


SOUTHERN BAPTIST
TEXAN

AUGUST 2024 | VOL. 23 | NO. 8



GOING WEST, MOVING FORWARD

SBTC's Reach Nevada initiative is propelling
Lone Star State churches into a growing gospel field

 The joys, struggles, and
critical need for connection
among pastors' wives

 Young Pastors Network:
'True friends take you
to the feet of Jesus'

 Houston church damaged
during storm reaches out to
minister to its community



MOBILIZING TO BE ON MISSION TOGETHER



I REMEMBER IT AS IF IT WERE YESTERDAY, stepping off the plane on the island of Cebu in the Philippines. It was hot and humid, yet there was an excitement with our team I had not experienced before. I had been the pastor of this church for a couple of years, and this was our first mission trip together. The next few days flew by, and we had some incredible experiences serving the Lord.

Leading mission trips for our church became both a passion and a priority. Over the remainder of my time pastoring, we led over 10% of our church overseas on mission trips every year. It lit a fire in us for missions and evangelism that ultimately would begin spreading in our local community.

I love mobilizing people to go on mission for the Lord. If you are a pastor, let me strongly encourage you to develop mission opportunities for your people. It will have a lasting impact on the ministry of your local church.

Many churches have mission strategies and opportunities already in place. If your church does, be intentional about leading those trips and taking as many as possible. For a lot of churches, the desire to go is there, but maybe the opportunities are limited. Some churches can send large teams and some only a couple of people. In either circumstance, the

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention can come alongside you and help you develop a strategy that provides mission opportunities.

In fact, we have a great missions mobilization strategy to do just that, assisting churches in mobilizing their people to the mission field. We have mission opportunities in India, Puerto Rico, and Nevada, and we are in the process of developing some other great mission avenues, as well. Mission trip grants are also available to SBTC pastors. If you would like more information, please contact Colin Rayburn, our missions mobilization associate, at crayburn@sbtc.com. We would love to serve you in this way.

If you are a pastor, we lead vision trips to these mission opportunities. We would love to have you join us on one of these trips. I will personally be on some of them and would be honored to spend some time with you as you seek ways to mobilize your people. I love you and am honored to be on mission with you.

Dr. Nathan Lorick
SBTC Executive Director



Engage.
Encourage.
Equip.

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

Correspondents:

Mark Dance
Danny Forshee
Susan Gobert
Gary Ledbetter
Jane Rodgers
Arlene Sanabria

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

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

Have you subscribed to the Texan? Scan QR code or visit texan.digital/subscribe



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

ONLINE texan.digital

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

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



CONTENTS

VOLUME 23 // NO. 8
AUGUST 2024



BEING A LIGHT IN THE COMMUNITY

CHURCH PARTNERS WITH SBTC DR TO BE
HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS FOLLOWING STORM

10



6



14



19

2 FROM THE EDITOR

In this kingdom, nothing is small

4 FROM THE SBTC PRESIDENT

Want to live powerfully? Do this ...

5 LEADING OFF

Sometimes, it's the little things

6 WESTERN SWING

South Texas church becomes first to put boots on the ground as part of the SBTC's Reach Nevada initiative

13 5 MINUTES WITH RAYMOND PERRY

14 'IF THERE'S SOMETHING TO BE DONE, WE'LL BE THERE'

Despite suffering damage of its own, Houston church reaches out to hurting community following devastating storms

16 'SI HAY ALGO QUE HACER, ALLÍ ESTAREMOS'

A pesar de los daños que sufrieron, iglesia de Houston tiende la mano a la comunidad tras las devastadoras tormentas

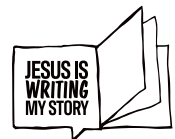
19 BEING A PASTOR'S WIFE IS A TEAM SPORT!



22 'THEY TAKE YOU TO THE FEET OF JESUS'

Central Texas pastor finds community, support through Young Pastors Network

24 GOD HAS GIVEN ME A NEW FOCUS AND A NEW MISSION



28 PASTORAL WELLNESS THE TOP TWO PRIORITIES OF EVERY PASTOR





IN THIS KINGDOM, NOTHING IS SMALL

YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER HEARD OF First Baptist Church of Woodsboro. In fact, you've probably never heard of Woodsboro.

Woodsboro is a little pocket of a town hanging off the southeast side of State Highway 77, about 40 miles north of Corpus Christi. There's no Walmart there, but they do have a 2A high school equipped with a hurricane shelter (standard issue for that part of the state), a Dairy Queen (standard issue in many a small Texas town), and a dollar store.

The town is home to about 1,300 residents, 80 of whom can be found on any given Sunday inside FBC Woodsboro.

"We are just a very normal-sized church," their pastor, Jordan Newberry, recently told me. "We're not a megachurch at all. Nothing like that. We're just your normal, everyday Southern Baptist church—full of good people, though."

Within this issue, you'll find a story about FBC Woodsboro that we hope inspires you. To be honest, it's not so much a story about FBC Woodsboro as it is a story about what God can do when kingdom-minded people say yes to the Lord and then wait to see where He will lead.

FBC Woodsboro recently returned from a mission trip to Nevada, where members worked alongside Pathfinder Church in Reno to connect with the community through a series of public outreach events. As the week wrapped up, Pathfinder's pastor said having FBC Woodsboro's assistance paved the way for him to have more meaningful conversations with Reno residents over the course of a week than he'd had in any other week since he planted the church about a year ago.

So how in the world did a rural church in Texas get connected with a church in a hustle-bustle town like Reno?

A couple years ago, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention partnered with the Nevada Baptist Convention to do kingdom work together. Through the partnership, the SBTC began offering its resources to help NBC churches become stronger and multiply. Part of that commitment included the SBTC making its churches aware of the opportunity to work side by side with Southern Baptist churches in Nevada.

These aren't connections churches like FBC Woodsboro would normally expect to have. But by leveraging the SBTC's network, the church was able to send a group to a western state for a week to help a young church hungry to reach the lost better connect with its community.

"We're not a huge church," Newberry said, "but we're still able to go and have an impact."

To be clear, there are megachurches among the SBTC's 2,700-plus churches doing amazing kingdom work. But there are also much smaller SBTC churches like FBC Woodsboro having a massive eternal impact not just in their

communities, but around the world.

Having pastored, I know how overwhelming it can feel to just address the needs in your own congregation and community. It can often feel like paddling as hard as you can just to keep your head above water, so reaching outside your local context might feel difficult.

That's one of the reasons God calls us to something greater. He calls us to be members of a body, one that works together to achieve His purposes. When we work together to multiply our resources behind a common gospel goal, there is no small work. It's a great work performed by thousands and thousands of faithful hands working together.



NOVEMBER 1, 2024

Preview Day



Southwestern Seminary is committed to helping you live your calling by equipping you with both theological and practical training. See how at Preview Day.

[SWBTS.EDU/PREVIEW](https://www.swbts.edu/preview)



WANT TO LIVE POWERFULLY? DO THIS ...

FORGIVENESS IS A WONDERFUL THING TO RECEIVE, but at times hard for us to give. I am currently reading a deeply theological and philosophical book by Miroslav Volf entitled *Exclusion and Embrace*. This book made *Christianity Today's* top 100 list of 20th century religious works. Volf is from Croatia and is the professor of theology and director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture at Yale University.

He begins the book recounting how, after he gave a lecture on forgiveness, one of those in attendance stunned him with a question: He asked Volf if he could forgive the Serbs for all the devastation they inflicted upon his homeland during the Balkan Wars in the 1990s. Volf paused for a few moments and then replied, “No, I cannot, but as a follower of Christ I think I should be able to.”

Throughout the Bible we read about the importance of both receiving God’s forgiveness and extending that same grace to others who have wronged us. Psalm 99:8 states, “You were to them God-Who-Forgives.” Praise the Lord for His forgiveness of sins! The Hebrew word translated “forgives” is *nasa*, and it means to lift away, to take away sin. Isaiah 1:18 says, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Psalm 130:3-4 states, “If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.”

To follow God’s example and forgive is a powerful way to live. Taking the path of kindness and grace is so much better than taking the path of retribution and

**“DO YOU HOLD ANY ILL
FEELINGS AGAINST ANYONE?
IF YES, ASK GOD TO HELP YOU
FORGIVE AND THEN DO IT. SAY
IT OUT LOUD—‘I FORGIVE.’”**

vengeance. Ephesians 4:32 states, “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” One truth that has helped me greatly is this: Choose to forgive daily. If they ask for it, forgive. If they do not ask for it, forgive. This is not just hard, but impossible to do without the power of Christ living in you. The opposite is to become bitter and drink the poison, thinking it will harm your enemy.

On a recent mission trip to Macedonia, something happened that triggered the memory of a deep hurt I had experienced as a child. Emotions of anger began to swell up in my heart. I physically had to remove myself from the area, walk, and pray to God. Instead of harboring a grudge and seething about the past, I chose to forgive again. It made all the difference!

Forgiveness received: Have you asked for and received God’s forgiveness of your sins? If not, do it now. Confess the wrong you have thought, said, or done. Receive the grace and pardon of God.

Forgiveness given: Do you hold any ill feelings against anyone? If yes, ask God to help you forgive and then do it. Say it out loud—“I forgive.”

SOMETIMES, IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

Each month, we keep our eyes open looking for ways God is moving in our churches across the state. That's what this Leading Off page is all about—as you read each month's issue, we want to start you off with something to encourage you.

Though a relatively new feature, we've already highlighted churches with members helping their neighbors recover from deadly storms and a dispatch from our ever-busy Southern Baptists of Texas Disaster Relief team.

Jesus is using His people to do big things. Count what follows as a small one—with the potential to have a huge impact.

Parkhills Baptist Church in San Antonio is asking its members to use technology for something good. Each Sunday, on the church's rotating video announcements that scroll prior to the beginning of the worship service, Parkhills encourages members to pick up their phones and text an encouraging message to someone—anyone—who

could use a pick-me-up.

The point, as posted on the church's Facebook page, is simple: "Let's share the love of Jesus and make someone's day a little brighter. It doesn't take much to make a positive impact on someone's life, and a simple message of kindness can go a long way."

We often talk about planting seeds, and SBTC churches all over the state are finding creative and effective ways to do just that. We think this one is worth adding to your toolbelt.

You never know how God is going to use a simple message of love to lift up the spirits of His people—or even draw people to Himself for the first time.

What encouraging thing is happening at your church that you wouldn't mind sharing with other churches across the state? Email jlanson@sbtexas.com.



SOUTH TEXAS CHURCH BECOMES FIRST TO PUT BOOTS
ON THE GROUND AS PART OF THE SBTC'S REACH NEVADA INITIATIVE

WESTERN SWING

BY JAYSON LARSON | TEXAN EDITOR  RENO, NEV.



“Ma’am, would you like a water? Coffee?”

It’s a little after 10 a.m. at Idlewild Park, and members of First Baptist Church of Woodsboro, Texas, are hard at work offering refreshments to passers-by. The park is pretty busy considering it’s a weekday, peppered with people sneaking in a walk or a jog before temperatures climb into the low 90s later in the day.

A few feet away from the table where the Woodsboro members are offering drinks, Scott Lamberth, pastor of Reno’s Pathfinder Church, is engaged in conversation with a woman pushing a stroller. He hands her a business card inviting her to church, and, with the Truckee River whooshing behind them, they have a conversation about spiritual things.

“If I come to your church, are you really going to ask me to believe that Jesus is the only way?” the woman asks.

“Look, we do believe Jesus is the only way,” Lamberth replies, “but we will give you the space to come and explore that at your own pace. ... Come and check it out and just see what God does.”

Ministry is happening, and the partnership between FBC Woodsboro and Pathfinder Church is playing out as planned—with the Texas team working the drink giveaway table so Lamberth is free to break off to the side and have more in-depth spiritual conversations with local residents.

The previous evening, the Woodsboro team was at another park with Lamberth, running an arts and crafts outreach. With children and adults from the

◀ Scott Lamberth (opposite page), pastor of Pathfinder Church in Reno, speaks with a woman about his church. **SBTC PHOTO**



AN EXCITING MISSION FIELD

The SBTC has partnered with the Nevada Baptist Convention to plant churches and strengthen existing churches. Here’s a glimpse at the opportunities this mission field offers:

3.1 MILLION
POPULATION

2.3 MILLION
LAS VEGAS POPULATION
(including 700,000 Hispanic/Latino residents and 250,000 Asian/Pacific Islander residents)

500,000
RENO/SPARKS/CARSON
METRO AREA POPULATION

BY 2060
NEVADA IS EXPECTED TO
DOUBLE IN POPULATION

10
NUMBER OF SEND NETWORK
ENDORSED CHURCH PLANTERS
IN NEVADA

177
NBC AFFILIATED CHURCHES



“MORE SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS, MORE INVITATIONS TO CHURCH, MORE BRIDGES BUILT— THE WORK THAT THE WOODSBORO TEAM HAS BEEN DOING HERE HAS JUST LED TO SUCH A GOOD RESULT.”

—SCOTT LAMBERTH

nearby neighborhood participating, Lamberth—and even several members of the Woodsboro team—went table to table, striking up conversations and inviting people to church.

“The amount of spiritual conversations I’ve been able to have this week is the most I’ve had in any single week in the year we’ve been here,” Lamberth said. “More spiritual conversations, more invitations to church, more bridges built—the work that the Woodsboro team has been doing here has just led to such a good result.”

In July 2022, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention entered a partnership with the Nevada Baptist Convention to strengthen its existing churches and plant new ones. As part of that partnership, the SBTC committed to not only provide financial resources, but also connect its affiliated churches with those of the NBC.

Since then, the NBC has hosted an Equip Conference similar to the one put on by the SBTC each summer. In 2023, NBC’s Equip Conference held in the Vegas area attracted 300 attendees. This year, it hosted two Equip Conferences in different parts of the state and saw more than 500 attend total.



Scott Lamberth (second from right) was joined at the park by FBC Woodsboro team members (from left) Karyn Borden, Leann Schubert, Pastor Jordan Newberry, Ethan Newberry, and Rachael Ringer.
TEXAN PHOTO

And in June, FBC Woodsboro became the first SBTC church to travel to Nevada to serve side by side with an NBC church.

An open frontier, a great gospel need

Reno is home to roughly 265,000 people, comparable in population to the Texas cities of Irving, Laredo, and Lubbock. That population swells to about a half-million when considering all the residents of nearby Sparks and Carson.

Much of Reno's booming population is attributed to an influx of Californians trying to escape soaring home prices, high taxes, and even higher crime. Though Reno is 450 miles northwest of sister city Las Vegas, it's just 12 miles from the California border—making it a natural landing spot for many fleeing east.

Lamberth said the people of Reno are friendly and open to conversation, which is why he commits time most weeks to set up a table at a local park offering free drinks to those passing by. Many people Lamberth talks to describe themselves as spiritual, though pinning down exactly what that means can be difficult. One thing usually becomes clear in those conversations—a great number of those he speaks with do not agree Jesus is the only way to be reconciled to God.

According to the latest numbers available, nearly two out of every three Reno residents are unchurched. In 2017, Lifeway Research declared Reno the second most unchurched city in the U.S., trailing only San Francisco, Lamberth said.

The Reno metro area offers contrasting extremes. Tesla's Gigafactory Nevada, which claims to be "one of the world's highest volume plants" for the production of electric motors, energy storage products, vehicle powertrains, and batteries, is located about a 30-minute drive east on I-80. Gigafactory has grown into one of the state's largest employers, offering high-paying jobs that can provide life-changing financial stability.

But just outside the Sparks city limits sits the state's largest legal brothel which—along with the area's gaggle of casinos and an out-of-control substance abuse problem—is tearing lives apart with increasing efficiency. In 2020, Nevada experienced a more than 300% jump in the number of people who admitted using marijuana, according to the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services. Alcohol and drug-related deaths have spiked in recent years, with fentanyl overdose deaths rising more than 200%.

Reno, once known as the "biggest little city in the world," sadly is now referred to by many as the "Sodom of the Sierras," Lamberth said.

"But one of the positives is, people here are open and hungry," Lamberth said. "People who are needy are ripe, and there are a lot of needs here."

That makes the call to not only plant churches in Reno, but strengthen existing Southern Baptist churches like Pathfinder, all the more urgent.

A call to get involved

So how can churches of the SBTC partner with NBC churches?

First and foremost, NBC churches need prayer, said Damian Cirincione, NBC's executive director. Some churches need help putting on events such as vacation Bible schools, while others have buildings in disrepair that need to be remodeled or rebuilt. Ideally, longterm relationships would form between SBTC and NBC churches that would allow them to work together for years to come.

"[Our churches] need people to come alongside them, love on them, love on their pastors, and encourage them to continue to reach their community,"

**“IT’S OUR GOD-GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY
TO SUPPORT CHURCHES LIKE THIS.
WE’RE JUST A SMALL CHURCH OURSELVES,
BUT THAT DON’T MATTER.
CHURCH SIZE DON’T MATTER WHEN IT
COMES TO THE GREAT COMMISSION.”**

—CARROLL BORDEN

Cirincione said. “The most important thing is sharing the love of Jesus and making His name known in these small communities.”

The Reach Nevada initiative is one of several partnerships the SBTC is building using an Acts 1:8 model, developing statewide, nationwide, and global ministry partnerships to accomplish the Great Commission. In addition to Nevada, the SBTC has a similar relationship with Southern Baptist churches in Puerto Rico, and it is considering other such partnerships in Europe and Asia.

SBTC missions mobilization associate Colin Rayburn said local churches often lack the connections to engage in missions opportunities with other churches. In other words, they have a heart to do cooperative gospel work on multiple levels, but they just don’t know where to start. By using the SBTC’s connections with Southern Baptist churches on the state, national, and international levels, churches will be able to find partners more easily, he said.

“We realized we have this unique opportunity born out of this desire to amplify what the Lord is doing in other places to help mobilize our churches to find the partnerships that they need,” Rayburn said. “There’s no reason a small, local church would naturally have connections with other small churches all over the world, but when we all come together, we get to create something profound.”

Carroll Borden, an FBC Woodsboro elder who came on the Nevada trip, said the call to work with other churches outside one’s own context is not only a desire, but a command from the Lord.

“It’s our God-given responsibility to support churches

like this,” he said. “We’re just a small church ourselves, but that don’t matter. Church size don’t matter when it comes to the Great Commission. You just have to have a passion for spreading the Word of God.”

‘We know the way’

When the Woodsboro team arrived in Reno, Lamberth asked members to begin not by prepping supplies or even knocking on doors, but by praying over some of the areas where they would spend hours over the coming week meeting people and building relationships.

At the first stop, in a park, Newberry said he was walking and praying when he came across a bench. Someone had used a marker to scrawl a message into the wood: “Make Life Beautiful—Smile.” For reasons he still doesn’t understand, the words gave Newberry pause. His mind swirled as he considered them, and he soon found himself recalling a conversation he’d had earlier with some people who believe there are many ways—aside from Jesus—to be right with God.

“There are a lot of good people here, but they are good people who are lost,” Newberry said later. “When I read that written in Sharpie, about making life beautiful, I thought, ‘Someone here is searching. They’re searching for the point, for the purpose, looking for something good, and they just don’t know where to find it.’

“But we know the way—it’s the gospel. ... The gospel is the key to everything they’re searching for.”

REACH NEVADA INITIATIVE

Contact Colin Rayburn, SBTC missions mobilization associate, at crayburn@sbtexas.com, or scan QR code.



BEING A LIGHT IN THE COMMUNITY

CHURCH PARTNERS WITH SBTC DR TO BE
HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS FOLLOWING STORM

By Jane Rodgers | Texan Correspondent



LEVELLAND

THE SMALL LEVELLAND CHURCH of about 75 had been praying for a way to serve its Hockley County community, 30 miles west of Lubbock. When a microburst with vicious straight-line winds swept through the city in the early morning hours of Wednesday, May 28, they got more of an opportunity than they anticipated.

“Since I’ve been here, we’ve been praying for an opportunity to be a beacon of light to the community,” said Tony Ward, pastor of College Avenue Baptist Church since March. “This is probably not how we wanted or expected it.”

Dinnertime on May 27 in Levelland brought more than conversation around the table. A brief storm pelted the community with hail—weather not uncommon in the flat lands of the Llano Estacado. Little did residents know that the small evening storm was a precursor of what was to come.

**“SINCE I’VE BEEN HERE,
WE’VE BEEN PRAYING FOR
AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE
A BEACON OF LIGHT
TO THE COMMUNITY.
THIS IS PROBABLY NOT
HOW WE WANTED
OR EXPECTED IT.”**

—TONY WARD



SBTC DR volunteers deployed quickly to Levelland following a spring microburst, giving College Avenue Baptist a way to show love to the community. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

‘It came out of nowhere’

Ward recalled waking with a start around 2 a.m. the next morning to the sound of hail pounding his property.

“It came out of nowhere,” he said. “No lightning or thunder. It just started immediately. High winds, heavy hail ... probably for 20 to 30 minutes. The power went out pretty quickly.”

The Ward home, located on the south side of town, escaped the worst of the damage as the storm struck the north side with unanticipated ferocity. Some thought it was a tornado, Ward said, although the National Weather Service has only confirmed the microburst.

Ward stayed up most of the rest of the night, watching to see if anything else was coming. Dawn revealed downed power lines and trees shorn of their leaves and branches. Ward estimated that he later raked up 15 bags of leaves, as did his neighbors.

A handful of church families were affected by damage at their farms and homes. No members were injured, but some collected buckets full of dead birds, likely victims of large hailstones.

Hailstones also piled up around the church, which suffered broken windows and damage to its roof. A

**SBTC DR SPRING
2024 STATS
APRIL-JUNE**

22,947 VOLUNTEER DAYS	229,470 VOLUNTEER HOURS
16 PROFESSIONS OF FAITH	897 SPIRITUAL CONTACTS
100 BIBLES DISTRIBUTED	21,764 MEALS PREPARED
1,559 SHOWERS PROVIDED	1,014 LAUNDRY LOADS
157 RECOVERY REQUESTS COMPLETED	

courtyard flooded, causing water to spread inside the foyer and into a section of the sanctuary. Members quickly showed up to help shovel hail away from the doors to prevent further water damage as the hail melted. Cleaners estimated they pumped out 600 gallons of water from the facility.

But with the inconvenience came opportunity.

SBTC DR deploys quickly

Shane Kendrix, SBTC regional catalyst for Northwest Texas, contacted Ward to check on the church and community early on May 28. Could the SBTC help?

“That [phone call] got the ball rolling,” Ward said. “By Wednesday afternoon, we had plans for a team to come.” An SBTC DR QRU quick response mobile kitchen from the Top O’ Texas association in Pampa with four volunteers arrived later that day, setting up feeding operations at the church.

Over the next three days, the SBTC DR QRU cranked out more than 1,000 meals for residents and first responders, Ward said, before power was finally restored to the town.

“All those volunteers were tremendous,” Ward said. “They served and never complained. They’ve been doing this for a while.”

From a pastoral perspective, teaming with SBTC DR was seamless and encouraging, Ward noted. “I didn’t

have to do a lot,” he said. “For someone in the SBTC to reach out and tell us what our options were was great. We were all in. It was a joy to have them.”

A light in the community

The experience allowed church members to see the benefits of SBTC affiliation, Ward said, as well as how a DR ministry works in emergencies.

Members helped, too, visiting with and praying for locals who came to the church for encouragement and a hot meal.

“Several church members had meaningful conversations with visitors. We heard lots of people just being appreciative,” Ward said, adding that people were pleasantly surprised to find that the food would cost them nothing.

College Avenue announced the meals on social media. Area banks and small businesses were also organizing food giveaways, Ward said. Word spread and people flocked to the bright yellow and blue SBTC DR QRU in the church parking lot.

“For our little church, we put it on our Facebook page and the post had the most Facebook interactions we’ve

ever had in the history of our church, plus 125 shares,” he added, estimating the post reached several thousand people in the Levelland area.

“We wanted to be a light in the community and to share the gospel,” Ward said. “We wanted to love on people here.”

In the wake of a devastating storm, they did just that.

SBTC DR Director Scottie Stice said of the Levelland deployment: “We were grateful for the opportunity to partner with Pastor Ward and College Avenue Baptist as we served Levelland and Hockley County. We appreciate the QRU volunteers who responded very quickly and arrived ready to serve.”

Stice also confirmed that an SBTC DR shower and laundry unit deployed to Roswell, N.M., on June 20 to support a shelter housing evacuees from Ruidoso, where wildfires continue to rage.



Want to get involved? Scan the QR to learn more about how to volunteer with SBTC DR:



investments with ETERNAL IMPACT

new certificates now earning

5.00% APY*	5.15% APY*
05-MONTH TERM	10-MONTH TERM

*New Money Promos Available Through 7-31-24

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS OF TEXAS
FOUNDATION



CALL 844-351-8804 | VISIT [SBTEXASFOUNDATION.COM/NEW-DEPOSIT](https://www.sbteexasfoundation.com/new-deposit)

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



RAYMOND PERRY



Raymond Perry has pastored Trinity Friendship Baptist Church in Wylie since its founding in 2008, with the support of Mesquite Friendship Church, the SBTC, and the Dallas Baptist Association. Trinity Friendship started with 17 people, including the Perry family of five. Today, the congregation has grown to around 100, despite challenges including not only COVID, but also a 2016 hailstorm that destroyed the structure, necessitating a rebuild. Perry was also a founding officer of the SBTC's African American Fellowship. Perry and his wife, Lois, have three adult children: William, 20, and Jordyn, 24, serve at the church, while Kathryn, 25, is stationed in the U.K. with the U.S. Air Force.

What is something you've been able to celebrate at Trinity Friendship recently?

Just prior to COVID, we were able to pay off our land and property. We currently own the 2.5 acres and 12,000 square feet on which our church sits. Owning the property frees up debt. We experienced a wilderness journey during the [2016] hailstorm. Having a place to call home sets us up to have a permanent footprint in Wylie for generations to come. City authorities and other pastors tell us Trinity Friendship is the first predominantly African American church in Wylie's 130-year history.

What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced in your ministry lately?

Church planting is a challenge. Many people are raised in [established] churches that have a history. Having to establish a history, identity, ethos, can be challenging, especially in a mobile community. We are predominantly African American, but we also have Hispanic and Caucasian members. We want to establish a diverse identity in the community we serve. We'd like to be able to reach more, and not just African Americans, but all ethnicities who need to serve the Lord.

What's a lesson you've learned to this point of your ministry you know you'll never forget?

To the best of my ability to do things God's way, and that leadership is vital. Selecting appropriate leadership is important [for] ministry. What God has taught me is it's not just finding people—it's finding the right person. You don't select leaders to grow into a position. The leader must have the preexisting qualities to be in that position.

What's one thing you'd like to see God do specifically at Trinity Friendship this year?

Trinity Friendship would like to see the economy improve so we can build a family life or children's area, a kids zone. Construction costs have accelerated since COVID and there's no end in sight. A kids zone would help us better serve the community. We would also like to start a Hispanic fellowship at Trinity and are praying for that.

How can the other SBTC churches be praying for you?

My request is that SBTC churches would pray not only for me and my family, but also for the people of God, for unity across the nation, and peace throughout the world.



‘IF THERE’S SOMETHING TO BE DONE, WE’LL BE THERE’

DESPITE SUFFERING DAMAGE OF ITS OWN, HOUSTON CHURCH REACHES OUT TO HURTING COMMUNITY FOLLOWING DEVASTATING STORMS

By Arlene Sanabria | Texan Correspondent

HOUSTON

IT WAS MAY 16, AND THE NORTHERN PART OF HOUSTON was experiencing spectacular weather. But in Texas—especially in the springtime—the weather can change in an instant.

That evening, a weather advisory was issued suddenly, warning residents to seek shelter from a fast-moving and potentially destructive thunderstorm headed toward the area that had the potential to spawn tornadoes. Soon after, straight-line winds of more than 100 mph and a tornado barreled into the area, throwing the region into chaos. According to local news reports, the storms caused flooding, downed trees and power lines, some deaths, and nearly a million homes and businesses were left without power.

“WE ARE CONSTANTLY INVITING OUR CHURCH TO SERVE AND LOVE THE COMMUNITY, BECAUSE WE MAY BE THE ONLY BIBLE THEY WILL READ.”

—JAIME GARCÍA

Among the places affected was Bethel Baptist Church, where, according to Senior Pastor Jaime García, the storm ripped off part of the roof allowing rain to pour into the sanctuary—causing extensive damage, including to sound equipment and musical instruments.

García is no stranger to storms. In addition to his duties as Bethel’s pastor, he is a storm chaser. That day, he was in another city recording video for a local news affiliate. As soon as he heard about the danger threatening his community and his people, he returned home to Houston.

“I saw all the destruction and people who were desperate and scared,” said García, noting that the drama only intensified once he learned how the storms had impacted his church and members of the congregation.

And yet, they were not deterred.

The next day, Bethel members mobilized to clean and repair the church as best they could, then went to work serving the community. The following Saturday, they came together to help the community by going to homes to cut down trees and “extend a hand of love,” García said.

God also opened doors for the church to distribute food provided by an aid organization from Mississippi while the power was being restored. Church members set up a distribution site in their gym to distribute food, cleaning supplies, and toiletries to those impacted by the storm.

Though hurting themselves, García said the storms provided a great opportunity for



Bethel Senior Pastor Jaime García, seen above (at left) with FBC Troup Pastor Preston Lindsey, says his church looks for any opportunity it can find to share the love of Christ with its community.

Members of Bethel Baptist Church distributed basic supplies, including food, cleaning items, and toiletries, following a storm that hit the Houston area in May. The church used its gym as a makeshift distribution site. **SUBMITTED PHOTOS**



Bethel to fulfill its mission: to love God, love people, and serve others.

“That’s part of who we are,” García said. “If there’s something to be done, we’ll be there to serve and show them the love of Christ.”

So far, Bethel has not been able to fully repair its building because insurance only covered part of the damage. So, church members are trying to raise the funds to rebuild the church as soon as possible. In the meantime, Bethel continues to meet in the youth center to praise the Lord and share the gospel of Jesus.

“With all this experience, the church is growing in its faith. Our desire to worship God does not change,” García said. “We do not have the comforts of before, but God has not changed.”

García has served as Bethel’s pastor for 25 years—13 as youth pastor and 12 as senior pastor. He is also the director of Unique Student Ministries, which is dedicated to equipping and discipling students in evangelism through a conference that hosts 400 to 500 young people from area churches each year.

He said families have come to their church because they have lost all their food, and they have tearfully expressed their deep gratitude, not only for what they are being given, but also for the church’s willingness to serve in a part of the community where many shy away from helping due to the high crime rate.

“We are constantly inviting our church to serve and love the community,” García added, “because we may be the only Bible they will read.”



‘SI HAY ALGO QUE HACER, ALLÍ ESTAREMOS’

A PESAR DE LOS DAÑOS QUE SUFRIERON, IGLESIA DE HOUSTON TIENDE LA MANO A LA COMUNIDAD TRAS LAS DEVASTADORAS TORMENTAS

Por Arlene Sanabria | Corresponsal del Texan

HOUSTON

E RA UN 16 DE MAYO, Y EN LA PARTE NORTE DE HOUSTON había un clima espectacular. Pero en Texas, especialmente en primavera, el tiempo puede cambiar en un instante.

Esa tarde, se emitió de repente un aviso meteorológico, advirtiendo a los residentes que buscaran refugio de una tormenta eléctrica de rápido movimiento y potencialmente destructiva que se



“CON TODA ESTA EXPERIENCIA, LA IGLESIA ESTÁ CRECIENDO EN SU FE. NUESTRO DESEO DE ADORAR A DIOS NO CAMBIA. NO TENEMOS LAS COMODIDADES DE ANTES, PERO DIOS NO HA CAMBIADO”.

—JAIME GARCÍA



dirigía hacia la zona y que tenía el potencial de generar tornados. Poco después, vientos en línea recta de más de 160 km/h y un tornado se abalanzaron sobre la zona, sembrando el caos en la región. Según las noticias locales, las tormentas causaron inundaciones, árboles y tendidos eléctricos caídos, algunas muertes y casi un millón de hogares y empresas se quedaron sin electricidad.

Entre los lugares afectados se encontraba Bethel Baptist Church, donde, según su pastor, Jaime García, la tormenta arrancó parte del techo y dejó entrar la lluvia en el santuario, haciendo daños sustanciales, incluyendo todo el equipo de sonido y los instrumentos musicales.

García no es ajeno a las tormentas. Además de sus responsabilidades como pastor de Bethel, es un cazador de tormentas. Aquel día se encontraba en otra ciudad grabando video para un noticiero local. En cuanto se enteró del peligro que amenazaba a su comunidad y a su gente, regresó a su casa en Houston.

“Vi toda la destrucción y a la gente desesperada y asustada”, cuenta García, y señala que el drama no hizo más que intensificarse cuando se enteró de

La cruz de 55 pies de altura que se encuentra frente a Bethel Baptist Church de Houston se dobló, pero no fue derribada por las fuertes tormentas que azotaron la zona en mayo.

Los miembros de Bethel Baptist Church distribuyeron suministros básicos, incluidos alimentos, artículos de limpieza y de aseo personal, tras la tormenta que azotó la zona de Houston en mayo. La iglesia utilizó su gimnasio como lugar de distribución. **FOTO COMPARTIDAS**

cómo las tormentas habían afectado a su iglesia y a los miembros de la congregación.

Sin embargo, no se amedrentaron.

Al día siguiente, los miembros de Bethel se movilizaron para limpiar y reparar la iglesia lo mejor que pudieron, y luego fueron a trabajar al servicio de la comunidad. El sábado siguiente, se reunieron para ayudar a la comunidad, yendo a las casas a cortar árboles y “tender una mano de amor”, dijo García.

Dios también abrió las puertas para que la iglesia distribuyera alimentos proporcionados por una organización de ayuda de Mississippi mientras se restablecía el suministro eléctrico. Los miembros de la iglesia instalaron un punto de distribución en su gimnasio para dar comida, artículos de limpieza y de aseo a los afectados por la tormenta.

Aunque sufrieron, García dijo que las tormentas brindaron una gran oportunidad para que Bethel cumpliera su misión: amar a Dios, amar a la gente y servir a los demás.

“Eso es parte de lo que somos”, dijo García. “Si hay algo que hacer, estaremos allí para servir y mostrarles el amor de Cristo”.

Hasta ahora, Bethel no ha podido reparar su edificio porque el seguro sólo cubrió parte de los daños. Por eso, los miembros de la iglesia están intentando recaudar los fondos necesarios para reconstruir la iglesia lo antes posible. Mientras tanto, Bethel sigue reuniéndose en el edificio de los jóvenes para alabar al Señor y compartir el evangelio de Jesús.

“Con toda esta experiencia, la iglesia está creciendo en su fe. Nuestro deseo de adorar a Dios no cambia”, dijo García. “No tenemos las comodidades de antes, pero Dios no ha cambiado”.

García ha servido como pastor de Bethel durante 25 años, 13 como pastor de jóvenes y 12 como pastor principal. También es el director de Unique Student Ministries, que se dedica a equipar y discipular a los

“INVITAMOS CONSTANTEMENTE A NUESTRA IGLESIA A SERVIR Y AMAR A LA COMUNIDAD PORQUE PUEDE QUE SEAMOS LA ÚNICA BIBLIA QUE LEAN”.

—JAIME GARCÍA

jóvenes en la evangelización a través de una conferencia que acoge a 400-500 jóvenes de las iglesias de la zona cada año.

Él dijo que familias han acudido a su iglesia porque han perdido sus alimentos, y han expresado con lágrimas en los ojos su profunda gratitud, no sólo por lo que se les está dando, sino también por la voluntad de la iglesia de servir en una parte de la comunidad en donde muchos rehúyen ayudar debido al alto índice de criminalidad.

“Invitamos constantemente a nuestra iglesia a servir y amar a la comunidad”, añadió García, “porque puede que seamos la única Biblia que lean”.

INVEST IN KINGDOM WORK & SAVE MONEY

Because individuals and ministries invest in certificates, the Foundation can offer loans to Texas churches that allow them to expand and better reach their communities with the gospel.

4.00% APY*
07-MONTH TERM

4.15% APY*
11-MONTH TERM

*Promos Available Through 7-31-24



SBTEXASFOUNDATION.COM/CERTIFICATES

Call 844-351-8804 for additional questions. Open an account with as little as \$2,500. Promotional certificates will auto-renew for a 3-month term at the current yield unless the client provides other instructions before renewal. Certificate investments are available to a qualified class of Texas churches, ministries, and individuals.

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS OF TEXAS
FOUNDATION

BEING A PASTOR'S WIFE IS A TEAM SPORT!

I have been a minister's wife for 37 years—the first 30 in youth ministry and the past seven as a senior pastor's wife. I still feel like a newbie at this whole pastor's wife gig. It is a gift to be called to this role, one that brings many blessings but also unique challenges and plenty of questions.

How do I find my role in an established church? Am I expected to be a part of everything that goes on at our church? I am a co-laborer with my husband, so how do I handle criticism of him, myself, or other aspects of our church? Where can I get answers to these and other questions?

Not long after becoming the wife of a senior pastor, I attended the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's Pastor Wives Retreat. What an impact this event had on me. It showed me how important it is to be connected to other pastor wives.

At the retreat, I sat at a table with other wives from my area, and we spent time sharing answers to specific ministry questions. It was so encouraging to hear I was not the only one feeling lonely at times and to know I could talk about struggles or ask questions in a safe place. It was also amazing that, inevitably, someone would share something I could apply to my own experience.

We decided to start a text group to stay connected and, six years later, that group is still going strong. We share prayer requests, funny stories, challenges, even pastor wife memes. These seemingly simple gestures have walked our little group through hilarious situations, job changes, heartbreaking life and church events, joys and celebrations, answered prayers, and so much more. Also, each year at this retreat, my circle of fellow wives has grown and new text groups and Facebook friends have formed. Through it, God has met a need in my life and many others.

So what are some of the benefits of being connected to other wives of senior pastors?



Are you a wife of a senior or lead pastor looking to connect? Scan the QR code for information on the Pastor Wives Connection Night, which precedes the She Stands conference in Houston:



Emotional support

Being the wife of a pastor can sometimes feel isolating. Together, we can share experiences, challenges, and encouragement, or just offer a listening ear to hear each other's concerns.

Shared wisdom

Experienced pastor wives can offer valuable advice and insights on how to handle various aspects of church life and family dynamics. New pastor wives remind us we still have things to learn from one another in these ever-changing times.

A prayer network

Having a group of women who understand the unique challenges of ministry—and who can pray specifically for one another—is powerful.

Friendship and fellowship

Having fellowship with those who share this unique role facilitates deeper friendships and meaningful connections, allowing us to be authentic and real.

Shared laughter and joy

Sharing moments of joy and laughter with friends can help make the weight of our journey easier to bear and just more fun.

The SBTC has several ways for the wives of pastors to connect. I encourage you to join the SBTC Pastor's Wife Facebook group or plan to attend the next Pastor Wives Retreat. Whatever you do, don't wait to get connected!



Susan Gobert is a member of Cedar Creek Baptist Church in Whitney.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Noteworthy moments mark SBC 2024, including a number of people deciding to follow Jesus

INDIANAPOLIS

Tailgate parties—where fans gather, socialize, and barbecue in stadium parking lots before a sporting event—usually require people to come to them.

Living Faith Church in Indianapolis tried something a little different this past weekend as part of the evangelistic Crossover event held each year in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting.

The church brought the party to the people.

Living Faith Church held a mobile “tell gate” party, serving traditional stadium fare such as hamburgers and hot dogs to residents of the Indianapolis neighborhood of Riverside. The food was cooked on a grill fastened to a rack on the back of a van, which included a decal on one of its back doors stating, “The church has left the building.”

The strategy was simple: meet needs through food service, make connections, and tell people about the love—and saving power—of Jesus. The church later reported that, through a series of Crossover-related events over the past couple of days, it had shared the gospel with 400 people and seen 17 put their faith in Christ.

Tony Mathews, senior strategist of missional ministries for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, was on the Living Faith team.

“It was an amazing event,” Mathews said. “Not only did we get to interact with the people in the neighborhoods, but we got to pray for them, pray for their families, and share the gospel with them. The response was incredible. You could tell they really appreciated what we were doing.”

—JAYSON LARSON



Tony Mathews, SBTC senior strategist for missional ministries, was among the hundreds of volunteers who participated in Crossover 2024, held in conjunction each year with the SBC Annual Meeting. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

Zamari McClain, 13, gets a snow cone from Hope Howard, a member of Retama Park Baptist Church—an SBTC church in Kingsville, Texas—at a block party at Bertha Ross Park in Indianapolis on June 8. **JOSSelyn GUILLEN PHOTO/BAPTIST PRESS**





SBTC Executive Director Nathan Lorick (right) speaks during a prayer panel at the SBC Annual Meeting in Indianapolis on Monday, June 10. Lorick is seen with panel moderator Kie Bowman (far left) and Gordon Fort (center). **SBTC PHOTO**

LORICK, OTHERS SPEAK ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER AT SBC

Nathan Lorick, executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, was among those included in a prayer panel held June 10 as part of the SBC Annual Meeting. Panelists spoke of the critical importance of prayer and the impact it has had on their lives and ministries.

The panel was hosted by Kie Bowman, the SBC's national director of prayer, and also included International Mission Board ambassador Gordon Fort. Bowman's work has included keeping prayer at the forefront of ministry efforts among SBC churches. Lorick has repeatedly stressed the primacy of prayer if SBTC churches are to experience a movement of God to reverse the growing rate of lostness in Texas and around the world.

"[Prayer] is not just an emphasis—it is a major emphasis for the churches of the SBTC," Lorick said. "We are going to unapologetically be churches of prayer. ... I'm convinced that the tool of prayer is one of those things churches [often] use as an accessory, but when it becomes a driving force, we experience the power and presence of God in ways we've not experienced before—and it's exciting."

Added Fort: "The great need of the hour is to restore the doctrine and practice of prayer."

—JAYSON LARSON

PRESSLEY ELECTED SBC PRESIDENT, FORNEY'S LOPEZ NAMED SECOND VP

In a six-way presidential race that resulted in two run-off votes, Clint Pressley, pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention June 12.

Brad Graves, pastor of First Baptist Church in Ada, Okla., was elected first vice president. Eddie Lopez, pastor of First Baptist Forney En Español, was elected second vice president. Lopez has been a church planter and led his church to plant other churches in the U.S. and Mexico. He has served committees at the SBC level and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention as vice president.

Recording Secretary Nathan Finn and Registration Secretary Don Currence were re-elected by acclamation.

—GARY LEDBETTER

SWBTS' CRIDER HAD ONE GOAL LEADING SBC WORSHIP: EXALT CHRIST

It's been a busy year for Joe Crider, dean of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's School of Church Music and Worship. In mid-June, he added leading worship before thousands of people at the SBC Annual Meeting to his 2024 resume.

"This means a lot for us as a seminary," Crider said. "One, that Pastor Bart [Barber, the outgoing SBC president] trusted us. We are grateful for the trust and the stewardship we have been given. We have been blessed with wonderful faculty and students in the School of Church Music and Worship to serve the convention."

SBC 2024 marks the third consecutive year of significant involvement by Southwestern musical groups, Crider noted. Two years ago, the Cowden Hall Band played for the Pastors' Conference in Anaheim, when Matt Boswell led worship. Last year, Southwestern A Capella sang under the direction of James Cheesman, worship pastor at FBC Farmersville.

"... We do not want to make this opportunity about us. This is about Christ and pointing people to Him. We want to rely completely on Him and the power of His Spirit to guide and direct us," Crider said.

—JANE RODGERS



‘THEY TAKE YOU TO THE FEET OF JESUS’

CENTRAL TEXAS PASTOR FINDS COMMUNITY, SUPPORT THROUGH YOUNG PASTORS NETWORK

By Jane Rodgers | Texan Correspondent

HEWITT

FOR MICHAEL VISY, senior pastor of Grace Church Hewitt, connections make the difference. Through a series of divine connections, he has found friendship, encouragement, and accountability via the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention’s Young Pastors Network.

The Maryland native was on staff at Grace Church Waco when a non-denominational church in Hewitt, its attendance declining, closed its doors. The cornfields once surrounding that church, nine miles south of Waco, had given way to neighborhoods full of families, with many adults commuting to Waco or nearby Temple for work. The members of the former church didn’t want to sell the property and see it become just another development.

▲ Pastors of the three churches—Grace Waco, Grace Hewitt, and Hope—are (from left) Dave Becker, Buck Rogers, Phil Barnes, Ray Carter, Robert Garmon, Drake Osborn, Michael Visy, and Bracken Arnhart. **SUBMITTED PHOTO**

Instead, they gifted 6.5 acres and buildings to Grace Church Waco to start a new work. Grace Church Hewitt was born in 2018.

“They said they didn’t want a school or park or another apartment complex to go in. They wanted the gospel preached in that location. They wanted a church,” Visy said, adding that representatives of the closing church found Grace Church Waco through connections with the SBTC. Dick Wooten, pastor of the former church, is the father of Bryan Wooten, teaching pastor of Remedy Church in Waxahachie. Bryan and fellow Remedy teaching pastor Aaron Clayton contacted Grace Waco

“THEY SEE ME AS A PERSON, NOT A PASTOR. A FRIEND. AND THEY ARE GREAT GUYS TO HANG OUT WITH. THEY HELP YOU PRESS INTO CHRIST.”

—MICHAEL VISY

about the Hewitt opportunity.

Dick Wooten has since become a friend and encourager to Visy. In addition to some 30 from Grace Waco who came south to help the new church plant, around eight to nine from the elder Wooten’s former congregation ended up joining Grace Hewitt. Wooten himself stayed. He preaches from time to time at Visy’s invitation.

“He has been really encouraging to me, especially seeing us through a very rough first year,” Visy said of Wooten. “He said, ‘Michael, I’m retired. I just want to love on people, invest in them, care for them.’”

Visy added that “having a seasoned guy in his 70s” to walk alongside him in ministry has been a blessing. Visy asked Wooten to share recollections of the church at Grace Hewitt’s fifth anniversary.

“I wanted the congregation to see that God was faithful to His people and His church long before we were in this building,” Visy said. Now in his 30s, Visy was only 26 when he became pastor at Grace Hewitt.

“I was fresh out of seminary, newly married. Why in the world would you want to follow a 26-year-old?” he recalled mentioning to the congregation back then.

“We’re not following you. We’re following the Lord,” members replied.

Today, Grace Hewitt is thriving, running around 150 with members and regular attenders, children, and visitors, demonstrating steady growth despite population mobility in its “suburban-rural” setting.

“Hewitt is a family-centered community,” said Visy. He and his wife, Michelle, have become parents to Harper, 4, and Gus, 2, during their time at the church.

“There are a lot of kids running around our church,” Visy said. “And there’s only one full-time staff person: me,” he added with a chuckle.

Finding a pastoral community

Visy has likewise found encouragement and friendships through YPN, an organization of pastors 40 years old or younger and mentors. Visy said he has been involved in YPN since its founding by Spencer Plumlee, pastor of First Baptist Mansfield.

Within the YPN, Visy has developed a core group of four fellow pastors in his region with whom he meets regularly. Among these is Drake Osborn, Grace Waco pastor of teaching and liturgy. Bracken Arnhart, pastor of Hope Church in Robinson, is another YPN member with whom Visy is close, as is Matt Byrd, pastor of Wellspring Church in China Spring.

“We’re all kind of young, all in the same theological world,” Visy said. “[We thought], ‘Let’s hang out and encourage one another.’ ... We get together once a month.”

Visy also serves on the YPN leadership team. “It consists of a dozen of us from all over the state, representing churches of different sizes and dynamics from West Texas, DFW, Houston, Austin, South Texas,” he said.

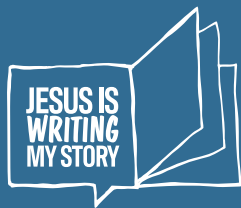
He credits YPN connections for assisting him in his role as pastor. “Guys in the state have helped me with logistical pieces of ministry: bylaws, member care things, church discipline matters. ... How do we do this? Having other friends in other churches in other parts of the state in other contexts is invaluable,” Visy said, adding, “They help with everything.”

Of YPN support, Visy said, “They see me as a person, not a pastor. A friend. And they are great guys to hang out with. They help you press into Christ. ... They are true friends who take you to the feet of Jesus.”



Want to know more about the SBTC’s YPN?





By André Blaze
(as told to Gary Ledbetter)

GOD HAS GIVEN ME A NEW FOCUS AND A NEW MISSION



I gave my life to Christ 24 years ago. That Sunday I gave my heart to Christ, I was in Dorm 4 at the Bossier Parish Penal Farm in a little town called Plain Dealing, La., serving a three-year sentence. I was literally broken. I was at the point where I was like, “Look, I can’t do this no more.” I told my mom, “I can’t do three years.” She said, “Baby, you have no choice.” But when she said that ... I was done. I wasn’t raised to do crime. I took my last step with the world and I took my first step with God, and I’ve never looked back. I got saved and from that moment on I started doing Bible study in prison and stayed close to the Lord, got out, and got right into the church and got baptized. I was 29 years old then.

After getting out of prison, my whole life changed—my wardrobe, everything. I worked as an electrician in Bossier City/Shreveport for about 33 years and got to a point where the Lord started blessing me in the trade. I also started a ministry called A Way of Escape Ministries, from 1 Corinthians 10:13. God gives a person a way of escape through Jesus Christ. Christ was my way of escape from the world and from repeating the negativity and the toxicity in my life. I was preaching on two radio stations in that area, sometimes preaching for local churches, and my wife, Patricia, and I spoke on building a strong marriage. All this while raising eight kids.

I was tired—we were tired—every day trying to work and take care of the ministry. My wife was working night and day, taking two or three shifts in local nursing homes. I was just working night and day, sometimes doing videos online, because we’re on Facebook. I’d work on the videos and fall asleep while I was doing that. I’m sitting at work eight, 10 hours a day doing electrical work.

Well, God sometimes just speaks out of nowhere—this is the highlight of my testimony. He spoke to my wife one day back in Louisiana and she said to me, “We got to go.” And I was like, “Go where?” She said,



“My heart’s desire is that those who don’t know God will know the God I know and serve.”

—ANDRÉ BLAZE

“We need to go to Texas. God said go to Texas—God is saying we need to move.” And I said, “Well, I need to go in prayer.” So after 90 days in prayer, we picked up everything. We started for Greenville but ended up finding a house for us in Sherman instead.

I’m building my business here, but it’s not been crazy busy yet. I have some good contacts, and many of the people of my church [First Baptist Sherman] have given me work. I couldn’t have dreamed of this. I can’t tell you [all that] God has done in the year we’ve been here. It’s been a blessing. It’s been a journey. Sherman is great for us. Our family and children are happy. God has allowed me to make enough on the jobs I get so that our needs are met. My wife works, but she just works regular hours. She’s not tired. I’m not tired, and He has blessed us. He’s just so good.

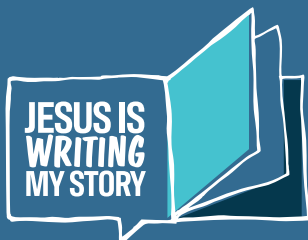
I’ve been changed, refreshed in my relationship with God—the same God who told Abraham to get up and leave the Ur of the Chaldeans, leave what you are familiar with and go to a land that I will show you. That’s the challenge, to really see where your faith is. It’s one thing to teach truth and to teach faith, but it’s another

thing to live it. The Word of God is more than just ink on paper. This move has strengthened my faith. I’m refocused. I’m better than I was.

It’s changed my children’s lives. We tell them, “We’re not here to make money, but we make money. You’re not here just to go to school, but you do go to school. We are here on assignment. We are here because of God’s kingdom.”

Now I own a radio station, a gospel station, and it’s called Blaze. God blessed me with that. We’re on 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I’ve got some contemporary Christian music on there, and then my messages. And then we’ve got messages with our children, Bible studies for the entire family. In other words, God has really blessed. I’m also continuing my prison ministry, preaching a few times a month in different facilities.

My heart’s desire is that those who don’t know God will know the God I know and serve. To those who know Him, I’d say be refreshed and know that God is good. Don’t become complacent with God, but know that He is going to take you higher and ask bigger things of you. Give Him what He wants and enjoy the ride.



WANT TO SHARE A STORY OF WHAT GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE OR YOUR CHURCH?

Scan the QR code or e-mail jlarrison@sbtexas.com to tell us your story.

Church Positions

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

PASTOR

FBC Munday is seeking a FT pastor who is devoted and enthusiastic and will guide our congregation in spiritual growth, revival, missions, and service. While experience and education are preferred, they are not necessary for someone who feels called by God. Email resume to david.dcalldwell@gmail.com.

Lifeway Fellowship Baptist in Amarillo is seeking a FT senior pastor. We are a congregation of about 100-150. Please email application/resume to Jennifer Merriss at benhur80@yahoo.com.

Harvest Acres Baptist Church of Mineola is in search of a FT pastor. Our pastor of 16 years retired. Mineola is a growth area with a steady increase in population. We seek a pastor who loves the Lord and loves the flock under his pastoral care. Contact habcsearch@peoplesnet.com.

Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Carthage is looking for a FT senior pastor. For more information, please visit cedargrovecarthage.org/pastoral-selection.

FBC Paducah is seeking a FT or bivocational pastor. Email resume to firstbaptistchurchpaducahtx@gmail.com.

FBC Rule is searching for a FT or bivocational pastor. Send resume to FBC Rule, P.O. Box 146, Rule, Texas 79547. For more information, call Larry at 940-200-0246.

Winfree Baptist Church in Orange is seeking FT pastor. The church's foundation is based on the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. Send resume to pastorsearch@winfreebaptist.org.

Anderson Mill Baptist Church is seeking a FT lead pastor. We will be accepting resumes until Sept. 15, 2024. Please send resume to ambcpastorresume24@gmail.com.

FBC Lake Jackson is seeking a FT senior pastor. Send resumes to Pastor Search Team, First Baptist Church, 401 Yaupon, Lake Jackson, Texas 77566, or email your resume to pastorsearch@fbclj.org. For more information, visit fbclj.org.

Tarpley Baptist Church is seeking a FT pastor. Mail resume to Tarpley Baptist Church, P.O. Box 84, Tarpley, Texas 78883, or email tarpleybaptistchurch@gmail.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 TOBCsearchteam@windstream.net.

First Southern Baptist Church in Fritch is searching for a bivocational pastor that would have the potential to become a full time position with spiritual & numerical growth. Email resume to pastorsearch@fsbcfritch.com.

Wildwood Baptist Church in Village Mills is seeking a bivocational pastor with preaching experience,

leadership ability, and a servant's heart for the Lord. Wildwood is in an HOA with 24/7 security gate and many amenities. Send resume to P.O. Box 729, Village Mills, Texas 77663, Attn: Pulpit Committee.

Calvary Baptist Church in Cleveland is seeking a FT senior pastor. Please send resume to calvarypastorsearchteam@gmail.com. Include links of past sermons.

Reliance Baptist Church in rural eastern Brazos County near Bryan is seeking a FT pastor to preach and minister to and visit members, and minister to and visit with visitors and the community. We are a small country church. Our present pastor retired in May. If interested, send a resume to jjoldfolks@gmail.com.

FBC Bastrop is asking for recommendations (only) for our next lead pastor. Check out our church, area, and pastor profiles, and/or recommend yourself or another man, by visiting fbcbastrop.org/profiles.

Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Commerce is seeking a bivocational pastor. Email resume to rbchurch711@gmail.com.

FBC Coolidge is seeking a senior/lead bivocational pastor for an ethnically diverse community. Submit resume to fbccoolidgepsc@gmail.com.

Faith Baptist Church in Hamilton is seeking a bivocational preacher. Contact deacon Jerry Cutler at 817-313-5429.

Mission Dorado Baptist Church in Odessa is seeking a senior pastor. Anyone wishing to be considered can email his resume to mdbcpscsearch@gmail.com.

North Oaks Baptist Church is seeking a PT/ bivocational Spanish speaking ministry pastor. Two years experience, two years theological education or pursuing theological degree. Email resume to flores0605@icloud.com.

Freedom Fellowship in Roanoke is seeking a lead pastor to guide our church into the future. Located in a rapidly growing area, our church is in excellent position to expand evangelistically in the coming years. Please submit cover letter with resume and links to resumes@fforinfo.com. For more information on the position, visit fforinfo.com/lead-pastor-job-description.

MUSIC

Wylie Baptist Church in Abilene is seeking a FT worship pastor to provide spiritual leadership for worship services and ministries through blended worship. For a full job description, email lwest@wyliebaptist.org. Send cover letter and resume to Wylie Baptist Church, 6097 Buffalo Gap Road, Abilene, Texas 79606, or email to lwest@wyliebaptist.org.

Paramount Baptist Church in Amarillo is eager to welcome a new FT worship pastor. Responsibilities include leading worship services and managing the music ministry budget. Full job description and application instructions can be found at paramount.org.

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 a talented praise band & worship team. For information or to send resume, email Pastor Mike Fortenberry at mikefortenberry@hotmail.com, or mail to His Place Fellowship, P.O. Box 128, Paris, Texas 75460.

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

Inglewood Baptist Church in Grand Prairie is seeking a PT or bivocational minister of music. Send resume to jobs@inglewoodbaptist.com.

First Baptist Church in Natchitoches, La., is seeking a FT minister of worship/music. Email jendris@fbcnatchitoches.com with a resume and cover letter. The Chairman of the Search Committee, Chuck Herrington, can be reached at 318-663-7400.

STUDENTS

Southmont Baptist Church in Denton is seeking a FT minister to students, overseeing students in grades 6-12. Prefer experience working with middle school and high school students. Bachelor's degree required. Completed or in-progress seminary degree preferred. Please send resume to jdooley@southmont.org.

Oak Grove Baptist Church in Burleson is currently taking resumes for a FT youth pastor. You can email resume to brady@oakgrove.church.

Kingsland Baptist North Campus in Katy is seeking a FT student pastor. Email resume to resumes@vanderbloemen.com.

Bay Area Church in League City is seeking a FT student pastor. Learn more and apply at bayarea.church/employment.

FBC Sinton (north of Corpus Christi) is seeking a PT youth minister. Please send resume to youth@firstbaptistsinton.com.

New Hebron Baptist Church in Waskom is seeking a PT student pastor. Please call the church office at 903-633-2645 for more information.

Northeast Houston Baptist Church in Humble, located at 18000 West Lake Houston Pkwy., is seeking a student ministry girls associate. Please send resume to mccott@houstonnortheast.org.

CHILDREN

Crossroads in Rowlett is hiring a FT kids minister to lead children's ministries. Responsibilities include spiritual guidance, event planning, and volunteer management. Applicants can contact jdlowrie@crossroadsrowlett.org for more info.

Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin is seeking a FT children's ministry director to primarily lead 1st - 5th grade children's ministry. Will partner with and report

to the family pastor and the family ministry team to create/implement holistic discipleship in the home. Salary and full benefits. Email resume to chatch@ghbc.org.

FBC Forney seeks qualified candidate for FT director of preschool ministries. To apply, email jjordan@fbcforney.org.

Rock Hill Baptist Church in Brownsboro is seeking a FT early childhood ministry associate. Email resume to kevin@rockhillbc.com.

Rock Hill Baptist Church in Brownsboro is seeking a PT grade school ministry associate. Email resume to kevin@rockhillbc.com.

FBC May is seeking a PT kids director to help coordinate and lead a ministry of connection, evangelism, and spiritual growth for our 40-60 children during Wednesday evening activities. Pay will be determined by experience and education. Please submit a resume and references to Bruce Landes at ministersearch@mayfbc.org.

FBC Keller is seeking a PT childcare teacher. Contact Amy Bearden, First Baptist Church, 225 Keller Parkway, Keller, Texas 76248, or email HR at abearden@fbckeller.org.

COMBINATION

Central Baptist in Hillsboro is seeking a FT youth and young families minister. Contact Darrel Beggs at pastord.beggs@gmail.com.

FBC Liberty is looking for a FT pastor of worship and outreach to lead our congregation for gospel growth through the worship of God in music. If

interested, please contact Pastor Glenn Leatherman at 936-228-8106, pastor@fbcliberty.org; or Lindsey Vara at 936-336-6881, info@fbcliberty.org.

FBC Jasper is seeking a FT youth and discipleship minister. Email resume to fbcjasperyouthsearch@gmail.com.

FBC Terrell is seeking a FT minister of youth and recreation. Send your resume to john@fbcterrell.org or mail to 403 N. Catherine, Terrell, Texas 75160.

FBC Gladewater is seeking a FT worship and next generation minister. Send questions or resume to fbc@fbcgadewater.org.

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@live.com.

OTHER

Coastal Oaks Church in beautiful Rockport is prayerfully seeking a FT associate pastor to partner with us in the gospel ministry as we cultivate deeply rooted missionaries. Please send resumes to cirving@coastaloakschurch.org.

FBC Forney Christian School is seeking FT qualified classical Christian school teachers as it expands for the 2024-2025 school year. Apply online at fbcforney.org.

Church at the Cross in Grapevine is seeking PT ministry interns for 1-2 yrs, 20-25 hrs/wk. Contact Lindsey by email at lindseyk@catc.church.

Paid Classifieds

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

PASTOR

Vallecito Baptist Church (17576 CR500, Bayfield, Colo.) is seeking a FT pastor. Call Robert Tate at 361-649-2914 for more information. Email resume to bobct53@gmail.com.

Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Ill., is seeking a FT senior pastor. If you prayerfully believe you are that man, we look forward to receiving your application. To apply, visit sites.google.com/view/labcseniorpastorsearch/home.

STUDENT

Immanuel Baptist Church in Wichita, Kan., is seeking a FT student and college pastor who has a ministry related degree and vocational ministry experience for our conservative, growing, and missional church. Approximately 600 in worship & \$1.6 million budget. The church is debt free. Send your resume to abarton@ibcwichita.com.

YOU'RE INVITED TO

ONLY JESUS

Womens Conference

Fri, Aug 16 6:30 pm

Sat, Aug 17 9:00 am

at His Place Fellowship

Early registration is \$60. After July 31, cost will be \$75. Tickets can be purchased at hisplaceparis.com

Lunch provided!



Allison Allen

Other speakers include
Cari Dees & Charlie Rose



With Teresa Harmening &
the His Place Praise Team
leading worship

For more information, call 903-706-5022
His Place Fellowship 925 TX Hwy 24 Paris, TX

THE TOP TWO PRIORITIES OF EVERY PASTOR



SHEEP WILL LET YOU LEAD THEM if you first love and feed them. This lesson is crucial for task-oriented pastors like me. This was Peter's blind spot also, which is why his post-resurrection restoration was such a pivotal moment in his life and ministry.

In Jesus' third and last interaction with His disciples after the resurrection, they grilled out for breakfast. Then Jesus took Peter on a life-changing walk on the beach (John 21:15-17):

Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said to Him, "You know that I love You."

"Feed My lambs," He told him.

A second time He asked him, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?"

"Yes, Lord," he said to Him, "You know that I love You."

"Shepherd My sheep," He told him.

He asked him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?"

Peter was grieved that He asked him the third time, "Do you love Me?" He said, "Lord, You know everything! You know that I love You."

"Feed My sheep," Jesus said.

Peter was like most action-biased leaders I know: "Charge!"

Jesus leveraged Peter's latest failure not only to restore him, but to also reset his ministry trajectory with these two simple directives.

'Feed My lambs'

Hungry sheep are never happy sheep, so make sure their souls are full from your preaching.

Soon after his restoration, Peter and his friends would face the challenge of prioritizing their prayer and preaching ministry (Acts 6:4). Immediate ministry demands

distracted them from their preparations, which led to the spiritual and numerical stagnation of Christianity's first church in Jerusalem.

The most effective way to prioritize preaching is to consistently start preparing your sermons early in the week. Unless you are preaching on Sunday nights, this ideally could begin on Sunday afternoon (after your nap). If you balk at studying on the sabbath, you should relax and enjoy the sabbath on another day, because Sunday is probably the worst time to rest for a pastor.

'Shepherd my sheep'

Good preaching won't make up for bad pastoring. How we treat people offstage is more important than how you teach them onstage. Yes, even those members who are resisting all of your initiatives. Most church conflict is the result of slow, relational erosion, not any one issue.

"We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

That doesn't sound very professional, does it? Almost sappy in fact. It took a while to learn that my sheep needed me to be personal more than they needed me to be professional. Pastor, your people are longing to be genuinely loved by you.

I believe gradual relationship erosion sneaks up on a lot of pastors, which is why so many are surprised when their sheep dig in their hooves in response to their vision and initiatives. Perhaps they are not so much opposed to advancing the gospel as they are opposed being pushed or shoved.

If you try to lead or feed them without loving them first, you may get bit—or worse—ignored.



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 or scan the QR code



bivo pastors network

AUG. 5
Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering

AUGUST

- 6-8** Pastor Prayer Retreat, Longview
- 27** Evangelism Connections (online)



SEPT. 22-29

Reach Texas State Missions Offering
WEEK OF PRAYER

SEPTEMBER

- 5** 55+ Adults Ministry Training, Flint
- 5** Pastor Wives Connection Night, Houston
- 6-7** She Stands Women's Conference, Houston
- 9** Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering
- 13-14** Florece Retiro de Mujeres, Glen Rose
- 23** Disciple-Making Leader Workshop, Longview
- 24** Disciple-Making Leader Workshop, Houston
- 26** Family Ministry Luncheon, Fort Worth
- 27-28** Hombres de Impacto, Glen Rose
- 30** Evangelism Connections (online)

ANNUAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS & EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

A resolution allows convention messengers to express consensus on a current issue. While resolutions are non-binding on convention churches, they 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 resolutions committee considers these proposed resolutions when preparing resolutions to present to messengers at the annual meeting.

The 2024 resolutions committee will receive proposed resolutions from Wednesday, Sept. 18, until Wednesday, Oct. 16. 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.

Additionally, only SBTC ministries and approved exhibitors may hand out material to the messenger body on the premises hosting the annual meeting.



OCT. 6

Cooperative Program Sunday

OCTOBER

- 3** Pastor Wives Connection Night, Longview
- 4-5** She Stands Women's Conference, Longview
- 7** Bivo Pastors Network Remote Gathering
- 8** Pastors Masters Golf Tournament, Flower Mound
- 8** Evangelism Connections (online)
- 12** Intro to DR & Phase 1 Training, Flint
- 17** Pastor Wives Connection Night, Odessa
- 18-19** Conferencia Mujeres Firmes
- 18-19** She Stands Women's Conference, Odessa
- 21** Bivo Pastors Network Regional Gathering, San Angelo
- 22** NAMB Evangelism Toolkit Training - Crossover 2025



SOUTHERN BAPTISTS OF TEXAS CONVENTION

ANNUAL 2024 MEETING

SIDE **BY** SIDE

PHILIPPIANS 1:27

NOVEMBER 11-12

HOUSTON
SAGEMONT CHURCH

sbtexas.com/am24

