royal Ambassadors and Girls in Action programs.

"I had never been in an area where they were so open to church involvement," Crosby said.

'All hands on deck'

For several years now, FBC Jewett has hosted Awana clubs for children. They pick them up from school and take them to church to help with homework, play games, feed them dinner, have a worship time, and teach them the Bible.

"It's all hands on deck. We don't do anything else on Wednesday but Awana," Crosby said. "All our adults are involved."

What helps with manpower for the task is that FBC Jewett is about 10 miles from Lake Limestone, where people from Dallas, Houston, and other areas move for retirement.

"A lot of the retirees that come to our church have come to serve," Crosby said. "They're not just pew warmers. They were looking for a church where they could get busy, get active. Awana is a great place to plug them in. Some of these folks are becoming like grandparents to some of the kids."

For one former member of FBC Jewett, his testimony begins with being picked up in the church van at about 3 years old and taken to church with his sisters every week until he graduated high school. Now he is a student at Texas Baptist College and serving on staff at a church, Crosby said.



◀ Pastor Allen Crosby and his wife, Marcia, moved to the remote town of Jewett seven years ago and have seen God at work.

Retirees who joined First Baptist Church in Jewett were looking to serve by reaching children, the pastor said. For many years, the church has invested in local students by hosting Awana clubs and other activities.

PHOTOS COURTESY
OF FIRST BAPTIST JEWETT



“He’s very evangelistic and has reached so many people for Christ,” he said, adding that the young man’s mother and grandmother now are involved in the church.

Though FBC Jewett has a good number of older members, several young families have joined the church in recent years, including a family with seven daughters that started coming because of Awana and now is very involved.

More than 20 youth attend each week, and many of their parents are part of the church, too. On Sundays, between

“God has just really blessed our church, and I’m thrilled to be here. That can happen anywhere as long as you know you’re right where God wants you.”

—ALLEN CROSBY

100 and 120 people attend worship. One challenge, Crosby said, is that for some families, the father works on an oil rig and only gets to be home once a month.

Before moving to Jewett, Crosby was serving in Athens, Ga., where concrete was everywhere and the mall was around the corner, he said.

“Now we live in a place where we have to keep a cooler in the car in case we’re near a grocery store and we can buy things and bring them back home. It takes 45 minutes to an hour to get to Walmart. We have to plan our trips, and for people who live around here, that’s just a way of life.”

Jewett is about two hours south of Dallas and two hours north of Houston, just off Interstate 45. The pastor says there are more cows in the county than people.

“When I came here, I thought God had sent me to the most desolate place in the world. It’s so remote,” Crosby recounted. “When we first moved here, it was so dusty, so dry, and so hot that when I drove down the road I could hardly see because of the dust kicking up. I doubted at times and questioned God about why He did this.”

The Lord soon answered that question for the pastor. Crosby said he witnessed so many baptisms at his church, he wondered where the people were coming from. Though a small town, the need to reach people is great—and not just in Jewett.

Acts 1:8 is a focus of the church, and members recently traveled to the Mexico border for evangelism in partnership with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and North American Mission Board. The church has historically supported missions well financially, and now they’re getting involved with their hands and feet, too.

“My challenge to anybody would be just listen and follow God and don’t judge a book by its cover,” Crosby said. “This is a like a diamond in the rough. God has just really blessed our church, and I’m thrilled to be here. That can happen anywhere as long as you know you’re right where God wants you.”

CONNECTING HERE, THERE & *everywhere*

**Generosity, heart for missions
marks Texas Panhandle church**

FRIONA

A steady presence in the Texas Panhandle since 1914, First Baptist Church in Friona has seen success at reaching families in a modern context, and through the years it has been marked by a generous spirit toward missions.

“Some churches have more of a banker’s mentality when it comes to money—hang on, save,” said Brett Hoyle, pastor of FBC Friona. “It’s been amazing to see how generous the church is toward mission work.”

The church, which averages 150 in attendance, gives 13% of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program, and its special offerings for state, national, and international missions are strong, too, Hoyle said.

“People see how they’re able to be a part of what God is doing, and it’s exciting to give,” Hoyle said. “When we send mission teams, the mentality is that those folks are taking off work and sacrificing to go, so we want to help take care of the cost.”

“I’ve heard many of the folks who have been here for decades say the church has always had such a generous heart toward missions.”

FBC Friona partners with missionaries in Lesotho, Africa, and sent a team there last December. The church also has a partner in India, where its teams occasionally travel. They’re considering assisting a church in New Mexico with revitalization.

Locally, one of the highlights is a shoe distribution led by the church’s children’s ministry. Children who demonstrate a degree of maturity in Christ are eligible to serve on a children’s leadership team, which includes leading in outreach and reading Scripture during worship services. They also minister in special ways to homebound members.



The children’s leadership team hosted the first shoe distribution event at the beginning of the past school year. Any children in the community in need of shoes were invited with their families to receive them and also to hear a gospel presentation in English or Spanish. The church and school worked together to provide more shoes to children in January.

“That’s been a really neat ministry to make connections,” Hoyle said.

Recently, an immigrant mother whose husband left the family contacted the church.

“She didn’t know where to turn,” the pastor said. “She ended up texting me because my wife and I had delivered shoes a couple of months ago. I was able to get her connected with some other ladies at our church who speak Spanish, and they were able to minister to her and meet some immediate needs until she could get closer to some family that she has in the states.”

Within the past year, FBC Friona started a Spanish Bible study on Wednesday nights to minister to Spanish speakers whose children attend Wednesday night activities. The class began with three couples in the church who are bilingual and has reached a few newcomers.

Hoyle said the majority of residents in Friona now are Hispanic, drawn by agriculture jobs such as feed lots, dairies, and a beef processing facility. The population has remained steady at 4,000 through the last two censuses, and the town even has a housing shortage now, the pastor said.

“It’s definitely holding its own,” he said. “Friona is not drying up like a lot of small towns. People

Along with local and international missions, First Baptist Church in Friona serves nationally, such as sending disaster relief workers to New Mexico.

PHOTOS COURTESY
OF FIRST BAPTIST FRIONA



▲ Twenty years ago, there were few children at First Baptist Church in Friona, but now the children's ministry is thriving.

▼ The student ministry at First Baptist Church in Friona is growing so much that leaders are considering a renovation project to make more room.



can find a job pretty quickly if they're willing to work."

Hoyle grew up near Abilene and went to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Immediately after graduation in 2009, he became pastor of FBC Friona.

The church had hit a rough patch in the 1980s and '90s, he said. "Twenty years ago, there weren't any little kids or babies, really, in the church." Now, the church is doing well and God is at work with lots of families.

"Biblical preaching is very important," Hoyle said of what draws people there. "The church is so good to welcome new people in. It's the culture of the church to reach out and invite their neighbors and new people that move to town. I think a big key is folks loving on others and doing life together.

"The biblical focus of making disciples is important," Hoyle added. "Our ministry is not the nicest or the flashiest, but the Lord is working and moving."

The pastor recounted the story of a woman who had been attending on Wednesday nights and sometimes on Sundays for six or seven years. She had a Catholic background, and at FBC Friona she had been growing in the Lord, he said.

"Recently she and her husband needed some help, and she humbled herself and said, 'I'm going to go to the church for help and not anywhere else.' She was able to see the love of Jesus through the church."



OCTOBER 20, 2023

PREVIEW DAY

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Rick Lewis (pictured second from right), who serves as regional Houston catalyst for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, speaks with attendees at the Equip Conference, held Saturday, Aug. 5, at Sagemont Church. **SBTC PHOTO**

MANDRELL ENCOURAGES EQUIP CROWD TO BE FILLED BY 'POURING INTO OTHERS'

HOUSTON Ben Mandrell, president and CEO of Lifeway Christian Resources, challenged ministry leaders to remember the importance of caring about people during his keynote address at the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's Equip Conference held Saturday, Aug. 5, at Sagemont Church.

"Ministry is nothing short of showing people a visible picture of who God is," Mandrell said. "If you are called to ministry, you've got to love shepherding. And to shepherd means you've got to smell like sheep, which means you've got to be close to them all the time, not locked away in some room developing homiletical schemes. You've got to love people."

Equip drew more than 1,400 registrants this year. The conference, aimed at helping the local church develop and strengthen leaders, featured 70 speakers leading breakout sessions on more than 130 ministry topics.

—TEXAN STAFF

MISSIONS TEAM FROM FORT WORTH CHURCH MEETS WITH PERUVIAN OFFICIALS

LIMA, Peru A missions team from Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth accepted an invitation from the National Congress of Peru for a private audience with Third Vice President Alejandro Muñante and Congresswoman Milagros Aguayo, leader of the pro-life coalition, on July 21.

The meeting came as the Birchman missions team traveled throughout the city of Lima to host worship and evangelism concerts. The trip was part of Birchman's longterm partnership with local pastors and churches in Peru. On this most recent trip, more than three dozen people came to faith in Christ and were baptized by local congregations.

During the meeting, a formal invitation was extended to Birchman's pastor, Bob Pearle, to address the Peruvian Congress and have a private audience with President Dina Boluarte. Cameron Bowman, Birchman's minister of young adults and outreach, accepted the invitation on the pastor's behalf.

Discussion topics included religious liberty, protections for the unborn, and family values.

—TEXAN STAFF



(From left) Pastor Javier Chavez, Peruvian Third Vice President Alejandro Muñante, and Cameron Bowman and Ronnie Mosley of Birchman Baptist Church are seen together after a meeting. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**



REACH TEXAS WEEK OF PRAYER SCHEDULED FOR SEPT. 17-24

GRAPEVINE The Reach Texas State Missions Offering Week of Prayer is scheduled for Sept. 17-24, serving as the kickoff for the annual emphasis that sees churches across the state partner to further the Great Commission.

All funds given through Reach Texas go directly toward ministry efforts aimed at delivering the gospel to the estimated 20 million people who are lost in Texas. Those efforts include missions and evangelism strategies such as disaster relief, church planting, and more. This year's statewide challenge goal is \$1.6 million.

For more information, including resources that can be used by churches to help promote the offering, visit sbtexas.com/reachtexas.

—TEXAN STAFF

OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT OFFERED TO PRUITTS FOLLOWING DEATH OF SON

ROCKWALL Messages of condolence and prayer support came forward for Shane Pruitt and his family July 25 following the death of his son.

"Titus Praise Pruitt, our precious boy, went home to be with Jesus at 12:50 AM this morning," Pruitt, national Next Gen director for the North American Mission Board, posted online.

"We are heartbroken, but also joyful. Joyful about him being home in Heaven with Jesus. Joyful that he will never again experience seizures, or a wheelchair, or medicines, or crying, or pain, or surgeries, or suffering. Joyful that he is finally fully healed and fully alive. Joyful that he is getting to do so many things for the very first time like walk, run, sing, and worship the King face to face."

Nathan Lorick, executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and a close friend of Pruitt, said, "I can't imagine the pain the Pruitts are going through, but I know others will see Jesus in how they walk through the loss of their precious son, Titus. I sincerely ask you to join me in praying for Shane, Kasi, and their kids as they grieve the loss of Titus Praise Pruitt."

—BAPTIST PRESS

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.

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

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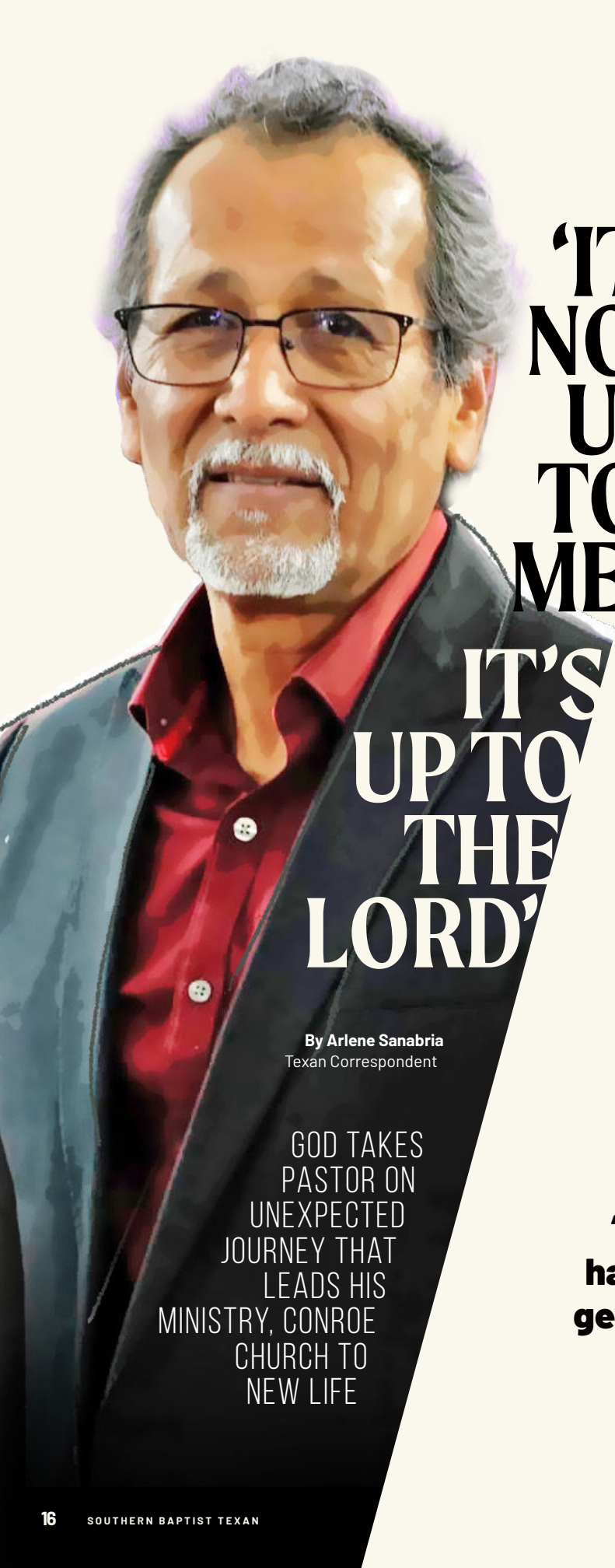
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**‘IT’S
NOT
UP
TO
ME**

**IT’S
UP TO
THE
LORD’**

By Arlene Sanabria
Texan Correspondent

**GOD TAKES
PASTOR ON
UNEXPECTED
JOURNEY THAT
LEADS HIS
MINISTRY, CONROE
CHURCH TO
NEW LIFE**

CONROE

Simon Villalobos had always seemed to be in ministry.

He began serving the Lord at age 16. By the time he was 21, he answered God’s call to the pastorate and ultimately landed in Veracruz, Mexico, where he served as a pastor for 22 years with 14 churches under his care.

Eventually his ministry in Veracruz concluded and a door seemed to be opening for him to pastor in Texas. But when Villalobos arrived in the U.S., that door closed for reasons beyond his control, leaving his family and him in limbo.

Simon Villalobos had always seemed to be in ministry ... until suddenly, he wasn’t.

“I thought it was time to hang up the equipment and get comfortable in the pew,” Villalobos said.

And so began a difficult journey—one of learning to be dependent on God—that has led him to where he is today, pastoring the growing Champion Family Church in Conroe.

**“I thought it was time to
hang up the equipment and
get comfortable in the pew.”**

—SIMON VILLALOBOS

'Like throwing a dying little fish into the water'

The unexpected path that kept Villalobos from vocational ministry for 10 years led him to seek secular employment for the first time in his life. Though no formal ministry opportunities presented themselves during that time, he and his wife, Rosita, volunteered to help pastors and ministries in various capacities. It was a time of rest for Villalobos, but also a time when he and Rosita felt God was done with them.

At least until their son invited them to Champion Forest Baptist Church Español in 2017. Villalobos said he felt comfortable there and connected with the preaching of Pastor Esteban Vazquez. Before long, Villalobos struck up a friendship with Vazquez and began accompanying him on various ministry assignments.

Among those assignments was offering support to a church in Conroe that was dying, with only about five members carrying the entire ministry load. To help fill the pulpit at the struggling church, Vazquez invited Villalobos to preach there. Then Villalobos began to preach more often, and before long, Vazquez asked him if he would be interested in pastoring there.

Villalobos said he was not sure whether to accept the offer because he “saw no future here. [This church] was dead.” So he talked it over with Rosita and, to his surprise, she encouraged him to accept the challenge.

“For Rosita, it was like throwing a dying little fish into the water,” Villalobos said. “She has a very specific calling [in serving the local church] and she wasn’t exercising it.” Serving the struggling church could help them satisfy the desire God had put in their hearts, so Villalobos agreed to be the pastor for a trial year to see what the Lord might do.

'A mission that goes outside the walls'

Villalobos was installed as the pastor of the church, now called Champion Family Conroe, in October 2019. Upon his arrival, the church had 13 people, some sent from Champion Forest. By the end of 2019, about 25 people were attending, with growth and stability continuing into the following spring. The progress slowly changed Villalobos’ thinking and brought hope. “It’s not up to me,” he said. “It’s up to the Lord.”

COVID-19 interrupted church meetings in 2020, but progress continued. Once in-person services resumed, attendance kept increasing and, the following summer,



Simon Villalobos, seen at top with his son, Simon Jr., and at middle with his wife, Rosita, have been on a long journey that has led them to serve at Champion Family Conroe. The church is now seeing more people attend, get saved, and get baptized (bottom).

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Champion Family sees the kingdom value in missions, and the church is currently supporting gospel workers in Mexico and Africa.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

the Lord provided a catalyst that not only helped the church, but Villalobos.

In August 2021, Villalobos was invited by Champion Forest to participate in the North American Mission Board's church planter training program. He describes the training as a new beginning that provided him with knowledge and resources that were not available to him previously—including methods of using technology in ministry.

"The [NAMB] residency served to introduce me to a new way of doing church," Villalobos said. "Pastoring 40 years ago and in another country is not the same as doing it now and here."

By the end of 2021, Champion Family Conroe had about 80 attendees, including newcomers, refugees, and some other Champion Forest families who joined the replanting effort. Attendance now hovers around 100 people per week. That number swells to more than 200 on special days.

"This has been a phenomenon in Conroe because [many] churches here have peaked at 50 to 80 people and then dropped off, but now Champion Family keeps growing and growing," Villalobos said.

Champion Family is a testimony of how God has worked the miracle of multiplication and revival in Conroe, but Villalobos is clear about the goal. "We

"We are not here to fill the temple, which is already filled, but to develop a mission that goes outside the walls."

—SIMON VILLALOBOS

are not here to fill the temple, which is already filled, but to develop a mission that goes outside the walls," he said.

The church now supports a group of young missionaries in Veracruz and a Baptist pastor in Fresnillo, Zacatecas, Mexico. It also supports a pastor-planter in Mozambique, Africa, where Champion Family just purchased land for the church there to meet, and they are in the process of purchasing an acre-and-a-half of land in hopes of building a school in Nampula, Africa.

"I am amazed at how people have gotten involved without forcing anything," Villalobos said. "This church has grown organically. We pray that God will give us pastors and elders who have the calling to keep ministering and looking outside our walls."



DIOS LLEVA A PASTOR POR UN CAMINO
INESPERADO QUE DIRIGE A SU MINISTERIO Y
A LA IGLESIA DE CONROE A UNA NUEVA VIDA.

CONROE

Simón Villalobos parecía haber estado siempre en el ministerio.

Empezó a servir al Señor a los 16 años. A los 21, respondió al llamado de Dios al pastorado y finalmente llegó a Veracruz, México, donde sirvió como pastor durante 22 años con 14 iglesias a su cargo.

Con el tiempo, su ministerio en Veracruz concluyó y parecía que se le abría una puerta para pastorear en Texas. Pero cuando Villalobos llegó a EE. UU., esa puerta se cerró por razones ajenas a su voluntad, dejándole a él y a su familia en un limbo.

Simón Villalobos parecía haber estado siempre en el ministerio... hasta que, de repente, dejó de estarlo.

“Yo creía que ya era tiempo de colgar el equipo y de ponerme cómodo en la banca de la iglesia”, dijo Villalobos.

Y así comenzó un viaje difícil, lleno de aprendizaje para depender de Dios, que le ha llevado hasta donde está hoy, pastoreando la creciente iglesia Champion Family de Conroe.

**“Yo creía
que ya era
tiempo
de colgar
el equipo
y de
ponerme
cómodo en
la banca
de la
iglesia.”**

—SIMÓN VILLALOBOS



Champion Family ha visto un aumento constante de asistentes a la iglesia y cuentan con muchos ministerios que tienen como objetivo compartir el evangelio con los niños.

FOTOS COMPARTIDAS

‘Como echar un pecesito moribundo al agua’

El camino inesperado que apartó a Villalobos del ministerio vocacional durante 10 años le llevó a buscar un empleo secular por primera vez en su vida. Aunque no se presentaron oportunidades formales de ministerio durante ese tiempo, él y su esposa, Rosita, estuvieron como voluntarios ayudando a pastores y ministerios en diversas funciones. Fue un tiempo de descanso para Villalobos, pero también un tiempo en el que él y Rosita sintieron que Dios había terminado con ellos.

Al menos hasta que su hijo les invitó a la Iglesia Bautista Champion Forest en Español en el 2017. Villalobos dijo que allí se sintió cómodo y conectó con la predicación del pastor Esteban Vázquez. Al poco tiempo, Villalobos entabló amistad con Vázquez y empezó a acompañarle en varias tareas ministeriales.

Entre esas tareas estaba el ofrecer apoyo a una iglesia de Conroe que se estaba muriendo, con sólo unos cinco miembros que llevaban toda la carga del ministerio. Para ayudar a llenar el púlpito de la iglesia en apuros, Vázquez invitó a Villalobos a predicar allí. Entonces Villalobos empezó a predicar más a menudo y, tiempo después, Vázquez le preguntó si le interesaría quedarse como pastor allí.

Villalobos dijo que no estaba seguro de aceptar la oferta porque “no veía futuro aquí. [Esta iglesia] estaba muerta”. Así que lo habló con Rosita y, para su sorpresa, ella le animó a aceptar el reto.

“Para Rosita, fue como lanzar un pecesito moribundo al agua”, dijo Villalobos. “Ella tiene un llamado muy específico [sirviendo a la iglesia local] y no lo estaba ejerciendo”. Servir a esta iglesia en apuros podría ayudarles a satisfacer el deseo que Dios había puesto en su corazón, así que Villalobos aceptó ser el pastor durante un año de prueba para ver qué podía hacer el Señor.

‘Una misión que va más allá de las paredes’

Villalobos fue instalado como pastor de la iglesia, que ahora se llama Champion Family Conroe, en octubre de 2019. A su llegada, la iglesia comenzó con 13 personas, algunas enviadas desde Champion Forest. A finales del 2019, asistían unas 25 personas, y el crecimiento y la estabilidad continuaron durante la primavera siguiente. El progreso fue cambiando poco a poco la forma de pensar de Villalobos y le trajo esperanza. “No depende de mí”, dijo. “Depende del Señor”.

En el 2020, Covid-19 interrumpió las reuniones de la iglesia, pero el progreso continuó. Una vez reanudados los servicios en persona, la asistencia siguió aumentando y, al verano siguiente, el Señor proveyó un catalizador que

no sólo ayudó a la iglesia, sino también a Villalobos.

En agosto del 2021, Villalobos fue invitado por Champion Forest a participar en el programa de formación de plantadores de iglesias de la Junta de Misiones Norteamericanas [NAMB por sus siglas en inglés]. Él describe la formación como un nuevo comienzo que le proporcionó conocimientos y recursos de los que antes no disponía, incluidos métodos para utilizar la tecnología en el ministerio.

“La residencia me sirvió para conocer una nueva forma de hacer iglesia”, dijo Villalobos. “Pastorear hace 40 años y en otro país no es lo mismo que hacerlo ahora y aquí”.

A finales del 2021, Champion Family Conroe contaba con unos 80 asistentes, entre recién llegados, refugiados y algunas familias de Champion Forest que se unieron al esfuerzo de replantación. La asistencia ronda ahora las 100 personas por semana. Ese número aumenta a más de 200 en días especiales.

“Esto ha sido un fenómeno en Conroe, porque aquí las iglesias han llegado a un máximo de 50 a 80

personas y luego han decaído, pero ahora Champion Family sigue creciendo y creciendo”, dijo Villalobos.

Champion Family es un testimonio de cómo Dios ha obrado el milagro de la multiplicación y el avivamiento en Conroe, pero Villalobos tiene claro su objetivo. “No estamos aquí para llenar el templo, que ya está lleno, sino para desarrollar una misión que vaya más allá de las paredes”, dijo.

La iglesia apoya ahora a un grupo de jóvenes misioneras en Veracruz y a un pastor bautista en Fresnillo, Zacatecas, México. También apoya a un pastor-plantador en Mozambique, África, donde Champion Family acaba de comprar un terreno para que la iglesia se reúna allí, y están en proceso de comprar un acre y medio de terreno con la esperanza de construir una escuela en Nampula, África.

“Me asombra cómo la gente se ha involucrado sin forzar nada”, dijo Villalobos. “Esta iglesia ha crecido orgánicamente. Oramos para que Dios nos dé pastores y ancianos que tengan la vocación de seguir ministrando y mirando fuera de nuestras paredes.”

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LEAH HOLDER GREEN



Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Executive Board member Leah Holder Green has been teaching God's Word since she was 17 and writes Bible study curriculum for Second Baptist Church of Houston. She practiced law before entering full-time ministry as a Bible curriculum specialist. In addition to her work with Second Baptist, she is pursuing a Master of Arts in Christian Education from Dallas Theological Seminary and has a speaking and writing ministry (leahholdergreen.com). Green and her husband, Clarence, have two daughters: Caylen Joy, a toddler, and Lena Hope, who is with the Lord.

What is one challenge you face as a Bible curriculum writer in 2023?

One challenge I face is presenting biblical truths in new and fresh ways, especially for young people. Although there is nothing new under the sun, the internet and social media have created interesting dynamics in the realm of Christian education. My aim is to keep the gift (God's truth) the same and simply change the wrapping paper according to my audience.

What is your assessment of the state of biblical literacy in the modern church?

In my experience, biblical literacy is lacking in the modern church. It seems many people are content to receive biblical teaching and knowledge from ... untrained and unverified sources on social media. I once saw a post on Instagram that said, "God does not want you to deny yourself," and many self-proclaimed Christians liked the post. I found it baffling because Matthew 16:24 clearly reads, "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me.'" [So] one aim of my Bible teaching ministry is to encourage people to study and love God's Word.

How does in-house curriculum writing benefit a congregation?

Some benefits of in-house curriculum writing include ensuring veracity and relevance. It is important to screen any pre-written curriculum to make sure it presents orthodox Christian teaching. Writing the curriculum in-house helps ensure fidelity to Scripture and sound Christian doctrine. Further, writing curriculum in-house enables churches to tailor the lessons and illustrations to their congregants' particular needs, communities, and seasons of life.

Where do you see the greatest needs as they pertain to curriculum?

I write curriculum primarily for youth and women. While everyone needs sound Christian education, I believe it is especially important for youth. They are impressionable, seeking truth, and developing their worldviews. I pray God allows me to participate in helping them form biblical worldviews.

How can the churches of the SBTC be praying for you and your ministry?

I love God, I love His Word, and I love His people. I also love learning and sharing what I learn. Thus, I find my calling as a Bible teacher and Christian author incredibly rewarding. Whenever we work to advance God's kingdom of light, we necessarily encounter opposition from the enemy's kingdom of darkness. I'd appreciate prayer that I will stay the course, keep my mind on the things above, and fulfill every purpose God has ordained for my life and ministry.



SBTC Executive Board hears reports on partnerships, student ministry

GRAPEVINE

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Executive Board heard a pair of encouraging reports regarding a growing network of partnerships outside the state, as well as a summer full of activity in student ministry that led to hundreds of decisions for Christ, at its regularly scheduled triannual meeting on Aug. 15.

Missions Mobilization Associate Colin Rayburn spoke about the strategic partnerships that have been developed with the Convention of Southern Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico and the Nevada Baptist Convention. Through those partnerships, the SBTC has provided strategic vision opportunities for four of its churches in Puerto Rico, while also helping resource a retreat for pastors and their wives on the island—the first such event that had been offered to them in many years.

Rayburn also reported the Nevada Baptist Convention recently hosted an Equip Conference similar to what the SBTC hosts in Texas annually. Additionally, a vision trip which will aim to connect SBTC churches with strategic partnerships with Southern Baptist churches in Nevada is scheduled for Sept. 11-13.

Student Ministry Associate Brandon Bales gave a report on what turned out to be an incredible summer for M3 and Youth Week camps. Bales said attendance at the camps totaled 4,582 students. Of those, 394 students made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, 240 were baptized, and 316 answered a call to ministry. Additionally, Bales reported the SBTC Student App has been downloaded more than 1,400 times since being launched in August 2022, with more than 133,000 engagements this year alone.

CP receipts down after giving slows in June, July

SBTC Chief Financial Officer Joe Davis reported to the board that Cooperative Program giving was significantly lower in June and

July, resulting in a 5% year-to-date budget shortfall and a 5% reduction from the same time last year. “We’re continuing to manage expenses and watch the budget closely as we steward Cooperative Program dollars,” Davis said after the meeting.

Board to ask messengers for extension on constitutional interpretation at AM

Messengers to the 2023 Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Annual Meeting in November will be asked to consider extending the effective date of a constitutional interpretation referring to the office of pastor for currently affiliated churches.

At the 2022 Annual Meeting in Corpus Christi, messengers approved a motion requiring the convention to interpret its constitutional requirement that the “office of pastor be limited to men” be applied “not only to the titles of senior pastor or lead pastor, but to any role designated by the noun ‘pastor’” beginning Jan. 1, 2024. At the Aug. 15 meeting, the Executive Board voted in favor of the Executive Committee’s recommendation to request the messengers at November’s Annual Meeting to consider extending the effective date to Jan. 1, 2025.*

The SBTC Credentials Committee is already operating under the new interpretation for churches being newly considered for affiliation.

In August, Baptist Press reported a similar request made by Southern Baptist Convention President Bart Barber, pastor of the SBTC-affiliated First Baptist Church of Farmersville. Barber asked state conventions and local associations to “press pause on any ongoing work they may be conducting or motions they may be considering that involve the nature of what it means to be a church in friendly cooperation with sister Southern Baptist churches.”

Such a pause, Barber said, would allow a newly seated “cooperation group” to engage in “high-quality research, dialogue, prayer, and contemplation about the nature of cooperation among Southern Baptist churches and our needs going forward.”

The 2023 SBTC Annual Meeting is scheduled for Nov. 13-14 at Cross City Church in Euless.

** Editor’s note: This article constitutes first notice of this motion.*



'Here I am Lord, use me!'

The Lord moved me from my home in Manila, Philippines, in 2004. I've been here in Texas since 2011. God also gave me a hunger to know His direction for my ministry. I began to see it during my third year at Criswell College. We were doing a practicum in Oak Cliff and I was working with a multi-language church. As I listened to people in Texas worshipping in their mother tongue, I got the sense that God wanted me to preach His gospel in my native Filipino dialect.

Having received a direction from the Lord, my wife, Alpa, and I began to visit Filipino restaurants from DFW to Plano. There was one particular restaurant in Plano, owned by four ladies, where I asked

◀ Larry and Alpa Cortez them, "If I bring people and do a Bible study here in your restaurant every Friday night and pay half of the bill ... will you allow me to do the Bible study?" They laughed and said, "Of course, it will increase our business." These ladies were my "persons of peace" to enable my ministry. So I started a Bible study in the Filipino restaurant in our dialect, and I also invited the owners of the restaurant. I shared the gospel with them and they prayed to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Soon, four of my regulars approached me and asked, "Will you bring that same Bible study to our town, Greenville?" I asked, "Where is Greenville?" They said, "It's way far east. If you are from here, you just go east on I-30 and you will not miss Greenville."

So I went, and we started Bible studies there maybe six months before my graduation. I also started attending Southern Baptists of Texas Convention church planting seminars and I found a sending church. We moved to Greenville in 2019. I instantly fell in love with the city, the culture, and the people. I think it's God's thing.

We started a Bible study in my home and I began to transition to preaching. After a couple of years, we had 50 people meeting with us, and then the pandemic hit. In order to work within the quarantine regulations, we told our people that the first 25 to register during a week could attend one Sunday, and then another 25 could attend the next. In a way, God used it to grow our church. As things began to open up again, we were near 70 people some weeks. We needed a new place to meet and rented a building temporarily.

With the help of the Hunt Baptist Association, we were able to find and buy the building of a church that had closed. By this time, we had started outreaches in Forney and Plano. My family travels from Greenville to these locations on Sunday afternoons. Our plan is to disciple leaders to preach and pastor these congregations as

“What’s my story? It’s not what you know and what you have. It’s your heart that is willing to say, ‘Here I am, Lord, use me.’ That’s all there is.”

—LARRY CORTEZ

freestanding churches, sent by my church, Genuine Faith Community Church. And now, we even have a chance to start a Hispanic congregation in Richardson. We have people meeting in 10-15 homes as well. The Lord is so amazing. It blows my mind. Glory to God! This is all His doing. I just said, “Lord, here I am. Use me in any ways that your name will be glorified.”

It is very important for a pastor or a servant or a missionary to have a willing heart. Last year, a stranger came to my house saying that he’s also a pastor from the Philippines and he said he’s here to plant a church. So, I allowed him to reside in my house for six months and he became a friend and a brother. He helped me in our church here in Greenville. I asked if he would, with or without anything, plant a church in the Philippines. He said he would, so I told him, “Go home [to the Philippines], wait for me there, bring me to where you are, show me what you’re doing, and we will plant a church—with or without anything.”

At the time, my son was studying in the Philippines and graduated

college last June. So my wife and I, even without enough, went home for my son’s graduation. I challenged my church of 50 people to bring me to the Philippines. My pastor friend now had a group meeting in a Muslim part of the country. I met with 24 pastors and introduced church planting to them. Some of them were meeting in little brush shelters—not really buildings at all.

We visited various provinces and islands, speaking to city officials, sharing the gospel, laying the groundwork for churches all across the country. Isn’t it amazing how the Lord is making me witness His salvation and His way of bringing His salvation to Filipinos in the Philippines?

Who am I? *Who am I?* I witness the glory of God, and not because of my capacity. If your heart is willing, God will use you and show you how amazing His church planting is.

What’s my story? It’s not what you know and what you have. It’s your heart that is willing to say, “Here I am, Lord, use me.” That’s all there is.

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PASTOR

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.

FBC 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 resume to groomfbcsearch@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 resume to admin@popcitychurch.org.

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

FBC 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 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.

Living Word Baptist in Odessa seeks God's man as our FT senior pastor, with the hope 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. Candidate will have a shepherd's heart, a vision to grow, and be a good communicator with 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.

FBC 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 and view our church profile, visit fbcsaratogatexas.churchcenter.com. Send resume to pscfbcsaratoga@gmail.com.

Cornerstone Church, located at 2242 W. Lucas Rd., Lucas, Texas 75002 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 phone: 214-882-8955. Office Manager: Darlene Stephens.

FBC 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, such as attending games, work days, etc. Email resumes to fbcrvsearch@gmail.com.

FBC Collinsville is seeking our next FT pastor. Located 75 miles north of Dallas with an average worship attendance of 250 in 2022. We believe in all aspects of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. Resumes will be accepted through Oct. 17, 2023. Send resume to fbcsearch2023@gmail.com.

Champion Baptist Church in Roscoe is seeking a FT senior pastor. Email resume to championbaptistchurch2319@gmail.com.

Rosanky Baptist Church in Rosanky is seeking a FT senior

pastor who preaches the full gospel and believes in the inerrant Word of God as stated in 2 Timothy 3:16. Email resume to rosankypsc@gmail.com.

FBC Tom Bean is seeking a FT senior pastor/elder in a growing community. Email resume to bert@fbctombean.com.

FBC Rosebud is prayerfully seeking a FT pastor. The committee is accepting resumes through Sept. 30, 2023. Please send resumes to asonntag52@gmail.com.

Central Baptist Church in Kirbyville is seeking a FT next gen pastor. Send resume to 801 S. Margaret Ave., Kirbyville, Texas 75956, or email to cbckville@sbcglobal.net.

Winfree Baptist Church in Orange is seeking a FT or bivocational pastor. We are affiliated with the SBTC and our foundational belief system is the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. We are seeking a man with proven experience in ministerial leadership skills, a heart for evangelism, outreach, and missions. Send resume to pastorsearch@winfreebaptist.org.

College Avenue Baptist Church in McGregor is seeking a FT senior pastor. Email resume to CABCMcGregorTX@gmail.com or mail to 201 S Monroe St., McGregor, Texas 76657.

Unity Baptist Church in Porter is seeking a FT senior pastor. Send resume to Danny McCabe, P.O. Box 1296, Porter, Texas 77365, or email to danny.mccabe@gmail.com.

Summit Church Texas (6301 Weber Road in Corpus Christi) is seeking a Spirit-filled man to be our FT or bivocational lead pastor with at least 3 years proven experience in kingdom building, counseling new and existing believers, community outreach, and ministerial leadership. Seminary preferred. Email resume to tony@summitchurchtexas.com.

Main Street Baptist Church in Grand Saline is seeking a FT senior pastor for a church committed to expository preaching. We have a wide diversity of ages with an attendance of 140+. Located between Tyler and Dallas, with an estimated population of 3,500. Email resume to churchonmainstreet@googlegroups.com.

Pioneer Drive Baptist Church in Irving, a small congregation, is seeking a bivocational pastor to shepherd our church with a vision to grow the church in spirit and service to God. Email resume to ljbryantppc@yahoo.com.

FBC Murchison is seeking a bivocational pastor. Mail resumes/DVD to First Baptist Church, C/O Pastor Committee, P.O. Box 27, Murchison, Texas 75778.

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

Trinity Pines Baptist Church in Trinity is seeking a FT pastor. TPBC is seeking someone wanting to reach people for Christ and make a kingdom impact. Our worship is contemporary. We are affiliated with the SBTC and have a parsonage. Email resume, salvation story, call to ministry, and any helpful information to TPBCsearchteam@windstream.net.

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 resumesspringtowncfc@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.

FBC Dawson is seeking a PT pastor. Submit your cover letter and resume to fbcdawson.tx@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.

FBC Loraine is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor to help grow a small evangelical church. Parsonage available (3/2) next to church. Mail resume to Pastor Search Team, P.O. Box 369, Loraine, Texas 79532, or email to pampnp@windstream.net.

MUSIC

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

Sherwood Baptist Church in Odessa is seeking a FT minister of music and outreach to lead Christ-centered worship, reach people with the gospel, and connect them to our church family. Send resumes to personnel@sherwood.church.

FBC Alto is seeking a PT music director/worship leader. The position is responsible for coordinating, encouraging, and supporting the glorification of God through music and song. Apply with resume to altofbc.psc@gmail.com.

FBC Duncanville is seeking a PT minister of music. For a description of duties and further information, contact 903-658-0936 or email charlese6894@gmail.com.

Longbranch Community Baptist Church in Midlothian is looking for a PT worship leader. Contact brent@lbcmidlothian.org for more information.

FBC Lumberton is seeking a bivocational minister of music/worship that God has anointed, called, and blessed to lead our congregation in worship. Music is mostly traditional while blended w/contemporary. Will be asked to develop an adult choir in music specials every 4 weeks for A.M. service. Email resume or contact the church at pastor@fbclumberton.org.

Redemption Hill Church in Fort Worth is seeking a PT director of music ministry. Email resume to info@redemptionhillfw.org.

Golden Baptist Church is seeking a PT minister of music to lead worship in Sunday AM service. Contact mejpeeneley@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 email billygt@me.com.

STUDENTS

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.

FBC Huntington is seeking a FT youth pastor to oversee our youth ministry and serve as a pastor in our church. Email resume to huntingtonfbc.org/youthpastor.

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

Hardin Baptist Church in Hardin is looking for a FT youth minister with a passion for Christ and discipleship. Send resume to jerred.a.scroggins@outlook.com, or call 936-346-1241 if interested in the position.

Cross City Church in Euless is searching for a FT student ministry associate to provide admin assistance & lead the teen girls ministry. Please submit your resume to hr@crosscity.church.

Lakeview Baptist Church in Longview is seeking PT youth minister. Submit resume with salvation experience and why you feel called to lead youth to lakeviewbaptist2011@gmail.com.

FBC Lumberton is seeking a bivocational student minister to work, lead, and teach grades 7-12. Candidate will be a called

man of God w/experience in this area and a passion to see students grow spiritually and help the lost come to Christ. Email resume to pastor@fbclumberton.org.

Plainview Baptist Church in Krum is seeking a married couple to serve in a PT position of youth minister and to organize, plan, and direct all church youth activities in the rapidly growing area of Northwest Denton County. Contact us at trustees@pbckrum.org.

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 will be on junior high. Email resume to frontdesk@crossroadscanton.com. 903-567-0800. crossroadscanton.com.

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

CHILDREN

FBC 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.

Victory Life Baptist Church in Lubbock is looking for a FT children's ministry associate. You will be working with the next gen minister who has 25 years of children's ministry experience and is ready to support, train, guide, or disciple you. Contact Stephanie Thames at stephanie.thames@victorylife.net.

Lake Fork Baptist Church in Alba is prayerfully seeking a preschool minister. This is a part time position: Monday, Wednesday, and Sunday. Focus will be on Sunday school, preschool worship, and Wednesday evening ministries. Salary: \$18,000. If interested, please submit your resume to

tbartley@lakeforkbaptist.org.

East Mountain Baptist Church, located between Gilmer, Gladewater, and Longview, is searching for a PT children's minister. Resumes will be accepted until Sept. 15. Please send resume or inquiries to staffsearch@eastmountainbaptist.org.

COMBINATION

FBC Garrison is searching for a PT worship/youth leader with responsibility for worship (60%) and youth ministries (40%) in our rural, conservative, East Texas, SBTC church. 20-30 hours per week. \$33K plus housing. Some music education or experience required to lead our blended worship. Send resume to pastorben@fbcgarrison.com.

OTHER

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 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 church business by implementing strategic goals and vision as a key leader, growing current/developing new ministries, and ensuring staffing, facilities, and programs are effectively aligned to best meet strategic goals. Email resume to jim@fblakeside.net.

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

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

Mobberly Baptist Church in Longview is seeking a FT visual content creator/media technician. Mail resume to

Mobberly Baptist Church, 625 E. Loop 281, Longview, Texas 75605, or email to gailm@mobberly.org.

Hillcrest Baptist Church in Jasper is looking for a FT business administrator. For information, contact searchcommittee@hbcjasper.com.

East Paris Baptist Church in Paris is searching for a FT administrator. Interested parties should submit a resume or ask for additional information via epadminsearch@eastparis.org.

Kentuckytown Baptist Church in Whitewright is seeking a FT family pastor. Salary, housing allowance, and other benefits included. Email resumes to kbctravis@gmail.com.

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.

New Day Church in Pasadena is seeking a PT associate pastor with the possibility of FT. We are a church replant in Pasadena and are fully committed to glorifying God, growing in our love for Him, and loving our community. Email questions and resumes to Pastor John Colunga at johncolunga@newdaychurch.com.

New Day Church in Pasadena is seeking a PT ministry intern. We are a church replant in Pasadena and are fully committed to glorifying God, growing in our love for Him, and loving our community. Email questions and resumes to Pastor John Colunga at johncolunga@newdaychurch.com.

FBC Lakeside is seeking a PT preschool director to lead in spiritual/educational development of children enrolled in the Lakeside Little Learners Preschool (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.

Paid Classifieds

For the latest listings, visit 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 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.

First Baptist Church in Roswell, N.M., is seeking a FT lead pastor. Bold in principle, gifted in preaching, strong in leadership. Submit resumes or questions to pastorsearch@fbcroswell.org.

WORSHIP

Summer Grove Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., is searching for a FT worship leader for our modern worship service. Applicants must be capable of leading a band and knowing current worship music. You will work closely with the worship pastor and senior pastor. You must have skills in planning weekly worship services and recruiting

musicians. You will also lead and train a worship band for the student ministry. Send your resume to Senior Pastor, Summer Grove Baptist Church, 8924 Jewella Ave., Shreveport, La., 71118, or email to pastor@summergrove.org. You may request a copy of the complete job description by emailing pastor@summergrove.org.

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.

OTHER

Summer Grove Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., is searching for a FT creative arts director. Applicants must be capable of overseeing all operations of AVL systems for all services and events and oversee all IT operations of the church, graphic design for internal and external publications, and video production for internal and external publications. Send your resume to Senior Pastor, Summer Grove Baptist Church,

8924 Jewella Ave., Shreveport, La., 71118, or email to pastor@summergrove.org. You may request a copy of the complete job description by emailing pastor@summergrove.org.

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 1-877-977-6800 or visit wsrpianocds.com.

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 tray@firstmansfield.com, First Baptist Church, Mansfield, 817-463-1161.

Finding stability (& sanity!) amidst your busy schedule



Most pastors aspire for some sanity in their schedules. More than half say time management is an aspect that needs attention or investment today and that avoiding over-commitment is a challenge for them, according to a Lifeway Research study.

This month, as I started my 36th year of pastoral ministry, I took a minute to reflect on some routines I have woven into my life and ministry that I hope will be helpful for you:

Wake up worshipping

My personal preference is to worship first thing in the morning because I cannot recover those first thoughts later in the day. Morning worship supports my desire to make loving God my first priority of the day (i.e., the Great Commandment). I typically read a chapter a day from the Bible in my favorite chair, then pray either in that same chair or worship as I am walking, jogging, or driving.

Do sermon prep early

According to *Inc.* magazine, workers have been found to be more proactive and productive in the mornings. There will never be a time in my day when I have more energy and fewer distractions, so I do most of my sermon prep and writing before lunch.

For those of you who are multi-vocational and may not have the option of starting earlier in the day, you can start earlier in the week instead of stress-prepping on the weekend. Once you have devoted yourself “to prayer and to the preaching ministry” (Acts 6:4), you are ready to start connecting with your sheep and staff (or in my case, shepherds).

Stack your meetings

Most of our members do not know how much we dread committee and team meetings (and weddings). Although we cannot and should not avoid them, we can stack them. You can stack meetings on church days by making them the only option when you are available to meet. Sundays and Wednesdays are less likely to compete with our personal and family time, and they are already blocked off on our calendars.

Protect most nights & weekends

With the forementioned exceptions of Wednesdays and Sundays, my goal has been to stop working completely by supper. I cannot fully connect with my family until I have disconnected from my ministry. Neither can you. The health of your family and your ministry is connected to your own health, and evenings are a great time to recharge. Nobody in ministry can protect every weekend, but you can and should say no more often to church members if you find yourself consistently skipping sabbath. Sabbath (literally meaning “stop”) is not optional for ministers—or any believers, for that matter. You may have to be creative in how and when you stop. Just don’t try to redefine what God declared holy.

Protect your bedtime

The American Medical Association, the National Institutes of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention all say we typically need about eight hours of sleep to feel and function normally while awake. In my experience, I do better work and I am in a better mood when I am fully rested. If you think God hardwired you to be the exception because you only need four to five hours of sleep, your delusion is proof you are wrong.

Though my schedule rarely plays out exactly as planned, these guidelines have helped me enjoy a sane and sustainable life and ministry for almost three decades. I pray it does the same for you and your ministry!

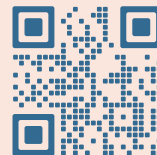


Mark Dance is director of pastoral wellness for Guidestone Financial Resources.



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



REACH TEXAS STATE MISSIONS OFFERING WEEK OF PRAYER

SEPTEMBER 17-24

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COOPERATIVE PROGRAM SUNDAY

OCTOBER 1

sbtexas.com/cp



SBTC ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 13-14 Euless

sbtexas.com/am23

SEPTEMBER

4	Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering (online)
7	55+ Adults Ministry Training, McAllen
14	55+ Adults Ministry Training, Houston
15-16	Retiro de Mujeres Florece, Glen Rose
18	Disciple-Making Leader Workshop, Grapevine
19	Disciple-Making Leader Workshop, Kyle
21	55+ Adults Ministry Training, Abilene
26	Children & Family Ministry Luncheon, SWBTS
29-30	Hombres de Impacto, Glen Rose

OCTOBER

2-3	Pastors Masters Golf Tournament, Flower Mound
2	Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering (online)
6-7	She Stands Women's Conference, San Antonio
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

NOVEMBER

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



2023 ANNUAL MEETING **FORWARD**

PHILIPPIANS 3:13

NOVEMBER 13-14 Cross City Church, Euless

HOTELS

Questions? Email
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Marriott DFW Airport South

4151 Centreport Blvd.
Fort Worth, TX 76155
817-359-4612
\$159 All room types
Cutoff Date: 10/23

Residence Inn DFW Airport West

2000 State Highway 121
Bedford, TX 76021
817-354-2222
\$137 All room types
Cutoff Date: 10/20

Group Rates

Specify SBTC for group rates when making any hotel reservations.

Housing Assistance

Hotel cost assistance available to senior pastors with financial need.

Childcare

Available to those that pre-register.

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