

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST**  
**TEXAN**

APRIL 2024 | VOL. 23 | NO. 4

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CHURCHES ACROSS TEXAS  
ARE ENGAGING THEIR  
COMMUNITIES WITH  
THE GOSPEL ...**

**MAKING  
INROADS**



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# JOIN ME AS WE WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

I want to personally invite you to join me later this year on our Experience the Holy Land Clergy Familiarization Trip in Israel.

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention is hosting this 10-day trip from Dec. 26, 2024, through Jan. 4, 2025. The trip is available to senior pastors of SBTC-affiliated churches at a discounted price, which includes \$1,300 in financial assistance provided by a generous grant from the SBTC Executive Board. Special pricing is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Senior pastors who wish to register must currently be pastoring an SBTC church. Their cost is \$1,797 (after the grant has been applied). A second pastor from the same church may travel at the regular clergy price of \$3,097, but only two pastors are allowed per church. Spouses can join the trip for \$3,497.

You can scan the QR code on this page for more information. Space is limited. I have been to the Holy Land several times and it has been a life-changing experience for me. I hope you will prayerfully consider joining us as we re-trace the footsteps of Jesus and watch the Bible come alive before our very eyes.

I love you and I am honored to serve you!



Nathan Lorick  
SBTC Executive Director



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

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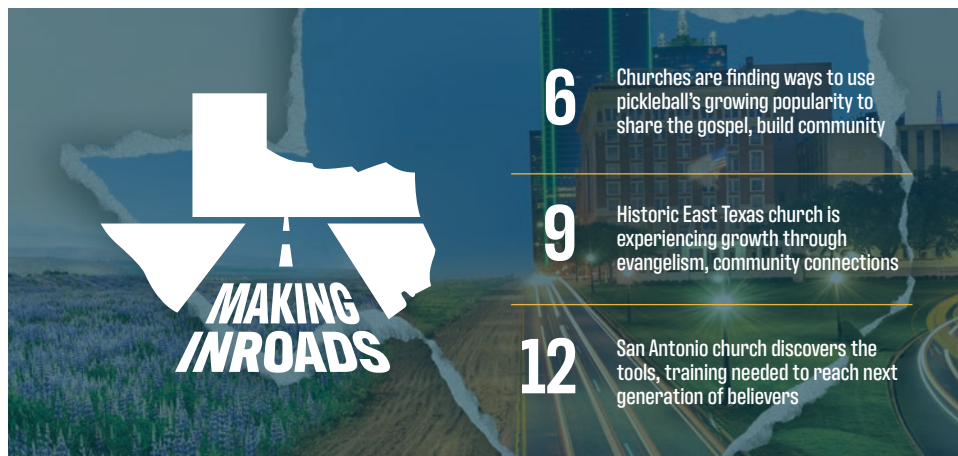
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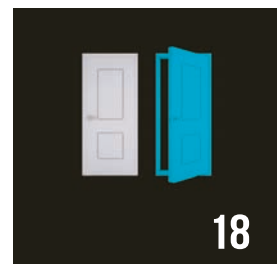
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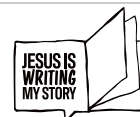
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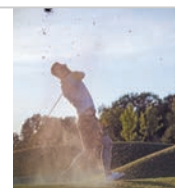
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Conference

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# JUST KEEP CASTING YOUR LINE

I'm not what you would consider a man of the outdoors, but I did my fair share of fishing during my teen years. A friend of mine growing up owned a bass boat, and we would stay out on the water for countless hours tossing plastic worms under lighted docks and running crank baits through a forest of submerged tree limbs trying to catch a lake record.

Though it may seem like a straightforward endeavor, fishing requires skill. Unlike me, my friend spent his entire childhood fishing, and he had developed a talent for understanding how factors including water levels, temperature, and spawning season timetables affected his ability to catch fish. I knew none of those things, but what I did know was this: the more times I threw my line in the water, the better chance I had of catching a fish.



As followers of Christ, we are all called to tell others about Jesus. That can be intimidating for many, and it's often a source of guilt for others who struggle to do so. But can I just encourage you to remember a couple things?

**1** The Holy Spirit has promised to give us the right words at the right time when He is at work. There's nothing wrong at all with evangelism trainings that aim to better equip us to share our faith, but we also see biblical examples of the Holy Spirit boldly using "uneducated and untrained" people (Acts 4) to speak boldly for Jesus. This ought to be a freeing truth.

**2** Our best days, regardless of their circumstances, will be the ones spent with a constant awareness of the presence of Jesus. That's a tall order as we navigate this world of distraction, but if we can just keep our Lord at the forefront of our minds, we'll likely be more intentional about speaking His name when the moment calls for it. To say it another way, the more we keep Jesus on our minds, the more likely we are to keep throwing our lines into the water knowing that it will increase our chances to tell someone the good news about Jesus.

In this issue, you'll see examples of churches throwing their lines into the water and hoping for opportunities to tell others about Jesus. Churches in the eastern and southern parts of the state are seeing God bless their efforts through traditional outreaches such as Vacation Bible School and fall festivals. A church plant in Corpus Christi hosts community forums on mental health topics to open doors to a wider conversation about how Jesus can heal our minds. Other churches are using the fast-growing sport of pickleball—pickleball, I said!—to introduce people to the gospel. And on our new Leading Off page, you'll read about how our Southern Baptists of Texas Disaster Relief teams are thrusting themselves into the heart of the worst wildfire in Texas history to minister to people with a hope only Jesus can give.

Don't be discouraged. Instead, be ever-mindful of ways you can sneak Jesus' name, or your testimony, or the full-blown gospel, into your conversations. Be creative. Be consistent. Be intentional. Whatever you do, just keep throwing your line into the water and trust God with the results.

Join other churches from around the state at our next Evangelism Connections virtual event. Scan the QR for more information:



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# NEVER GIVE UP ON ANYONE!

What a wonderful Empower Conference God blessed us with on Feb. 26-27 at the Irving Convention Center. I am so grateful for the inspiration and encouragement my wife, Ashley, and I received. I want to say a special thank you to our executive director, Nathan Lorick, and Tony Mathews, senior strategist of missional ministries at the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. We are so blessed to have gifted men of God full of integrity leading our convention.

In Luke 19:10, Jesus states, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Jesus sought and saved Zacchaeus, a tax collector deeply hated by most. Jesus first found him perched in a sycamore tree. Our Lord told him to come down out of the tree so He could come stay at Zacchaeus’s house. After encountering Christ and hearing the message of salvation, Zacchaeus surrendered his life to Jesus and started following Him.

No one is ever beyond the reach of God. He can save anyone. Consider these other examples:

► One of my favorite hobbies is reading biographies and autobiographies. I am currently reading the remarkable story of Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese fighter pilot who led the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. In his book, *Wounded Tiger*, T. Martin Bennett recounts the fascinating story of how Fuchida came to faith in Jesus.

► In Ron Chernow’s *Alexander Hamilton*, he

chronicles the life of the greatest founding father of the U.S. never to have been elected president. Hamilton was a genius in the fields of politics, banking, and commerce. He was the first treasury secretary to serve under President George Washington. Some of his many accomplishments include writing most of the Federalist Papers, creating the first bank in America, and starting the U.S. Coast Guard and Customs Service.

But most do not remember him for these prodigious accomplishments. They remember Hamilton as the man who lost the pistol duel in 1801 to Aaron Burr, the U.S. vice president at the time. As he lay on his deathbed, Hamilton asked for a pastor to come and administer the Lord’s Supper to him. Chernow records the conversation Hamilton had with the Rev. John Mason: “As Mason told how Christ’s blood would wash away his sins, Hamilton grasped his hand, rolled his eyes heavenward, and exclaimed with great fervor, ‘I have a tender reliance on the mercy of the Almighty, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.’”

Jesus is still seeking and saving the lost today. He invites you and me as His disciples to join Him in this wonderful adventure of seeking out the lost and sharing the good news with them. No one is ever so far from God that He cannot reach them.

Keep going, loving, helping, and sharing the wonderful message of salvation. I invite you to join me today to obey our Lord when He said in Matthew 4:19, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Let us not give up on anyone!

# In the midst of historic Texas wildfires, SBTC DR teams offer help, hope, healing

Even in the worst of situations, God offers hope through His people.

When the largest wildfire in Texas history burned more than 1.3 million acres in the Texas Panhandle in February and March, Southern Baptists of Texas Disaster Relief volunteers rushed to the scene to help. The wildfires devastated livestock and destroyed homes and ranches across multiple counties, displacing hundreds of people.

SBTC DR and Southern Baptist Disaster Relief teams from across the nation served thousands of meals to firefighters, DR volunteers, and survivors. Recovery teams with skid steers and wheelbarrows cleared debris and helped homeowners sift through the ashes of their homes. Shower and laundry volunteers washed countless loads of clothes soiled by ash and smoke and offered clean, hot showers to

all. Chaplains and assessors shared the gospel of Jesus and prayed with survivors.

They brought hope to the hopeless.

“We always want to be the hands and feet of Jesus, sharing His message of hope,” SBTC DR Director Scottie Stice said. “With other national Southern Baptist DR teams, that is what we have been in the Panhandle. We serve but we also pray with survivors who have lost everything and who desperately need the promises of Jesus. So many are in shock and despair. Our volunteers bring encouragement. As the national SBDR logo proclaims, we bring ‘help, hope, and healing.’”

“The destruction is real,” said SBTC DR task force director and team leader James Greer. “The ministry now begins.”

To donate or volunteer, visit [sbtexas.com/dr](http://sbtexas.com/dr).

# LOBS FOR



# THE LORD

By Jane Rodgers  
Texan Correspondent

## CHURCHES ARE FINDING WAYS TO USE PICKLEBALL'S GROWING POPULARITY TO SHARE THE GOSPEL, BUILD COMMUNITY

**S**OME FIND THE CONSTANT POP of the wiffle ball batted about by oversized ping pong paddles annoying. Others see a sport encouraging exercise, multigenerational competition, and camaraderie.

Regardless, pickleball is here to stay.

It's called the fastest-growing recreational sport in the U.S., although it has been around since 1965, invented as a family diversion at Bainbridge Island, Wash.

With short 11-point games, mostly played by doubles teams, people of varying abilities can occupy the same court space. Open play allows for multiple combinations of players, while leagues may be geared to established teams or rotating partners.

Churches—among them, First Baptist Dallas—have discovered how to tap into this phenomenon for ministry purposes.

### A big city league of its own

First Dallas runs seasonal pickleball leagues in its Wicker gym.

Brent McFadden, the church's sports and recreation minister, said he first heard about pickleball in a staff meeting a few years ago when a colleague suggested the sport be offered at the church.

"We all laughed," McFadden recalled. "We asked, 'What is this thing called pickleball?'" They taped lines on the Wicker gym floor and hosted a league in 2018. The response was "all right," McFadden said. Then COVID hit and interest dwindled.

That was soon to change.

When his brother-in-law, a sports statistician, was isolated in the NBA's competition "bubble" during the 2020 COVID season, the sport reappeared on McFadden's radar.

"My brother-in-law got into it with the referees and statisticians playing pickleball every day during that isolation," he said. "He told me that the sport was taking off."



By 2022, McFadden and team installed permanent pickleball lines at the church gym and leagues resumed, joining the list of adult and youth recreational activities such as volleyball, youth basketball, cheerleading, golf, and soccer camps offered at the church.

### A higher purpose

McFadden, a former college baseball player who once worked in the front office of the Oakland A's Double-A affiliate, didn't originally intend to work in sports ministry. But he found community outreach events required of his position with the A's compelling, and he began to see a higher purpose.

A mentor told him, "If you run a sports ministry just to play sports, without it being Christ-centered, what's the good in that?"

"I truly want [participants] to get more out the experiences [at the church] than just to play sports," McFadden said, adding that pickleball offers unique opportunities for socialization and ministry. So, he provides weekly video devotionals with Scripture and applications for league teams to watch.

"I don't want to provide a way for people just to connect physically, but also to connect with Jesus spiritually," he added.

"A lot of people want to play," he said. First Dallas offers three seasonal leagues per year. Players sign up in teams of two and the church helps prospective players find partners if needed.

Men's and mixed doubles league play occurs during the church's Sunday afternoon Discipleship University time. Women's play hasn't proved as popular, McFadden said, but may be added in the future.

Some 80 players of mixed ages participated in the fall 2023 league; 36 teams signed up for the winter 2024 league.

The fall mixed league winner was Kay Seamayer, an 83-year-old senior women's basketball champion known as "Granny Globetrotter." She teamed with Jim Lockhart, in his 60s, to win the league, illustrating one of pickleball's distinctives: an octogenarian can take down millennials with well-placed dinks, drives, lobs, and placement over power.



▲ Kay Seamayer, the "Granny Globetrotter" and her partner, Jim Lockhart, won the First Dallas fall 2023 league championship.

**SUBMITTED PHOTO**

▼ Brownwood's Coggin Baptist group often meets outside to play on sunny days. Here, ladies show the traditional paddle tap pickleballers use at the end of a game to show sportsmanship. **JANE RODGERS PHOTO**





But the spiritual possibilities far outweigh all other benefits.

“Sports ministry is so crucial ... an opportunity to bring people into your church who likely have not heard of Christ or heard very little. His ways are always better. That is the exciting part to me,” McFadden said.

### **Small city pickleball vibes**

Pickleball is relatively inexpensive and easy to learn. An average church gym with a full-sized basketball court has room for three pickleball courts, which are about one-fourth the size of tennis courts. Sturdy, good-quality portable nets cost less than \$200.

This accessibility is one of the reasons Jerry Don Gleaton started offering pickleball at Brownwood’s Coggin Avenue Baptist Church about four years ago. The former Major League Baseball player and Coggin’s activities director said members recommended the sport.

Gleaton initially started opening the gym for pickleball on Monday nights, then added daytime playtimes, some in conjunction with the newly formed Brownwood Pickleball Club. The church made the initial investment in portable nets, which the club replaces as needed.

“We see people getting invited to play pickleball and then getting invited to church,” Gleaton said.

**“PICKLEBALL LENDS ITSELF TO CONVERSATION. IT’S ALL ABOUT FELLOWSHIP. WHY NOT INCLUDE BIBLE STUDY IN THAT?”**

**—JINA JOSS**

One indoor play date per week is reserved for Coggin members and guests, an effort spearheaded by church member Sandy Joyner, who also sets up separate playtimes at the city’s public courts.

“It’s a great ministry,” Joyner said. “Pickleball has brought community to so many.”

Joyner said her prayer is that “God will touch people’s hearts and connect those who desperately need community and ultimately, Jesus!”

Another Coggin member, Jina Joss, used pickleball to invite women to a home Bible study on prayer, posting the details on the Brownwood Pickleball Club’s Facebook page. About 15 women signed up for the six-week study, and whoever feels like it after each session hangs around to play on nearby private courts.

“We all play pickleball. We have community in that, so I thought pickleball would be a good segue into Bible study,” Joss said.

“Pickleball lends itself to conversation,” she added. “It’s all about fellowship. Why not include Bible study in that? Why not fellowship with Jesus?”



# ‘People still want to know that you care’

*Historic East Texas church is experiencing growth through evangelism, community connections*

By Erin Roach Texan Correspondent

HALLSVILLE

**M**ULBERRY SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH, about 15 miles northeast of Longview, doesn’t see a lot of traffic on a typical day. Yet the rural congregation—founded in 1892—is building a new worship space to seat nearly 800 people.

“We’re in a community of houses. We’ve got a little country store that just opened, but that’s it,” Pastor Danny Warbington said. “You’re not coming out here unless you live here, or maybe you’re going to make your way to Lake O’ the Pines, which is a beautiful place to camp and fish. Otherwise, we’re kind of in no man’s land.”

Before Warbington got to the church 18 years ago, attendance was a little over 100 and the discouraged congregation had moved

**“WE WANT THEM TO KNOW WE WANT THEM TO BE A PART OF SOMETHING GREAT GOD IS DOING IN THE COUNTRY.”**

**—DANNY WARBINGTON**

back to its older, smaller meeting space. Things began to look up when the interim who preceded Warbington—an evangelist—started preaching the gospel and seeing people get saved.

“We began to implement the things that I know work—preaching the gospel, visitation,” Warbington said, noting he wanted to lead the church to build on those first signs of renewal. “I do believe people still want to know that you care.”



After taking gift bags to the homes of visitors and getting involved in the community, including winning best float in a local parade, Mulberry Springs began to average 30 baptisms per year.

“We began to prosper and see God move mightily,” Warbington said. “About three or four years ago, we were number one in baptisms for churches our size in the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. It’s evangelism, evangelism, evangelism.”

The church now fills its 425-seat auditorium, and Warbington said the number of baptisms is a sign of health the church can continue to build on—literally.

“About seven years ago, we decided the Lord was calling us to build a new sanctuary because the house of the Lord was packed,” Warbington said. “We built a balcony and filled it up. We decided to turn our existing sanctuary back into what it was intended to be—a multipurpose gymnasium.”

The new worship space also will include six offices, five nursery rooms, and an upstairs mezzanine for children’s church.

“Our church is not rich. We have great givers, great tithers, but we’re just blue-collar people,” he said. “We prayed about a God-sized vision that only God can do.”

The church grows through children, Warbington said, noting that Mulberry Springs has a mother’s day out program twice a week with about 70 children and a homeschool co-op that meets Fridays with about 100 students.

A particular blessing to the pastor is that senior adults have told him that seeing people come to know Jesus has outweighed some of the changes the church has experienced, such as a new worship style.

“That adds to the growth of the church, because those who have been here so long are willing to give up the ground that is necessary,” Warbington said. “They’ve



Danny Warbington, pastor of Mulberry Springs Baptist Church, says a commitment to preaching the gospel and getting the church more involved in the community has been used by God to grow the rural congregation. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

**“THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HERE SO LONG ARE WILLING TO GIVE UP THE GROUND THAT IS NECESSARY. THEY’VE BEEN SO EXCITED SEEING NEW FAMILIES AND NEW FACES. TO SEE PEOPLE SAVED AND BAPTIZED, THEY’RE GOING TO REJOICE NO MATTER WHAT.”**

**—DANNY WARBINGTON**



A congregation that dwindled to 100 now packs its 425-seat worship space even in a rural community in East Texas. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**



been so excited seeing new families and new faces. To see people saved and baptized, they're going to rejoice no matter what."

Each year, Mulberry Springs hosts an Engage conference where it displays the ministries of the church and encourages everyone to sign up to serve.

"We only have a few committees, and we have lots of ministries from missions to outreach to children," Warbington said. "We constantly put before people that God has called them to serve and they need to find a place."

The children's director has a pool of about 45 people to draw from as workers, he said, and the church is known for a high-quality Vacation Bible School. The gospel is preached at VBS, and seldom are fewer than 10-12 children saved, he noted.

"Our people love VBS," he said. "We go all out and the kids have the time of their lives."

Something unique about Mulberry Springs is that every Sunday morning after the first song, men and their sons are called to the front to pray

and ask God to anoint them to lead their families. Warbington said the church has been doing that for four decades.

Hallsville, the nearest community to Mulberry Springs, has an exemplary school system, which is attractive to parents working in nearby Longview, Warbington said.

"There are hundreds of homes. They're going up everywhere. The number of people to reach is why we built the sanctuary. We're talking about within 10 miles there are huge housing additions going up," he said. "I really believe that we may have built too small. The potential is there."

Mulberry Springs averages six to eight visitors per week, the pastor said.

"These are people searching for a church, and we visit them if they want. We want them to know we want them to be a part of something great God is doing in the country," Warbington said. "Make evangelism and discipleship a priority. When you see people saved and the waters stirred, a lot of problems that people are focused on go away."

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SOUTHERN BAPTISTS OF TEXAS  
**FOUNDATION**



# GROWING *younger* GROWING *together*

SAN ANTONIO  
CHURCH  
DISCOVERS  
THE TOOLS,  
TRAINING  
NEEDED TO  
REACH NEXT  
GENERATION  
OF BELIEVERS

By Erin Roach  
Texan Correspondent

## SAN ANTONIO

**T**O POSITION ITSELF for a healthy future, University Baptist Church in San Antonio set a goal of “growing younger,” placing a renewed emphasis on reaching young families even as it continues to treasure and involve older generations.

The church realized most families in the surrounding area “are not more than two generations removed from active church participation,” Pastor David Norman said, explaining that in a given family, the child may have never heard of Jesus, the parents may have attended church sporadically, and there is a strong likelihood the grandparents were active in church.

The nearest neighborhood to the church is largely filled with young families, so the congregation went to work painting, updating, and cleaning its preschool and children’s areas.

“Preparing a nursing mothers room was a big step for our church, utilizing that space for those that we’re trying to reach rather than for storage,” Norman said.

The idea of growing younger was spurred by the church’s participation in one of the first cohorts of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention’s Regenesys process for guiding churches toward health and renewal. Norman now serves as a trainer in the program.

“I’ve been subject to crafting more vision statements than I can count, and I breathed a deep, deep sigh when I saw that was part of the Regenesys process,” Norman said, “but this was a very helpful manner of going about it.”

Regenesys helped University Baptist Church develop a three-year vision of being “a church family surrendered and sent,” with 200 adults engaging in connect groups, 150 engaged in one-on-one discipleship, and baptizing at least one new believer each month.

Though the numbers are just markers, Norman said, by comparison the church averages 135 in worship now with about 100 in connect groups. Along with growing younger and growing





▲ With a goal of baptizing one new believer each month, University Baptist Church is intentional about leading people to Christ.

▼ All church members are urged to participate in Vacation Bible School at University Baptist Church in San Antonio.

**SUBMITTED PHOTOS**



together, the church is emphasizing evangelism and leadership development.

“For our three-year vision to be attained, these are the four initiatives that we believe are necessary to that end,” the pastor said. “We have to grow younger, we have to go out, we have to grow together, and we have to grow up.”

Last fall, the church offered two Bible studies—one on evangelism and the other for young mothers who would otherwise drop off their children on Sunday nights and leave. Also, the children’s ministry focused on missions, while students learned to steer conversations toward the gospel.

To reach families in the community, the church started hosting a trunk-or-treat event in the fall. They ask for 100% participation from members: if someone is unable to sit out in the cool weather that night, that person can donate candy or help organize.

“We found shortly after I came here (in 2020) that there were a lot of really large Halloween events but that parents were really eager to bring their kids to a safe environment where they could go trunk to trunk with no traffic,” Norman said. “It was an opportunity for us to love them, to provide for them, to show them that we are a church that cares for them.”

One of the trunks was manned by an off-duty Santa Claus who gave out candy canes and invited children to Pancakes with Santa, an event hosted by the church in early December.

“My family has 22 years of Santa pictures with our children. We have spent a lot of time in line waiting on Santa,” Norman said. “We’ve spent a lot of money paying for those pictures. We decided we would provide an avenue for parents to come, eat pancakes, and take a picture of their kids with Santa—no stress.”

Church members had been training to share the gospel and their testimonies, the pastor said, and Pancakes with Santa provided an opportunity for them to engage their neighbors. Attendees were invited to the church’s Christmas Eve service, which was aimed at people who don’t know Jesus.

“On Christmas Eve, we saw probably twice our typical Sunday morning numbers,” Norman said.

Considering how God has used Regenesi s to renew University Baptist Church to this point, Norman encouraged other churches to set goals tailored for their congregations.

“My encouragement would be revitalization is very difficult. It is something only the Lord can do,” Norman said, “but I think the Regenesi s process provides an opportunity to discern how the Lord is leading your church.

“One of the things I constantly emphasize is that Regenesi s is not a copy and paste. It’s not a program. It’s not something you just pick up and take on,” he added. “The beauty of Regenesi s is that it helps you discern God’s vision for your church and the unique contribution to the kingdom your church has to offer.”

Regenesi s is designed to help churches identify and overcome growth barriers. A Regenesi s One-Day event is coming to your area soon. Scan the QR code to find the one nearest you:



# SALVATIONS, ONE OF LARGEST EMPOWER CROWDS EVER MARK 2024 CONFERENCE

## IRVING

John Meador, lead pastor of Cross City Church in Euless, offered a simple-yet-powerful reminder to the capacity crowd at the Cooperative Program luncheon at the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention 2024 Empower Conference: "God is faithful."

Though final numbers are still being tallied, more than 4,000 people are estimated to have attended this year's two-day Empower Conference on Feb. 26-27—representing one of the largest crowds in the history of the event.

Meador delivered the luncheon's keynote address, sharing personal stories of God's faithfulness from his 17.5 years at Cross City—faithfulness he said he experienced at every church he has served.

"In 45 years of marriage and 40 years of pastoral ministry, it never



Cross City Church Lead Pastor John Meador

ceases to amaze me to see how God moves," Meador said, "... to move people's hearts to give in such a way that churches are funded, pastors are paid, mission dollars are sent, and missionaries share the gospel all over the world."

In closing the luncheon, which had a theme of Advancing Mission, SBTC Executive Director Nathan Lorick encouraged churches by reminding them CP giving contributes to advancing the gospel across Texas, the nation, and the world.

"The Cooperative Program is the only thing under God's kingdom where you can be where you are and all around the world at the same time," Lorick said. "It is not a program. It is a people."

"In a day in which culture would say step out, I am asking you to lean in."

— JANE RODGERS



Tony Mathews (second from left) prepares to present Bill Gaither (center) with a plaque honoring his many years of kingdom service. SBTC Executive Director Nathan Lorick (second from right) is also pictured. **SBTC PHOTO**

## GAITHERS, JEREMIAH, REAVIS EXALT JESUS DURING CLASSICS SESSION

A crowd of over 1,800 enjoyed the Classics Session held on the first day of the Empower Conference, featuring the Gaither Vocal Band and pastors David Jeremiah and Herb Reavis Jr.

The event is planned each year with senior adults in mind. The Gaithers led off the session with an hourlong concert featuring their gospel quartet sound and later returned for another 40 minutes, after which SBTC Executive Director Nathan Lorick helped present Bill Gaither with a plaque commemorating his long impact on the kingdom of God.

— GARY LEDBETTER



## 18 SAVED AS PACKED HOUSE GATHERS FOR STUDENT RALLY

In only its second year, the high-energy Empower Conference Student Rally drew double the crowd—nearly 750 students and youth leaders from 70 churches—as the inaugural event did one year ago. But that wasn't the most important number.

Before the night ended at the Irving Convention Center, 18 students gave their lives to Christ following an invitation offered by evangelist Ryan Fontenot, founder of RAGE Ministries.

"The world says find yourself ... identify yourself. ... Jesus says, 'Deny yourself,'" said Fontenot, pictured at right praying over students. "Jesus is not signing up to be your co-pilot. He doesn't ride shotgun. ... He came to take over your life."

In addition to Fontenot, the rally featured illusionist Zak Mirz and worship leader Jimmy McNeal.

— JANE RODGERS



Speaker Rebekah Lyons

## LYONS URGES 'HOLY RESILIENCE' DURING WOMEN'S SESSION

How should Christian women meet life's challenges? With "holy resilience," according to speaker, author, and teacher Rebekah Lyons.

Lyons served as the featured speaker at the Women's Session held Feb. 26. Lyons, author of *Building a Resilient Life* and the devotional *A Surrendered Yes*, said culture maintains that resilience merely means to bounce back. "Jesus tells us the opposite: 'In this world, you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world.'"

Brokenness is universal, she added: "Any kid, any marriage, any home life, any relationship—we are all broken people in need of a Savior."

— JANE RODGERS

## APODERADOS ATTENDEES CHALLENGED: 'WE ARE ALL MISSIONARIES ... SENT ONES'



Pastor Eloy Rodriguez

### EULESS

They sang it and they prayed it: "Put in me the same mind that was in Christ ... make me a servant for your glory."

That was the heart cry of the more than 400 people who attended Apoderados Feb. 23-24 at Cross City Church. Apoderados, a conference held each year in conjunction with the Empower Conference, seeks to encourage, equip, and inspire Hispanic believers to evangelize their communities.

This year's conference emphasized world missions and how followers of Jesus can fulfill the Great Commission locally, nationally, and globally.

"We are all missionaries and we must live as sent ones," said Bruno Molina, the SBTC's language and interfaith evangelism associate, during a conference lunch panel.

— ARLENE SANABRIA

## IS YOUR CHURCH PROTECTED?

Frank Harber is a Christian attorney who works with churches and businesses that hold biblical views on marriage and human sexuality. He also serves as teaching and outreach pastor at Sunnyvale First Baptist Church. Harber was interviewed onstage by Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Executive Director Nathan Lorick during the 2024 Empower Conference held Feb. 26-27 in Irving for the purposes of informing churches of the legal help available to them through Harber's ministry. The following is an excerpt of that conversation:



Nathan Lorick(left) and attorney Frank Harber

**Nathan Lorick: In what areas would you say churches have the greatest need for legal protections today?**

**Frank Harber:** I think the greatest need we have is to make sure we're [legally] protected as we follow the Bible. I remember 30 years ago being at the Southern Baptist Convention and Adrian Rogers said the greatest battle the church was going to face in the future was [regarding] the family. Now we live in a world in which some people don't know what a man is and what a woman is. Webster's dictionary has changed how a marriage is defined. They're telling us now there are 102 genders .... In the church we have to say, "We're going to follow the Bible." But if something is not in your bylaws—and it's this way in every state—your bylaws will revert to the state's generic nonprofit bylaws. It's very important that we get very specific with our documents like never before if we want the religious liberty protections attached to them.

**NL: Based on your experience, how many churches have no idea how unprotected they are with their current documents?**

**FH:** A lot of big churches have [proper documentation], but most churches aren't protected. For example, if you don't want men who identify as women trying to use your women's restroom ... that's something you need to have in writing. Otherwise, you're going to have trouble saying they're violating your policies. You have to put policies in place so you don't get sued.

**NL: About a year ago, you started Church Shield. Can you share more information about this ministry?**

**FH:** Our Church Shield program now has 130 churches in it. It's a subscription program. You pay \$100 a month and we protect you with all your religious documents—your articles of incorporation, your bylaws, all your different policies. We also have over a thousand documents in our church bank. We really can create any document for you. When you sign up, you get all that. You also get free legal support from me. If somebody says, "Hey, we've got a situation in our church," you can call my cell phone and we won't charge you.

We represent churches on various legal issues. I'm licensed all the way up to the Supreme Court. We have a couple cases that might actually go to the Supreme Court, but most of the cases we take are churches. We're protecting churches on things that seem to be small, but if it affects the church's health, we're concerned. We are not a business. This is my ministry—the pastors and churches. So, I'm very passionate and excited about what we're doing.

For more information  
on Church Shield,  
scan the QR code:







Part of the Black Church Network dinner held on the final day of Empower included a panel discussion with (from right) Kason Branch, Averri Lemalle, Ed Johnson III, Caleb Turner, Leah Holder-Green, Sharonda Cooper, and Tony Mathews. **SBTC PHOTO**



At the Asian Empower Conference, Pastor Ryan Lee of Semihan Church preached a message and thanked the SBTC for its leadership in encouraging and equipping churches to be on mission. Lee challenged his hearers to be faithful in fulfilling the Great Commission. **SBTC PHOTO**

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# A GRAND **CHANGE** IN PLANS

**God uses ‘setback’ to open door for much-needed  
Hispanic church plant in Corpus Christi**

## CORPUS CHRISTI

**P**astor Ruben De Rus has personally experienced the biblical promise that God works all things together for good.

De Rus, originally from Spain, obtained a student visa and came to the U.S. in his 20s to study theology at a Baptist university in San Antonio. There he met his wife, Azucena, and, shortly before graduating, he was recruited to pastor a church in Colorado.

De Rus had been pastoring there for several years when he discovered something that would change the trajectory of his ministry: someone who had helped him obtain his religious visa did so fraudulently, forcing De Rus to change his plans and return to school so he could remain in the U.S. on his student visa. He decided

to pursue a master’s degree in clinical counseling, a path he says he might not have considered had things gone according to his own plans. During that time, he also took a job at a mental health center.

Little did he know, God was at work laying a foundation for ministry that would benefit the kingdom several years later.

By 2018, De Rus and his wife began sensing God calling them away from Colorado and back to Texas to be closer to her family. The Lord opened the door for De Rus to serve as a clinical counselor at a shelter for immigrant girls in the Corpus Christi area, a position he held for five years, the last serving as director of the counseling department.

As time passed, De Rus learned the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention had identified Corpus



as an area where more Hispanic church planters were needed. Although De Rus had no plans to return to pastoring, God impressed on his heart that he could help meet that need.

He began the evaluation process for planters through Send Network SBTC, the church planting partnership between the SBTC and North American Mission Board, in late 2022. He was sent out with the support of his church, Yorktown Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, its pastor, Jonathan Brazell, and its elders. De Rus and his family were officially commissioned as planters at the SBTC Annual Meeting in November 2022 and planted South Side Baptist Church in Corpus Christi a few months later.

### Having conversations, reaching families

South Side began holding Bible studies on Sundays in 2023, with De Rus and his wife being joined by friends Miguel and Daniela Barreras, who were eager to join the work God was doing. De Rus specifically felt called to put his experience and training as a clinical counselor into practice through the church, providing inner healing to people hurting and living without Jesus. That mission guided how South Side began reaching out to the community.

The church began offering a series of workshops called “Let’s Talk” addressing subjects such as immigration, parenting, and more. These talks helped the church connect with 10 families that attended not only the talks, but also church.

“Our focus at this time is to work with the family unit, and our mission is to make disciples of Christ who grow in their obedience to God and love for others,” De Rus said.

De Rus said it has been striking to see how many people the Lord has connected to the church in such a short time. South Side has witnessed a number of ministry doors open, allowing members to minister to families and vulnerable people. One of those opportunities has come through a local women’s shelter, where a woman there saw a social media ad promoting one of the church’s talks. She began attending, invited others to come, and, as a result, several have accepted Christ and been baptized.

South Side—which celebrated its one-year anniversary on Jan. 1, 2024, with a person coming to faith in Christ—has plans to expand its community outreach. Soon, a community plaza will be located on its premises where the church will offer ESL and GED classes. Additionally, a mobile Mexican consulate will operate there in May so Mexican citizens can legally resolve documentation issues.



▲ Ruben De Rus (back) is seen with his family (clockwise from right): Ariadna, Noemi, Jared, and wife, Azucena.

▼ South Side Baptist Church in Corpus Christi began with a handful of people (below), but that number swelled by the time the church celebrated its one-year anniversary a year later. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**



As a bivocational pastor who also serves as an assistant director at a family foster care program, De Rus said his prayer is that God will continue to help him manage his time well. He said it is a challenge to see great needs with few resources to address them. Even so, the plan is to faithfully minister to the 40 or so people attending South Side regularly while continuing to offer talks and workshops to strengthen families, introduce them to Jesus, and help them grow in their faith.

“When you decide to walk through [God’s] door, it’s amazing to see everything behind that door—which are opportunities to minister to people,” De Rus said. “We are seeing people coming to Christ, families integrated, serving, and growing in their relationship with God and strengthening their parent-child and spouse relationships.”



# UN GRAN CAMBIO DE PLANES

**Dios utiliza un “contratiempo” para abrir una puerta para la plantación de una iglesia hispana en Corpus Christi**

## CORPUS CHRISTI

**E**l pastor Rubén De Rus ha experimentado personalmente la promesa bíblica de que a los que aman a Dios, todas las cosas les ayudan a bien.

De Rus, originario de España, obtuvo una visa de estudiante y vino a EE.UU. a los 20 años para estudiar teología en una universidad bautista de San Antonio. Allí conoció a su esposa, Azucena, y, poco antes de graduarse, fue reclutado para pastorear una iglesia en Colorado.

De Rus llevaba varios años pastoreando allí cuando descubrió algo que cambiaría la trayectoria de su ministerio: alguien que le había ayudado a obtener su visa religiosa, lo hizo de forma fraudulenta, obligando a De Rus a hacer algo que no tenía previsto: volver a estudiar para poder permanecer en Estados Unidos con su visa de estudiante. De Rus decidió cursar una maestría en consejería clínica, un camino que, según él

dice, quizás no habría considerado si las cosas hubieran ido según sus propios planes. Durante ese tiempo, también trabajó en un centro de salud mental.

Poco sabía él, que Dios estaba trabajando y sentando las bases para el ministerio que beneficiaría al reino de Dios varios años más tarde.

En el 2018, De Rus y su esposa comenzaron a sentir que Dios los llamaba a salir de Colorado y regresar a Texas para estar más cerca de la familia de ella. El Señor abrió la puerta para que De Rus sirviera como consejero clínico en un refugio para niñas inmigrantes en el área de Corpus Christi—un puesto que ocupó durante cinco años, el último como director del departamento de consejería.

Con el paso del tiempo, De Rus se enteró de que la Convención de los Bautistas del Sur de Texas había identificado Corpus como una zona donde se necesitaban más plantadores de iglesias hispanos. Aunque De Rus no tenía planes de regresar al pastorado,



Dios puso en su corazón que él podía ayudar a satisfacer esa necesidad.

Él comenzó el proceso de evaluación de plantadores a través de Send Network SBTC, la asociación de plantación de iglesias entre la SBTC y la Junta de Misiones Norteamericanas, a finales del 2022. Fue enviado con el apoyo de su iglesia, Yorktown Baptist Church en Corpus Christi, su pastor, Jonathan Brazell, y su cuerpo de ancianos. De Rus y su familia fueron oficialmente comisionados como plantadores en la Reunión Anual de la SBTC en noviembre de 2022, y plantaron la Iglesia Bautista South Side en Corpus Christi unos meses después.

### **Teniendo conversaciones, alcanzando familias**

South Side comenzó a celebrar estudios bíblicos los domingos en el 2023, y a De Rus y su esposa se les unió una pareja de amigos, Miguel y Daniela Barreras, deseosos de unirse a la obra que Dios estaba haciendo. De Rus se sintió específicamente llamado a poner en práctica su experiencia y formación como consejero clínico a través de la iglesia, proporcionando sanidad interior a las personas que sufrían y vivían sin Jesús. Esa misión guió la forma en que South Side empezó a alcanzar a la comunidad.

La iglesia comenzó a ofrecer una serie de talleres llamados “Hablemos” que abordaban temas como la inmigración, la paternidad y otros. Estas charlas han ayudado a la iglesia a conectar con 10 familias que asistieron no sólo a las charlas, sino a la iglesia.

“Nuestro enfoque en este momento es trabajar con la unidad familiar, y nuestra misión es hacer discípulos de Cristo que crezcan en su obediencia a Dios y amor por los demás”, dijo De Rus.

De Rus dijo que ha sido sorprendente ver con cuántas personas el Señor le ha permitido a la iglesia conectar en tan poco tiempo. South Side ha visto abrirse una serie de puertas ministeriales, permitiendo a sus miembros ministrar a familias y personas vulnerables. Una de esas oportunidades ha llegado a través de un refugio local para mujeres, donde una mujer vio un anuncio en las redes sociales promocionando una de las charlas de la iglesia. Empezó a asistir, invitó a otras mujeres y, como resultado, varias han aceptado a Cristo y se han bautizado.

South Side—que celebró su primer aniversario el 1 de enero de 2024 con la llegada de una persona a la fe en Cristo—tiene planes para ampliar su alcance en la comunidad. Pronto, se instalará una plaza comunitaria en sus facilidades, donde la iglesia ofrecerá clases de inglés (ESL) y diploma de secundaria (GED). Además, en mayo funcionará allí un consulado mexicano móvil para que los ciudadanos mexicanos puedan resolver gestiones de documentación.



La Iglesia Bautista South Side en Corpus Christi comenzó con un puñado de personas, pero ese número creció para el momento en que la iglesia celebró su primer aniversario.

South Side ha trabajado duro para alcanzar y ministrar a su comunidad. La Navidad pasada, con la ayuda de una beca de la SBTC, la iglesia llevó a cabo un alcance evangelístico y regaló juguetes a los niños en el programa bilingüe de una escuela primaria local. **FOTO COMPARTIDA**



De Rus—que es un pastor bivocacional y también trabaja como subdirector en un programa de familias de acogida—dijo que su oración es que Dios siga ayudándole a administrar bien su tiempo. Dijo que es un reto ver las grandes necesidades que hay con pocos recursos para atenderlas. Aun así, el plan es ministrar fielmente a las cerca de 40 personas que asisten regularmente a South Side mientras se siguen ofreciendo charlas y talleres para fortalecer a las familias, presentarles a Jesús y ayudarles a crecer en su fe.

“Cuando decides entrar por la puerta [de Dios], es increíble ver todo lo que hay detrás de esa puerta, que son oportunidades para ministrar a la gente”, dijo De Rus. “Estamos viendo gente que viene a Cristo, familias integradas, sirviendo, y creciendo en su relación con Dios y fortaleciendo sus relaciones padre-hijo y cónyuge”.



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## JASON EARLS

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Jason Earls became pastor of North Garland Baptist Fellowship in December 2022, but he has long been involved at the church. He served as its youth pastor from 2011-2016 before stepping down to pursue a full-time career in stand-up Christian comedy, a passion he continues to pursue part-time. Born and raised in Portsmouth, Va., and the son and grandson of pastors, Earls came to the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex to attend Dallas Theological Seminary and stayed. He and his wife, Terri, have six children: Aaron, Alexandria, Alicia, Andrew, Achim, and Aniyah—as Earls quips, his “first time making straight A’s.”

### **What’s something you’ve been able to celebrate at North Garland recently?**

The number of individuals who have joined the kingdom by placing their faith in Christ. We’ve gotten to the point where we’ve had to renovate, turn our fellowship hall into our sanctuary to accommodate the amount of growth. We’ve had people coming to the Lord ... getting baptized, going public with their faith, and an overwhelming amount of young children. Families with multiple children are joining.

### **What are some of the biggest challenges you’ve faced in your ministry lately?**

The beautiful thing about NGBF is that we have six generations very well represented. For the first time in [modern] human history, we have six living generations: the silent generation, the baby boomers, Gen X, the millennials, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha. To be able to unify and show value to every generation has been consistently challenging. ... [I want us to] no longer look at generational leadership as a relay race where a baton is handed but ... as a Tour de France, where everybody has an integral part on this bicycle team. In a Tour de France, different people lead in different things, in different segments, in different parts of the race.

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

The more biblical knowledge, experience, and wisdom we get, the more we have the propensity to lean into our own understanding. When God gives you vision, you and your own understanding may hijack the vision God wants you to implement in His timing. It’s important to achieve the balance of using the experience and wisdom God has allowed you and that of those around you.

### **What is something you’d like to see happen at North Garland this year?**

For every individual to be so engaged with God’s Word and discipleship that we, as a church and as individuals in our own unique giftedness, are impacting Garland and the entire globe. God didn’t give everybody everything, but He gave everybody something and He wants you to use it in something to make His name known and to build His kingdom. If I could get everybody to understand what their something is and to use it for God’s kingdom, I could go be with Jesus.

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

Pray that this pastor and comedian stays faithful to his wife and children first, and that God allows Jason and every member of North Garland to be overwhelmed with the love of Jesus and His Word and a passion for the lost.



# How we've seen God raise up multigenerational disciples in our church

Over my first two decades of ministry, serving with students and as a lead pastor in New Mexico, my wife, Krista, and I experienced a consistent theme: we saw fruitful growth in the first generation of disciples in which we were investing as they studied the Word, memorized Scripture, engaged in personal evangelism, and connected through life-on-life communities that practiced vulnerable accountability. But we rarely saw those relationships create second-, third-, or fourth-generation disciples.

Don't get me wrong—we saw several victories for the Lord and isolated examples of multigenerational reproduction, but nothing like the multiplication testimonies we were hearing from pastors like David Platt, Robby Gallaty, and others. Honestly, I was discouraged with the feeling of always seeming to trip over a hurdle I was never quite able to clear.

This is when we went to the white board. At a pastor's retreat, we asked our whole team to write down the disciple-making tools they were using. We then prayed, agonized, and wrestled over letting go of some of our favorite tools in order to isolate only those we felt would be most effective at making multigenerational disciples.

From that process, we developed the following four principles that helped us leap over our non-multiplying hurdles. These principles became the catalyst for the discipleship strategy we adopted upon our return to serve in Texas.

## Create consistent language and tools

Curriculums come and go, but just like a master carpenter has specific tools he gives his apprentice, so too must disciple-makers equip others with lasting skills that remain consistent in future generations. At the front of every journal or workbook, we train disciple-makers to be proficient in the same four categories: tools for the discipleship meet-

ing, gospel-conversation tools, Bible study/prayer tools, and spiritual growth tools.

## Set the expectation to multiply from the beginning

Reproduction is greatly increased when the beginning of the relationship is started by saying, "This investment is not just for you, but also for the person you will disciple behind you, and the next soul, and the next soul." We look for four traits in those we train through our disciple-making process: they must be faithful, available, teachable, and reproducible (2 Timothy 2:2). Clearly setting this expectation at the outset makes it easier when you launch them out to multiply.

## Intentionally give away leadership sooner than you want

Structure meeting times in a way you can easily give portions of the meeting to those being trained. Most of us learn by doing, so we use the acronym MAWL (model, assist, watch, launch) to reinforce the idea that they will be leading others soon.

## Be disciplined to check in on downline disciple-makers

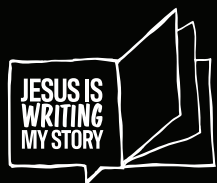
As multiple generations are reproduced, we're reminded of the importance of checking in on the growth of those we've launched. We have a pastor on our team devoted to mapping individuals using Coggle—a web-based tool that facilitates collaborative work—so we can pray, track, and check in.

I told our new church in Texas it could take up to three years to produce two dozen men and women equipped and participating in multiplying discipleship. By a miracle of God, we have six dozen already engaged and more than one example of discipleship to the fourth generation.

You may have different tools—and praise God if they are working in your context. Whatever you choose, always remember the priority Jesus gave us to make disciples who make disciples. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Let's get to work for His glory!



Aaron T. Colyer serves as lead pastor at First Baptist Church in Wimberley.



By Nitin Christopher  
(as told to Gary Ledbetter)

# I don't want to do anything but this!



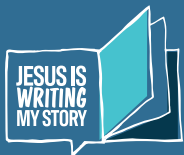
When I was a 16-year-old back in India, my soccer coach led me to the Lord. From that time, I've been very passionate about sharing the gospel with anybody and everybody. I feel a great burden to do this because otherwise they will perish. I don't want their blood to be on my head.

This passion continued as I became an engineering student in college and then moved to the United States to complete my education. My wife, Rachel, and I got plugged into an Indian church in the San Francisco area. I saw that the church was good, but I was not seeing an element of sharing the gospel to people who were outside the church. I started a group called EMT (Evangelism Ministry Team). We began to share the gospel with people who were recently released from prison, and we disciplined them. But I still felt a pull to do something more when one of the men asked me to baptize him.

So, in summer 2007 I was crying out loud in my car driving on Highway 101 when I heard the Lord telling me, "Feed my sheep." I said, "Lord, I don't know how to feed sheep. I can share the gospel. I can lead people to the Lord, but I don't know how to feed sheep." But later I heard two messages on the radio by Chuck Swindoll and Chip Ingram. Both of them were talking about how men of God should be prepared in season and out of season to share the Word of God, to prepare people for God's work. I loved it. I wanted to find out where these two pastors studied. Both studied at Dallas Theological Seminary. We prayed—my wife, my three kids, and I—and we left California and moved to Dallas to go to seminary.

After enrolling at Dallas Seminary, I was struggling—no job, no finances—but God was still good. I went to a [church] nearby, ate food there because they gave free food ... went to seminary, flunked Greek a couple of times, but those were good challenges. I did a church planting class with Aubrey Malphurs that God really used. I heard bikers give testimony of churches they started, of people who left [the profession of being] prostitutes. They started doing ministry among those women for their children, starting churches in San Francisco and other places. These testimonies enhanced my thinking: "You know what? Just evangelism won't work. Church planting is the way to do discipleship."

There were so many Asian Indians coming to Dallas around 2010 and 2011, and there were temples coming up everywhere. I used to go to every site and pray that God would never allow



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a temple to grow or be completed. But [later] I started thinking, “Why don’t I tap into all these Indians and start sharing the gospel?” In my church planting class, we wrote mission statements for a church plant. Mine was “Seek the lost, strengthen the weak, and send the strong.” With this mission statement, we registered our church, Church of the Way, on April 1, 2010. We still use that mission statement as we set priorities in our ministry.

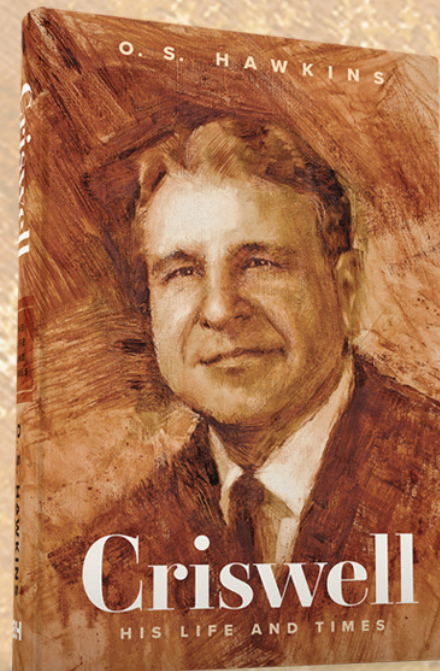
Church of the Way planted its first church in Murphy two years later. That one didn’t last, and we’ve had a couple of other tries that didn’t stick. But we have congregations in Carrollton, Frisco, and Plano, along with two services in Tamil [a South Indian language] that meet each week. We have struggled sometimes to find places to meet, but now have a building we bought from an Armenian congregation and we just contracted to buy a second building from a Lutheran church.

I just love the Word of God and teaching people how to read the Word of God. I share this with everybody so they can understand. In 1 Timothy 4, Paul talks to Timothy and tells him to get into this habit of the public reading of Scriptures, exhorting people, and teaching people. That’s what I follow. It’s a joy. I don’t think I’ll ever be tired of doing this. I don’t want to do anything else but this.

(Opposite page) Nitin and Rachel are pictured in 2007 upon their arrival in Dallas. (TOP) Only Rachel and Nitin were present at the first meeting of their church in 2010. (Bottom) A much larger crowd was present years later when the church gathered with the other churches it has planted.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

**PULPITS STILL  
MOVE PEOPLE  
AND PEOPLE CAN  
STILL CHANGE  
THEIR WORLD.**



Giants among us seem to be forgotten as the years pass by, but the life and legacy of W.A. Criswell is one that should be preserved for generations who are here and still yet to come.

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**Maplecrest Baptist Church in Vidor** is prayerfully seeking the man God has for us to serve as FT or bivocational pastor. Our congregation is moderately small and our church plant consists of large, updated, debt-free buildings. A 5-bedroom parsonage is available onsite. Please submit resumes to [maplecrestbc@outlook.com](mailto:maplecrestbc@outlook.com).

**Mission Dorado Baptist Church in Odessa** is seeking a FT senior pastor. Anyone wishing to be considered can email their resume to [mdbcpscsearch@gmail.com](mailto:mdbcpscsearch@gmail.com).

**FBC Mexia** is seeking a FT senior pastor to lead our church forward with dynamic, doctrinally sound preaching. Our congregation is aging and we need to connect better with younger families. If interested in small-town life, email resume by April 15, 2024, to [fbcmexiapastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:fbcmexiapastorsearch@gmail.com).

**Golinda Baptist Church in Golinda**, near Waco, is seeking a FT head pastor. If interested, please call 254-396-7514 or email [golinda.search@gmail.com](mailto:golinda.search@gmail.com).

**New Hope Baptist Church in Big Sandy** is seeking a PT senior pastor. Please email resume to Mike at [NHBCBS@gmail.com](mailto:NHBCBS@gmail.com) or call and leave a message with our church secretary at 903-636-4711.

**FBC Point** is seeking a FT pastor to lead and grow our congregation for Christ. Please submit resume to [fbcpoint@frontier.com](mailto:fbcpoint@frontier.com) or mail to FBC Point, P.O. Box 117, Point, Texas 75472.

**Friendship Baptist Church in Cleburne** is seeking to call a FT pastor. If you are interested, please send a resume with a cover letter of introduction to Friendship Baptist Church, P.O. Box 724, Cleburne, Texas 76033, or email to [admin@friendshipcleburne.org](mailto:admin@friendshipcleburne.org).

**Preston Ridge Church in Frisco** is seeking a FT lead pastor. Interested candidates should submit resume and brief introduction to [pastorsearch@prestonridge.org](mailto:pastorsearch@prestonridge.org).

**FBC Hico** is seeking a FT pastor. Mail resume to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 519, Hico, Texas 76457, or email to [firstbaptisthico@gmail.com](mailto:firstbaptisthico@gmail.com). Website is [firstbaptisthico.com](http://firstbaptisthico.com).

**FBC Ferris** is seeking a FT pastor. We will consider bivocational. Send resumes to [office@fbcferris.com](mailto:office@fbcferris.com).

**Reklaw Baptist Church in Reklaw** is seeking a bivocational pastor at a small Southern Baptist Church with Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening services rooted in the inerrant Word of God. Looking for a pastor to help grow the size of the congregation. Email resume to [reklawbaptistchurch@gmail.com](mailto:reklawbaptistchurch@gmail.com).

**Friendship Baptist Church in Buna** is seeking a bivocational pastor. We are a small congregation looking for God's man to lead us in reaching our community. Mail resumes to Friendship Baptist Church, Hwy. 96 South, P.O. Box 759, Buna, Texas 77612. Contact: Steve Dollar, interim pastor, at 409-893-4767.

**Second Baptist Church of Jacinto City**, located in Houston, seeks an ordained Southern Baptist minister to fill the position of bilingual (English/Spanish) bivocational pastor to shepherd our church to the next chapter of God's plan. Please submit resume to [SecondBaptistJC@outlook.com](mailto:SecondBaptistJC@outlook.com).

**FBC Darrouzett** is seeking a bivocational pastor. Email resume to [1stbaptistcdarrouzett@gmail.com](mailto:1stbaptistcdarrouzett@gmail.com). Call Nancy Barnett at 817-629-9275 for more information.

**FBC Dawson** is seeking a PT pastor. Please submit your cover letter and resume to [fbcdawsonstx@gmail.com](mailto:fbcdawsonstx@gmail.com). Submitting your resume is an indication on your part that you meet all biblical qualifications to be a pastor.

**Hainesville Baptist Church in Mineola** seeks a man of God to pastor our flock in beautiful East Texas. FT or bivocational applicants considered. Visit [htxhc.com/Pastor-Applicants](http://htxhc.com/Pastor-Applicants) to learn more. Send resume to [htxhcbs@yahoo.com](mailto:htxhcbs@yahoo.com).

**Indian Rock Baptist Church in Gilmer** is seeking a bivocational pastor for growing rural community. Active local elderly ministries, faithful small traditional congregation, financially stable. Parsonage provided. Contact Alton Bradley [altonandlind@juno.com](mailto:altonandlind@juno.com).

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

## MUSIC

**Emmanuel Baptist Church in New Caney/Houston** is seeking a FT or PT worship leader to join our team. We are looking for a passionate individual who has experience leading worship, strong musical abilities, and discipleship skills to build a team. If you are interested, please contact us at [info@ebc.life](mailto:info@ebc.life).

**FBC Wimberley** is seeking a FT minister of music and media. We are a friendly congregation of devoted followers of Christ in the Texas Hill Country. Email resume or questions to [mike@fbcwimberley.com](mailto:mike@fbcwimberley.com).

**Paramount Baptist Church in Amarillo** is eager to welcome a new FT worship pastor. Responsibilities include leading and producing worship services and managing the music ministry budget. Full job description and application instructions can be found at [paramount.org/employment](http://paramount.org/employment) or by calling 806-355-3396.

**His Place Fellowship in Paris** is seeking a FT worship pastor to lead in mostly contemporary music with assistance from our talented praise band & worship team. For information or to send resume, email Pastor Mike Fortenberry at [mikefortenberry@hotmail.com](mailto:mikefortenberry@hotmail.com), or mail to His Place Fellowship, P.O. Box 128, Paris, Texas 75460.

**FBC Dumas** is seeking a FT pastor for worship and music. Mail resume to First Baptist Church, 420 S. Bliss Ave., Dumas, Texas 79029, call 806-935-5604, or email [mattp@firstdumas.com](mailto:mattp@firstdumas.com).

**Oak Street Baptist Church in Graham** is seeking a FT worship pastor for our congregation. To apply directly, send a resume and links of work samples to [worshipsearch@oakstreetchurch.com](mailto:worshipsearch@oakstreetchurch.com).

**Voth Baptist Church in Beaumont** is seeking a bivocational worship leader. Contact Jason Mitchell at 409-550-5428 or email resume to [jasonm@myclassicgm.com](mailto:jasonm@myclassicgm.com).

**Windom Baptist Church in Windom** is seeking a PT music leader. For more information, call 903-623-2215 or email resume to [WindomBaptist@gmail.com](mailto:WindomBaptist@gmail.com).

**Blanchard Baptist Church in Livingston** is prayerfully seeking a bivocational music minister/leader. Please send resume and letter of interest to [blanchardbaptchurch@livingston.net](mailto:blanchardbaptchurch@livingston.net) or Blanchard Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, 2450 FM 2457, Livingston, Texas 77351.

## STUDENTS

**Houston's First Baptist Church** is seeking a FT high school pastor. Email resume to

[www.vanderbloemen.com/job/houston-first-baptist-high-school-pastor](http://www.vanderbloemen.com/job/houston-first-baptist-high-school-pastor).

**Paramount Baptist Church in Amarillo** is excitedly searching for a new FT student and preteen pastor. Responsibilities include planning and leading youth gatherings and discipleship programs. Full job description and application instructions can be found at [paramount.org/employment](http://paramount.org/employment) or by calling 806-355-3396.

**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](mailto:personnel@sherwood.church).

**Kingsland Baptist Church in Katy** is seeking a FT junior high girls minister to help co-lead the student ministry by partnering with parents, equipping leaders, and developing relationships, programs, and events to disciple students, with special emphasis placed on the discipleship of junior high girls. Email resume to [bfurry@kingsland.org](mailto:bfurry@kingsland.org).

**FBC Whitney** is seeking a PT youth minister. Email resumes with introduction letter to [jnk4jesus@yahoo.com](mailto:jnk4jesus@yahoo.com).

**Deer Park First Baptist in Deer Park** is seeking a PT worship pastor. If interested, please send a resume to [Dpfbcsearch@gmail.com](mailto:Dpfbcsearch@gmail.com).

**Nesbitt Baptist Church in Marshall** is seeking a PT youth minister to provide spiritual leadership by teaching and Christian example. The candidate needs to live close enough to "do life" with the youth. If this part-time position fits your personal ministry journey, contact Pastor Scott Seeley at 903-263-6289; [slseeley@hotmail.com](mailto:slseeley@hotmail.com).

**Calvary Baptist Church in Anna** is seeking a summer 2024 PT youth intern to assist with summer ministry activities. Approximately 5-10 hours a week. This is an opportunity to learn and minister at the same time. If interested, please send resume to [pastorcbcanna@gmail.com](mailto:pastorcbcanna@gmail.com).

**New Hope Southern Baptist Church in Kaufman** is seeking a man who fulfills the qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 to serve as a PT youth minister. Contact Jeff Campbell at [jeffery.c.campbell@gmail.com](mailto:jeffery.c.campbell@gmail.com) for more info.

**Shady Grove Baptist in North Richland Hills** is seeking a PT student minister. Send resume and cover letter to [sgbcyouthsearch@gmail.com](mailto:sgbcyouthsearch@gmail.com).

**Cottonwood Baptist Church in Lorena** is seeking a PT youth pastor. Email resume to [thecottonwoodbc@gmail.com](mailto:thecottonwoodbc@gmail.com).

**The Parish Church in Denton** is seeking a FT student director. The Parish is a thriving church plant ready to make a lasting impact on young lives. Interested candidates, please email your resume to [jobs@dentonparish.com](mailto:jobs@dentonparish.com).

**North Garland Baptist Fellowship in Garland** is seeking a PT student ministry director responsible for a comprehensive program for grades 7-12, including discipleship, evangelism, enrichment activities, camps, and retreats. Recruit, train, and supervise volunteers and ensure parent involvement. Complete job description upon request. Bachelor's degree preferred. Email resume to [scalhoun@ngbf.org](mailto:scalhoun@ngbf.org).

## CHILDREN

**East Paris Baptist Church in Paris** is looking for a FT children's pastor/director. Please send your resume to [kidspastorsearch@eastparis.org](mailto:kidspastorsearch@eastparis.org). Check out our website at [eastparis.org](http://eastparis.org).



**Lane Prairie Baptist Church in Joshua** is seeking a FT children's minister. We are a church committed to discipleship, missions, and evangelism, seeking to make Jesus known to children, students, and adults both locally and to the remotest part of the earth. Email resumes to rfuchs@lpbc.us.

**Oak Street Baptist Church in Graham** is seeking a FT children's minister (or pastor) to provide vision and leadership for spiritual growth and development of K-5th grade on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, and periodic special events throughout the year. Email resume and cover letter to childrenssearch@oakstreet.church.

**Calvary Baptist Church in Anna** is seeking a PT children's intern for the 2024 summer to assist with summer ministry activities. Approximately 5-10 hours a week. This is an opportunity to learn and minister at the same time. If interested, please send resume to pastorcbcanna@gmail.com.

**Trinity Hills Baptist Church in Benbrook** is seeking a childcare worker to help in nursery 3-6 hours a week. Salary will be \$18 an hour. If you have any questions or interest, please email Kyle Harris at youth@trinityhills.org or call 817-249-0704.

#### COMBINATION

**FBC Wellington** is seeking a FT or possibly PT youth and children's pastor to shepherd the ministries related to children, youth, and families through discipleship and gospel teaching. Email resume to fbcwsearch2023@gmail.com.

**FBC Olney** is seeking a FT associate pastor to work with youth and to assist the pastor. Salary: \$35K-\$40K+, nice parsonage. Email resume to fbcjan@brazosnet.com.

**FBC Centerville** is looking for a FT youth/worship pastor. This is a combo position. We are looking for a person who can lead a blended type worship service with a contemporary lean and who also loves working with teenagers. If interested, please email resume to Tony at decree777@yahoo.com.

**Southwest Chinese Baptist Church in Stafford** is seeking a FT minister of children and junior high youth. We are one church with English, Cantonese, and Mandarin congregations with about 200 adults and 40 children and youth. Contact Pastor Henry Kwan by email at barbaralole@gmail.com or at henrykwan@swcbc.org. Mobile: 516-467-8869. Website: swcbc.org.

**Macedonia Baptist Church in Longview** is seeking a FT worship & discipleship pastor. If interested, please send your resume to search@macbc.org.

**Central Baptist in Hillsboro** is seeking a FT youth/children's minister. Children's ministry will be more oversight and administrative. Need someone to plant themselves and build a strong ministry to students and parents. Contact Darrel Beggs at pastord.beggs@gmail.com.

**Little Cypress Baptist in Orange** is accepting resumes for a FT or PT position which is worship ministry focused, but also includes ministry with the preschool and children's area. Worship style is blended. Please send resumes to turnerddd@olive.com.

**Indian Creek Baptist Church in Mineral Wells** is seeking a FT associate pastor of discipleship & worship. Send resume to icbcsearchteam2023@gmail.com.

#### OTHER

**FBC Georgetown** is seeking a FT mobilization pastor, focusing on outreach, missions, and small groups. Be a part of our dynamic team impacting lives in our community and around the globe. Apply now by sending your resume to searchteam@fbc.gchurch.

**FBC Forney** is hiring a head of school for a new Christian school in Forney. FT with paid benefits. For more info, visit fbcforney.org/jobs.

**New Faith Baptist Church in Aledo** is seeking a PT associate pastor of family ministry to oversee youth and children's ministries and create strong personal connections within the church and the community. Salary commensurate with experience. Prefer bachelor's degree or enrolled in ministry program. Send resume to boonedonna1820@gmail.com.

**FBC Pampa** is seeking a FT director for its Child Development Center. The director leads our M-F early childhood center (avg. 80-100 preschoolers, plus 40+ K-5 in afterschool program with tremendous growth potential). To submit a resume or request a complete position description and application, email byron@firstpampa.org.

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

**The Kauf-Van Baptist Association in Terrell** is seeking a new FT director of missions. KVBA is made up of 75 churches and missions in a rapidly growing area just east of Dallas. Resumes are being received at domsearch@kaufvan.com and at P.O. Box 708, Terrell, Texas 75160.

**FBC Dumas** is seeking a summer pastoral intern. Mail resume to First Baptist Church, 420 S. Bliss Ave., Dumas, Texas 79029, call 806-935-5604, or email mattp@firstdumas.com.

**Mobberly Baptist Church in Longview** is seeking an audio and lighting tech. Job applicant may contact Mobberly Baptist Church, Scott Link, 625 E. Loop 281, Longview, Texas 75605, call 903-663-3100, or email scottl@mobberly.org.

**Trinity Baptist Church in Fort Worth** is seeking a PT secretary. Call 817-732-5566 or email pastor@trinityfortworth.org. Website: trinityfortworth.org.

**Trinity Baptist Church in Fort Worth** has paid internships available. For more information, call Clint Hopson at 817-732-5566 or email pastor@trinityfortworth.org. Church website is trinityfortworth.org.

**FBC Forney Christian School** is seeking a PT administrative assistant. For more info, visit fbcforney.org/jobs.

**Central Baptist Church in Itasca** is looking for a PT minister to families to work with parents and families to strengthen and lead our youth and kids ministries. Send resumes and inquiries to matt@itascacbc.org.

**FBC Forney** is growing and hiring an administrative assistant. PT M-Th, flexible schedule, paid holidays. Email jjordan@fbcforney.org for more information.

**First Steps Preschool at Katy's First Baptist Church** 600 Pin Oak Rd, Katy, Texas 77494, is seeking a PT admin assistant/assistant to the director. Contact June Lee at jlee@katysfirst.org.

## Paid Classifieds

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

#### PASTOR

**Sandia Baptist Church in Albuquerque, N.M.**, a SBC church, is seeking a full-time senior pastor. This is a preaching and leadership position. Full requirements may be found at sandiabaptist.org/about by clicking on the box under Senior Pastor Search Team on the web page. For questions or to send resumes, email pastorsearch@sandiabaptist.org.

**FBC Stillwater in Oklahoma** is seeking a FT senior pastor. Mail resume to Pastor Search Team, First Baptist Church, 701 S. Duncan, Stillwater, Okla. 74074, or email to fbc.mail@brightok.net.

**First Indian Baptist Church in Taos, N.M.**, is seeking a bivocational pastor to serve, lead, and teach God's Word. The primary areas for spiritual outreach are on the Taos and Picuris pueblos in New Mexico. Email Church Pastor Committee at gibsonrg@outlook.com.

**First Baptist Church in Erick, Okla.**, is seeking a bivocational pastor. Parsonage included. Bible-preaching, willing to visit community & relate well to all ages in spreading the gospel. Must work well with others & have administrative knowledge. Email resume to mdurham@dobsontealeco.com, or mail to Box 664, Erick, Okla., 73645.

#### MUSIC

**Vallecito Baptist Church** (17576 CR 501, Bayfield, Colo. 81122) is seeking a FT or PT worship leader. Mail resume to the church. Call Bob Tate (361-649-2914) or Fred Hewett (970-317-3040) for more information.

**First Baptist Church in Rio Rancho, N.M.**, is seeking a FT music pastor to lead our large music program. Please send your resumes to fbcrrresumes@gmail.com.

#### OTHER

##### Tennessee Baptist Foundation seeking president-treasurer

The Tennessee Baptist Foundation is committed to helping Christians impact ministries they are passionate about in the most substantial way possible. Today, the foundation administers in excess of \$180 million of God's money given by God's people for God's purposes. From providing estate planning services for churches and individuals to managing financial resources effectively and efficiently, the foundation is proud to play a vital role in sharing the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The foundation is seeking a president-treasurer to build upon its 85 years of service and provide leadership for the future. The president-treasurer will join a strong team of dedicated professionals and board of trustees in seeing the Tennessee Baptist Foundation grow and strengthen its level of service to Tennessee Baptist churches, like-minded evangelical ministries, and beyond.

You may view the job description on the TBF website [tbfoundation.org/president-search](http://tbfoundation.org/president-search). If you or someone you know is interested in applying, please submit a cover letter and resume to the foundation's Executive Committee email account: [tbfoundation1938@gmail.com](mailto:tbfoundation1938@gmail.com).

Deadline for applications is March 31, 2024.

# CHOOSE A MINISTRY MULLIGAN OVER MISERY

I have tried really hard to like golf, but I prefer hobbies that do not tempt me to say or do things I will regret later. One thing I do like about golf is the mulligan—a do-over stroke that doesn't count. They make those terrible shots disappear into thin air.

In Genesis 35, we see Jacob in desperate need of a mulligan. He has wasted the last decade of his life and God gave him a chance to start over by moving him back to Bethel. Eventually, you will need a ministry mulligan, too, so let's retrace Jacob's footsteps back to Bethel.

## Get up and go

God initiated Jacob's restoration by telling him in Genesis 35:1 to "Get up! Go to Bethel and settle there. Build an altar there." In defiance of God's clear instruction, Jacob lived in Shechem for 10 years instead of Bethel. His large family paid for his delayed obedience (aka: disobedience) in Genesis 34.

Fortunately, Jacob got another chance to get up and go to Bethel. I love it when God gives us a mulligan!

If you are stuck spiritually, consider making an aggressive spiritual move. Get up and go back to where you started when you fell in love with Jesus. Initiate a spiritual homecoming by building a new altar to the Lord. If your ministry is stuck, the same instructions apply to the group. There are no secrets or shortcuts to repentance and revival—just turn around (repent) and return to your first love.

## Clean out your closets

Jacob's family closets were full of foreign gods. If they were going to start over in a new place, they needed to re-prioritize what to pack. Jacob said to his family, "Get rid of the foreign gods that are among you. Purify

yourselves and change your clothes" (Genesis 35:2).

We've moved several times in the last five years as my ministry journey has led us from Nashville to Tulsa to Dallas. Each move made us rethink what we really wanted to keep, give away, or throw away.

Spiritual house cleaning is usually not a quick or painless process. However, if you want to get unstuck spiritually, you will need to aggressively get rid of some of your old baggage. After Jacob's family cleaned out their closets, they buried their idolatry under the oak of Shechem.

What's in your closet? Would you consider some aggressive spring cleaning for your soul, your family, or your ministry? Think of one thing that needs to be removed from your calendar or computer right now, then get rid of it before you change your mind.

## Rebuild your altar

Jacob eventually returned to Bethel, where he had made a covenant with God 30 years earlier (Genesis 28). The old altar was rubble, so he rebuilt it. Jacob had basically wasted the last three decades of his life obsessing over his job at the expense of his relationship with God and his family.

Instead of giving up, Jacob got up, cleaned up, and rebuilt his life based on the original covenant that God was giving him another shot at. Jacob's ministry mulligan is a great reminder that God is more interested in what is ahead of you than what is behind you.

Jesus is generously offering you grace instead of guilt, a mulligan instead of misery. Is it time for you to go back to Bethel for a spiritual homecoming? Get packing, friend!



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



# WHAT'S UP NEXT?

2024 CALENDAR

For more information about SBTC events,  
visit [sbtexas.com/events](https://sbtexas.com/events) or scan the QR code



**APRIL 5-6**

## Heart of the Child Conference

Southwestern Baptist  
Theological Seminary

## APRIL

- 1** Regenesis One-Day, Fort Worth
- 1** Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering (online)
- 2** Regenesis One-Day, Weatherford
- 4-6** Ven Y Reposas, Retiro Para la Esposa del Pastor (Español Pastor Wives Retreat)
- 6** Intro to DR & Phase 1 Training, Pampa
- 8** Evangelism Connections (online)
- 11-13** Come Away Pastor Wives Retreat, Aquilla
- 11** Kingdom-Building Roundtable, Beaumont
- 13** Bible Drill and Speakers Tournament Regional, Houston
- 15** Regenesis One-Day, Pittsburg
- 20** Who's Your One? Advancing the Movement, Houston
- 20** Bible Drill and Speakers Tournament Regional, Fort Worth
- 22** Disciple-Making Forum, Abilene
- 25** Disciple-Making Forum, El Paso
- 26** Women's Ministry Leadership Summit, Beaumont
- 27** Bible Drill Regional, Flint
- 29** Regenesis One-Day, McKinney
- 29** Bivo Pastors Network Regional Gathering, Paris



**MAY 15-17**

## Collegiate Roundup

CrossCreek Church, Colleyville

## MAY

- 1** Regenesis Online Interest Meeting
- 4** Mujeres Firmes, Austin
- 4** Bible Drill and Speaker Tournament Finals, Fort Worth
- 6** Regenesis One-Day, McAllen
- 6** Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering (online)
- 9** Regenesis One-Day, Angleton
- 13** Regenesis One-Day, Conroe
- 16-18** Breathe Deep Retreat, Austin
- 16** Regenesis Online Interest Meeting
- 17-18** Retiro para Adultos Mayores, Belton
- 28-1** M3 Camp, Mt. Lebanon
- 28** Evangelism Connections (online)



**JUNE 9-12**

## Southern Baptist Convention, Indianapolis

## JUNE

- 1** Mujeres Firmes, Laredo
- 3** Regenesis One-Day, El Paso
- 13** Bible Drill Nationals
- 17** Kingdom-Building Roundtable, New Braunfels
- 21** Noche de Cita, Grapevine
- 24-26** Asian Pastors Family Retreat

EQUIP IS DESIGNED FOR ALL LEADERS IN YOUR CHURCH



# EQUIP

conference

[SBTEXAS.COM/EQUIP](http://SBTEXAS.COM/EQUIP)

THEME **ABOVE & BEYOND** EPH. 3:14-21

JULY 27

20  
24

PRESTONWOOD  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
PLANO



Keynote  
**NATHAN LORICK**

SBTC Executive Director



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