



## SBC 2018 annual meeting in Dallas doubles as missions opportunity

SBTC invites Southern Baptists to add church planting, revitalization in Texas to summer plans

By Tammi Reed Ledbetter  
Special Assignments Editor

**DALLAS** As Dallas hosts next year’s annual meeting of Southern Baptists, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention is extending an invitation for churches to bring mission teams as well as messengers.

Whether it is the week leading up to the June 12-13 meeting, extending their trip into the next week or finding another time frame later in the summer, mission volunteers will find plenty of opportunities from which to choose throughout the state.

“In 2018 we will have opportunities for churches in other states to get a taste of foreign missions in Texas along with some Texas BBQ,” stated Barry Calhoun, SBTC director of missions mobilization.

See SBC DALLAS, 7



# ‘ROLES OF A MAN’

## Training series helps churches develop a clear and compelling men’s ministry

By Jane Rodgers TEXAN Correspondent

**While the Man Church phenomenon has gained momentum among some congregations, ministry geared specifically to men is missing in action in many churches today.**

In response, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention has teamed with Eric Reed and Don Munton of Houston’s First Baptist Church to produce the “Roles of a Man” video resource, now available online from the SBTC.

Reed has served Houston’s First for nearly a dozen years, most recently as men’s minister, while Munton has been the church’s single adult minister for almost two decades. The tag team duo discipled Houston’s First men using the Roles curriculum developed by Munton and honed by decades of teaching.

Reed and Munton believe a clear and compelling men’s ministry is vital to the health of a church. When churches step away from specific men’s and women’s ministries, Reed said, they may be forsaking the teaching and equipping of leadership and future generations.

See MEN, 8

### GREAT COMMISSION ON CAMPUS

## Multi-ethnic church grows out of engagement with international college students

By Morgan Collier  
TEXAN Correspondent

### ARLINGTON

Typically, churchgoers walk into their churches’ front doors on a Sunday morning and see only one or two different ethnic groups within the congregation. As for the members of International Baptist Church of Arlington (IBCA), every Sunday is a chance to fellowship and worship with brothers and sisters from all over the globe.

IBCA is located near the University of Texas at Arlington and the congregation celebrated its fifth anniversary in April, continuing a vision to look for opportunities to reach out and evangelize the students on campus.

See COLLEGE, 2



**“Wherever we go, we are going to continue to reach all people groups with the gospel of Christ then raise them up as leaders to send out as missionaries. We want to fulfill the Great Commission.”**

—STEVE LEE, PROFESSOR OF URBAN CHURCH PLANTING AT SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN FORT WORTH



# COLLEGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"We regularly go to the campus every Tuesday or Thursday to go out and meet students," Pastor John Sun said. "We open up by introducing ourselves, then ask a little bit about them like where they are from or what they are studying, and from there we look for opportunities to share the gospel and invite them to our church."

Steve Lee, professor of urban church planting at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, told the TEXAN God gave him a specific purpose and vision to start a unique church.

"The vision is to continue to reach all people groups around us and to the ends of the Earth," said Lee, who helped gather the core team and has served as a church planting mentor. "Wherever we go, we are going to continue to reach all people groups with the gospel of Christ then raise them up as leaders to send out as missionaries. We want to fulfill the Great Commission."

Through outreaches such as ice cream socials and study break nights on campus and events within their church, IBCA works to welcome students to the community, drawing in many international students.

"They don't know what it is like in America and to be a part of communities, so they are eager to come out to these events," Sun said. "Having our international students as the center point also draws in others to see different cultures."

Sun said a primary way the church reaches international students is through an on-campus organization called International Students Inc. (ISI).

"Every year when new students come to UTA, there is a good chance they will get to hear about IBCA through ISI as they provide a lot of services to new students that are coming to America for the first time," he said.



PHOTOS BY MATHEUS OLIVEIRA/SWBTS

Clarity Thoreson, who serves as the church's administrator and communications director, said the church also focuses its outreach on one of the biggest events on campus called the "Big Howdy."

Every fall semester the Big Howdy organizes a DFW tour for UTA students, held on Labor Day, Thoreson said. Organizations and churches take students to places around downtown Fort Worth, such as the stock yards and water gardens, then end with a picnic in a park nearby.

"By building these relationships early in the semester, we can invite them to other things, whether it be UTA events or church events," she said. "It really provides a starting point for these connections to start forming."

The Big Howdy also organizes Wal-Mart rides throughout the semester along with a big party that allows students, organizations and churches an opportunity to meet and begin forming bonds.

"The administration at UTA is actually very favorable to Christian organizations so it is truly the favor of the Lord," Thoreson said.

According to Sun, multiple community groups are scattered throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, including ones on campus.

"We know students are busy and that they need to be able to come and go freely," he said.

**"WHEN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS COME TO OUR CHURCH, WE WANT THEM TO BE ABLE TO READ IN THEIR NATIVE TONGUE. THE SBTC IS THE SOLE PROVIDER FOR ALL OF OUR DIFFERENT TYPES OF BIBLES, AND WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THE ABUNDANCE OF BIBLES IN EVERY DIFFERENT LANGUAGE."**

— PASTOR JOHN SUN, INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH OF ARLINGTON



"We have communities hosted by our members to provide a warm atmosphere for students to walk in and be taken care of."

Thoreson said that the Lord has also blessed the ministry by sending co-laborers with a heart for evangelism and discipleship to their church.

"Our members have such a heart for these students," she said. "This is a time where we can build relationships and get to know them a little bit more just through friendship, maybe even have the opportunity to share the love of Christ."

God provided IBCA a permanent facility near the campus and in the heart of Arlington about a year ago when a local church that had experienced decline was ready to close its doors.

"In light of what God was doing in our church, they had seen how we were bringing in young people and reaching out to the community," Sun said. "We were one of the three options that they could pass the church on to, and the Lord moved in their hearts."

Sun told the TEXAN that a deacon of the previous church felt God placing International Baptist Church of Arlington in his heart for weeks, and after sharing his story of God working through him, the church unanimously decided to pass the building on to IBCA.

"We have been honored to take the church facility and the building to continue the work the previous church had been doing for many years," he said. "It was purely from God, with him moving us to be at the right places and doing the right ministry."

As IBCA is growing in their ministry, Lee said that many of their members are already serving in Vancouver, Canada, as a part of the North American Mission Board's GenSend program.

"We want our members to be more than just church goers," Sun said. "But to be disciples and train them so that one day they will be the ones really living out missions in their communities."

During these past five years, Lee said the church has sown

the vision of their church planting values and discipleship but are looking forward to the second stage.

"We are praying about having a second service in the morning to reach out to families," he said. "Over the years a lot of college students have come through, but now we are taking on more cross-generational values."

IBCA was a church plant through the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC), and Lee said the convention has blessed IBCA through training, resources, conferences and guidance along with being a financial partner and encourager.

"When international students come to our church, we want them to be able to read in their native tongue," Sun said. "The SBTC is the sole provider for all of our different types of Bibles, and we are thankful for the abundance of Bibles in every different language."

For more information on SBTC Church Planting, visit [sbtxas.com/churchplanting](http://sbtxas.com/churchplanting).



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# Bible Drill yields spiritual benefits for children, parents

## SBTC TO OFFER TRAINING AT EQUIP

By Jane Rodgers  
TEXAN Correspondent

**HOUSTON** Blood flowed after a car door smashed into the head of a fourth grade boy whose mother panicked until the youngster spoke up, quoting Psalm 56:3, a verse he had learned at Bible Drill practice at Midland's Fannin Terrace Baptist Church: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee."

The episode is one of several recalled by Claudia Tomlinson, long-time Bible Drill sponsor at Fannin Terrace, who said the Southern Baptist competition encourages discipline, humility, friendship and even family togetherness in memorizing Scripture.

Doug Lamb, Tomlinson's pastor, affirmed that Bible Drill gives children confidence in handling the Bible and challenges parents to become more familiar with Scripture as well.

"[Bible Drill] helps implant into the soul the seed of God's Word as they move through life," Lamb told the TEXAN.

Veteran Sunday school teacher Pat Elam of La Junta Baptist Church in Springtown echoed Lamb's sentiments, calling Bible Drill "fun" and a way for kids to "know their Bibles" and "plant

God's Word in their hearts."

The Bible Drill and Speakers Tournament have long been staples of Southern Baptist churches, with associations and state conventions holding annual competitions. Children in grades 4-6 participate in Children's Bible Drill. Students in grades 7-9 take part in Youth Drill, while older teens, grades 10-12, compete in the High School Drill and Speakers' Tournament.

During Bible Drill competition, a caller issues a command and students have seconds to locate chapter and verse in their Bibles as well as quoting Scripture from memory. In the Speakers' Tournament, students prepare and deliver four- to six-minute talks on assigned topics.

Youth and high school competitors can advance to state and national competitions.

Daniel Engstrom, who sponsors Bible Drill with his wife, Terri, at Arlington's Tate Springs Baptist Church, described it as "a way to memorize Scripture and to also have a little fun competition," adding that "competition is a very small part" and that the benefits come from the students learning God's Word.

Sharon Reitzammer of North

Oaks Baptist Church in Spring was tapped by her pastor to lead Bible Drill in 1989 and was later recruited to direct the program for the South Texas Baptist Association. Her students have advanced multiple times to state competitions and twice to nationals.

As Reitzammer initially explored Bible Drill, she realized its impact would be both "present and future" for children, something she said has proven true for nearly 30 years.

The SBTC has sponsored Bible Drill competition since 2002 and awards college scholarships to first, second and third place state finishers in the youth, high school and speakers' competitions.

Emily Smith, SBTC associate for women's and children's ministries, serves on the Bible Drill's National Invitational Tournament procedural team. The 2017 national tourney was held in Brunswick, Georgia, June 15-16.

Bible Drill's importance cannot be overstated, Smith said.

"We see the value and life skills that Bible Drill/Speakers Tournament provides for children and youth," she said. "This is why we are dedicated to providing training and a quality program for [them] to compete

at the regional, state and national levels."

To assist churches in starting Bible Drill and Speakers Tournament programs, the SBTC will offer training at the EQUIP conference Aug. 12 at Champion Forest Baptist Church, Smith said.

Veteran coach Marcia Wood, who has 24 years of experience in Bible Drill, will lead the EQUIP training.

"My goal is to share [my] passion," Wood said, adding that not only will she provide "a glimpse" of the program and how to implement it in a church, but she hopes to impart "the vision of how having children and youth memorizing God's Word will be a blessing to the entire body of Christ."

Wood's own children benefited greatly from the competition, she said. "My shy, soft-spoken fourth grader learned to be confident in front of a group. My son continues to memorize Scripture, taking a leadership role in his church."

For competitors, Wood emphasized, "They will never look back and think, 'I wish I hadn't spent time learning God's Word.' That just won't happen. God's Word is alive, and it lives in us."

### SBTC BIBLE DRILL AND SPEAKERS' TOURNAMENT 2018

#### REGIONALS

- April 6-7 at First Baptist Church, Odessa, and Spring Baptist Church, Spring
- April 20-21 at First Baptist Church, Euless

#### STATE FINALS

- April 28 at the SBTC offices in Grapevine

Rickey Wilson of Arlington's Cornerstone Baptist Church has coordinated a successful Bible Drill and Speakers Tournament program with his wife, Joyce, for the past eight years. Wilson's children, now grown, participated even before that.

"God's Word is the foundation of our faith," Wilson said, adding, "If they don't have God's Word in them, they pretty much don't have a fighting chance in the world. ... They will either choose God's Word or the word of the world."

For more information on Bible Drill training at EQUIP, visit [sbtexas.com/equip](http://sbtexas.com/equip). 🌟

## Lorick elected executive director of Colorado Baptist convention

By Keith Collier  
Managing Editor

### WHEAT RIDGE, COLO.

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention evangelism director Nathan Lorick was elected executive director of the Colorado Baptist General Convention (CBGC) during a special called session at Applewood Baptist Church in Wheat Ridge, Colo., July 15. Lorick, 36, becomes the youngest executive director among the state conventions associated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

According to a Baptist Press article, the CBGC search team selected Lorick from a pool of 20 applicants. Lorick traveled the state July 11-14 to meet with pastors before being approved by Colorado messengers by a nearly unanimous vote of 75-1.

"We are excited about Dr. Lorick's election," Calvin Wit-

tman, search team chairman and pastor of the Denver-area Applewood Baptist Church, told Baptist Press. "We look forward to what God is going to do here in Colorado."

"When we put it all together, we wanted somebody that understood the past and was connected to the future," Wittman said. "We had some good candidates, but we really sensed that this was God's man. We believe that God wants to do something great in Colorado."

Lorick told the TEXAN that he is grateful for what God has accomplished during his time with the SBTC.

"My time at the SBTC has been an incredible opportunity to link arms with churches all across Texas to take the gospel from one end of the state to the other," Lorick said. "Alongside a great team, we were able to see God do some incredible things through our



Nathan Lorick

1Cross app, the Gameplan, our One in a Million emphasis, and many other aspects of our evangelism ministries.

"I could not have asked for a better team to work with as we sought to help churches fulfill the Great Commission across the state. I also understand that some people dream of meeting their hero, but I've had the privilege and honor of working for mine over the last five years under the leadership of Dr. Jim Richards."

Lorick also noted his desire to see a movement of God among Southern Baptist churches in Colorado.

"We're really excited about what God wants to do in Colorado through intentional evangelism, church planting and church revitalization," Lorick said. "We are believing that God will use us to help spark a fresh movement of his Spirit in the West. We would love prayers as we seek the avenues of ministry ahead and ask that people would not only pray for us but come join us in what God's doing in Colorado."

SBTC Executive Director Jim Richards praised Lorick's leadership of evangelism ministries for the Texas convention over the past five years and expressed excitement for how God will use him in his new role in Colorado.

"Nathan has God's hand on him," Richards told the TEXAN. "He pastored a strong

Cooperative Program giving church. When the SBTC evangelism director position came open, I knew he was the one to lead us forward. Now as he leaves for a new assignment, I count it a privilege to have served with him. He will do well serving Southern Baptist churches in Colorado. I pray God's best for him."

Lorick joined the SBTC staff as director of evangelism in 2012. Prior to that, he pastored two Texas churches—First Baptist Church of Malakoff and Martin's Mill Baptist Church—as well as serving as student minister at Sylvania Baptist Church in Tyler and First Baptist Church in Waskom. He earned Doctor of Ministry and Master of Divinity degrees from Liberty University and a bachelor's from East Texas Baptist University.

Lorick begins his role as executive director of the CBGC on Aug. 1. 🌟

# THE WIDE GATE AND THE EASY PATH



**Gary Ledbetter**  
Editor

It's always happened. An international or local Christian celebrity will build a following based on talent, communication skills or even biblical exposition; and then he or she evolves into something less biblical. Those keeping track choose sides—"So and so is a heretic," or "So and so is brave." In our day, we're blessed with more celebrities than ever before and more access to an international following. We're also encumbered with a trending cause that pulls the sentimental among us across the line from biblical orthodoxy. That process was played out over a couple of days in July when author and retired pastor Eugene Peterson affirmed same-sex marriage in an interview and then later reaffirmed the biblical view of "everything" (see story on page 6). This is the closest thing to a real recantation of a pro-LGBT statement I remember seeing.

But what do we do when one of our favorite singers or teachers or authors finally gets

in touch with his inner LGBT-affirming Christian influencer? Part of me wants to discard the CDs or the books that I liked pretty well a month earlier. Another part acknowledges that insight or talent is not less useful than it was last month; although I'd not likely make any new purchases or recommend these works to others—assuming that whatever new insight this celebrity can offer will have a strange agenda.

How is that different than my acceptance of Presbyterian theologians (infant baptism), Anglican C.S. Lewis, Roman Catholic G.K. Chesterton or any number of my favorite Pentecostal Jesus Music performers from the 1970s? Is it just a matter of accepting what I like without any judgment and rejecting for convictional reasons those things that I won't miss having around? Back when it was popular for churches to ask teenagers to bring their "secular" albums or CDs to church for a bonfire, I remember one long-haired kid being interviewed by a TV station about the event. The kid proudly displayed his mother's Englebert Humperdink and Perry

**We choose a destination, whether we know it or not, when we choose a path.**

Como records he had brought to burn. I assume he left his own Led Zeppelin records at home. But there doesn't have to be any hypocrisy in us if we discourage our people from reading Jen Hatmaker or Rob Bell but continue to quote Martin Luther from the pulpit. It's a question of direction or trend.

When I read Lewis or Luther I see redeemed men who were moving in their theology, and their sanctification, toward the teachings of Christ as recorded in Scripture. Their evolution was spiritual and their submission was to the things of God. The fact that they did not arrive at what I consider to be a thoroughly New Testament understanding of theology does not mean that they were farther from that ideal at the end of their lives than they were earlier. They were closer. It's biblical to trust people who are growing toward Christ, even if they haven't arrived yet.

But we can't so easily trust someone whose trend is on another path. It is a rare person, one I've never met, who will fully disagree with the Bible on only one or two things. Some of those disagreements they haven't yet named are revealed over time. We choose a destination, whether we know it or not, when we choose a path.

There is also a sense of betrayal or deception in these "wandering stars" (Jude 13). Bookstores still sell the books or recordings they made when they purported to be orthodox. They still receive royalties from those works, even though they no longer believe what they wrote or sang. Some people don't get the word and are led astray; most readers don't practice much discernment. Most believers don't have time to keep up with everything that changes in a day. There are some books I don't mind having in my library that I wouldn't give to most of my friends or

family. So yes, I'd pull copies of those books and CDs and DVDs out of my church library and my bookstore. They are no longer trustworthy resources because their authors are no longer trustworthy leaders.

Contrary to some things I've read from writers and entertainers who bemoan the fact that they now have fewer customers, this discernment is not hateful or unfair. No one has an absolute right to our ears, eyes or money. It makes me chuckle when someone is praised for "courageously" doing what most of our culture says he should do. It's ridiculous when he complains that there is a price for adopting a new constituency, which values vague Christianity even less than they do orthodoxy.

The culture of celebrity is inherently dangerous, and there will always be things we don't know about those we follow from a distance. But when we know that what they believe is willfully unbiblical and headed farther away from the teachings of Christ, we need to stop following them or letting them teach us. We're inevitably on the wrong path if our teachers are on the wrong path. ❖

## Open Your Home, Open Your Heart



**Lori McDaniel**  
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People gathering together is a universal activity throughout the world. And there's nothing quite like a room full of women bringing international food!

The air quickly fills with smells of curry and sounds of repetitive conversations. We each have to restate words several times to comprehend what is being said through thick accents (or a southern accent in my case).

Learning to love people from other cultures is a process. It's not something we automatically do. Have you noticed that? Yet, Scripture says, "The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself" (Leviticus 19:34).

Opening your home is one way to create space in your

heart for learning to love cross-culturally while also communicating favor and friendship.

Here are some steps I've learned:

❶ **Learn to dissolve presuppositions.**

They came in wearing black burqas, they took off their robes and shoes and went to the bathroom to fix their hair. All of sudden these women who crowded around a mirror, chatting and laughing, seemed like, well, normal women.

Did I really think they weren't normal because they wore burqas? They were women, like me. I'm the one who mentally put them into a different category. We often make assumptions about someone's life based on a news clip we saw on TV. We must work at seeing people as people, no matter their culture or beliefs.

❷ **Learn to be comfortable with being present.**

Americans have watches,

but other cultures have time. We are fast-paced Americans who feel awkward with silence. When building a cross-cultural friendship, there will be quiet moments where you'll feel uncomfortable. They probably don't. In many cultures, presence communicates friendship even in silence. Work at not rushing and just being present.

❸ **Learn their religion and culture.**

Learning about another religion is not denying your own. Asking questions communicates a posture of being interested and often gives insight into why they believe what they do. Ask questions—Why do women cover their heads? Have you been to Mecca? What does the red dot (called a bindi) on your forehead mean?

These are not offensive questions. You're learning. They want to learn too. By learning about them, you've created a safe

place for them to ask you questions. And they will—Why do you put ice in your tea? Why do you baptize? Why do you teach people to drink Jesus' blood?

❹ **Learn to be confident in the power of the gospel.**

Love the gospel, but lose the sales pitch. We don't have to convince someone that the gospel is true. It is true. And it is the power that brings "salvation to anyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). And we need to lose the fear that we might have to defend our faith. There is a place for apologetics, but often these casual conversations are not it. Ask them to tell a story about their beliefs, and you will eventually have an opportunity to story the gospel.

❺ **Learn to contextualize.**

Don't alter who you are, but learn to do things acceptable in their culture. I've so messed this up. The first time I had Hindus in my house I cooked chicken! They were vegetarian.

Develop a keen awareness to cultural cues and implement them. I've learned to eat rice with my hands, and I've learned to "bobble" my head side to side. They want to learn American culture, too, and they feel a mutual friendship when you learn theirs.

❻ **Learn to create margin to live life with them.**

Our lives are so busy that we schedule ourselves right out of a life on mission. After you've had them in your home, what's your next missional step to connecting with them? Many internationals living in the States want an American friend. Statistically, few have found them. Let us work at loving foreigners, from our prayers to our daily lifestyle. ❖

*Lori McDaniel serves as a global mission catalyst with the International Mission Board. She and her husband, Mike, and three children were missionaries in Africa before returning to plant Grace Point Church in Bentonville, Ark., where Mike is the lead pastor.*

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# THE DOG DAYS OF ADVERSITY



**Jim Richards**  
Executive Director

**W**e are in the “dog days of summer,” an ancient expression that was based on an astrological movement of stars and represented the hottest period of the year. The span of time varies in different cultures but basically begins sometime in July and ends in late August or September. I was in Phoenix for a week at the Southern Baptist Convention. I think they got a jump on the dog days of summer.

Dog days give me the connotation of being uncomfortable. There are a lot of things in life that make us uncomfortable. Recently I was interviewed for a video by “For the Church” from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. One of the

questions was “what difficult thing in your life has taught you the most?” In answering that question I realized it was one challenge that has played out in numerous seasons of my life. Constant adversity has been my companion throughout my ministry.

Shortly after I was saved, I answered God’s call to preach. I went to a Baptist college, where I was confronted with theological liberalism for the first time. Some professors denied the virgin birth, the bodily resurrection and the exclusivity of salvation in Christ. More than once I contested with them about their positions. It did not end well for me; I was asked to leave the school. At that moment I had to decide whether I was going to believe the Bible to be inerrant. In the crucible of adversity, my life’s ministry was shaped.

God blessed the second church where I pastored. We

**One challenge has played out in numerous seasons of my life. Constant adversity has been my companion throughout my ministry.**

saw people come to Christ, and the church grew. Those who were in the power structure resented losing their place to the new people. I was voted out as pastor. I think some Methodists cast ballots. But I could not quit. God had called me to preach, and there are too many street corners in America for me not to preach even if a church wouldn’t have me.

When the Conservative Resurgence got in motion, I was already on the train. Actively working to see change in my state convention, I was

attacked by denominational leadership. A preacher delivering the convention sermon brought a message that alluded to me and my efforts to bring change. I love being a “convention Baptist,” but if I had to lose my future involvement because of my stand for the Word of God, so be it. By God’s grace, the convention returned to its biblical roots.

Then in 1998 I was called to serve the churches of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. There were a number of untrue statements made about me and the convention

by outside critics. One state paper editor wrote an article calling me “a liar, a hypocrite and a horse thief.” He said I was “stealing” churches and institutions. I admit I have lied in my life. I admit I have been hypocritical in my life. But I have never been a horse thief. You know what they do to horse thieves in Texas. Being visionary and missionary had to continue to be my focus.

We all want to be loved and accepted. We should never give people a reason to fault our spirit. Even when we stand for truth in a Christ-like way we will be criticized. God showed His faithfulness to see me through many challenges. I’m here to testify of his grace.

The dog days of summer may be uncomfortable, but fall is on its way. Relief will be here soon. When you go through adversity, remember God’s Spirit will see you through. Jesus is there all along the way. ✠

## There are No Millennials in the Bible



**Shane Pruitt**  
SBTC Missions Director

**O**ne of the hottest topics in churches, conferences, blogs and books today is “How to reach Millennials.” Many of my friends, colleagues, and I are regularly invited to coach groups on this topic, and personally, I enjoy speaking on reaching the next generation. However, here recently I’ve been opening my talks and breakouts with this statement, “In the kingdom of God, there is no such thing as a Millennial. That is a man-made term with a made-man definition.”

So what is a Millennial? Well, there are no precise dates when this generation starts and ends, but most researchers and commentators refer to Millennials

as those born between 1980 and the early 2000s. Generations that precede this generation are Generation X (1965–1980), Baby Boomers (1946–1964), The Silent Generation (1925–1945), The Greatest Generation (1901–1924), and so on. The generation that follows the Millennials is Generation Z (2001–?).

However, like I said above, these are man-made names and descriptions. Don’t get me wrong. I realize that cultural shifts, advancements in technology and ever-changing family dynamics cause people to act, think and believe differently than their parents and grandparents.

But I also believe that we all too often allow culture, generational names and definitions to define our actions in a negative light. For example, there was a “reality” TV show not too

long ago that placed Millennials versus Generation X’ers in a survival competition. Several of the young Millennial girls who refused to work used the excuse, “You know how us Millennials are. We don’t like to work hard!” Well, who told them that? Who made them believe that there was a whole generation that didn’t like to work hard? Culture told them that.

Think about what the media calls them today—“snowflakes” and “buttercups.” A whole generation is being told that they’re overly sensitive whiners and unprepared to respond when someone disagrees with them. However, I strongly believe that these misleading articles, interviews and definitions are causing this generation to surrender to how culture defines them rather than how God defines them.

Plus, it’s a flat-out lie. I speak to tens of thousands of young adults and students every year; and for every one person out there that fits the generalizations seen on TV, I’ve met a hundred others that are hard workers, driven, ambitious and changing the world around them for the better.

It also doesn’t take long to realize that some of the characteristics attributed to Millennials today are the same characteristics applied to previous generations—“The now generation has now become the ME generation (New York Times, 1976, about Boomers).” “They have trouble making decisions. They would rather

hike in the Himalayas than climb a corporate ladder. They crave entertainment, but their attention span is as short as one zap of a TV dial. They postpone marriage because they dread divorce (TIME Magazine, 1990, about Generation X).”

Instead of a generation being characterized by certain generalities, maybe there is simply something to be said about being young. When you’re young, you act immaturely and make mistakes, stumbling through life as you attempt to figure out what God has called you to do. However, just like previous generations, prayerfully, youth turns into maturity with age and experience. Then, if history proves itself, that generation most likely will complain about the next. Believe me, Millennials will also grow old one day and will worry about the future of the world because of how 21-year-olds will look and act at that time.

Thankfully, according to the Bible, there is no such thing as a Millennial or any other generational name! The Scriptures don’t recognize Boomers, Generation X, Millennials or Generation Z. The Word of God only speaks about people who are made in the image of God. Some of these people are older, and some are younger.

People—not just Millennials, but all generations—need Jesus and are in desperate need of the gospel and discipleship. Whether you’re born in 1964, 1984 or 2004, you came into this world as a sinner who is

going to make lots of mistakes, possibly be a little spoiled and certainly in desperate need of a Savior. And that is exactly what God offers to every generation—his own Son: “But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Then, of course, this call to salvation will also propel people into sanctification through discipleship. What is discipleship? Christian discipleship is the journey by which we grow in the knowledge and wisdom of Jesus and his Word through the power of the Holy Spirit to live in this present world in a Christ-like way that will attract others to want know our heavenly Father. Thankfully, the model of discipleship has already been laid out in Titus 2, where older men are encouraged to teach the younger men and older women are encouraged to teach the younger women, all with the goal of helping them grow in wisdom.

The future generations are not projects that need more gimmicks from the church; they are people in desperate need of the gospel of Jesus Christ. So maybe its time for us to stop falling into the generalizations of generations and start walking in the truths of how Scripture views all ages—as people in need of grace. Instead of complaining about the future generations, let’s do what the Bible commands us to do—love God, love people and make disciples. ✠





Among Americans:  
**When sexual freedom and religious freedom conflict, which freedom do you feel is more important?**



LifeWay

LifeWayResearch.com

## Americans divided over religious freedom/sexual freedom disputes

When faith and sexuality clash in the public square, which side should prevail? Americans can't decide.

About half of Americans (48 percent) say religious freedom is more important in such conflicts, according to a new study from

LifeWay Research. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) say sexual freedom is more important, and 28 percent aren't sure.

The survey was released after the U.S. Supreme Court agreed in June to hear the case of a Colorado baker who refused to make a cake for a same-sex wedding.

"It's clear Americans value religious liberty," said Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research. "But when it comes to sex, they aren't sure religion should have the final word. That's especially true

for younger Americans and those who aren't religious."

LifeWay Research also asked Americans what they believe "motivates sincere religious believers who oppose sexual freedom." About half say faith (49 percent) is the main motivation. One in five (20 percent) say hate. Almost a third aren't sure (31 percent).

The study was based on a new analysis of a survey of 1,000 Americans.

—LifeWay Research

# News BRIEFS

### Eugene Peterson sparks controversy with same-sex marriage comments

Bestselling Christian author Eugene Peterson, known for "The Message" paraphrase of Scripture, caused a stir within the evangelical community in July by stating he would perform a same-sex wedding. But one day after the interview was posted, he backtracked.

Peterson, 84, is the author of more than 30 books and a former professor at Regent College in Canada.

"I wouldn't have said this 20 years ago," he told Religion News Service in the initial statement, "but now I know a lot of people who are gay and lesbian and they seem to have as good a spiritual life as I do. I think that kind of debate about lesbians and gays might be over. People who disapprove of it, they'll probably just go to another church."

"So we're in a transition and I think it's a transition for the best, for the good. I don't think it's something that you can parade, but it's not a right or wrong thing as far as I'm concerned," Peterson said.

In response to a question from RNS, Peterson said he would perform a same-sex wedding if asked to do so.

The day after the story was posted, Peterson released a statement saying: "I affirm a biblical view of marriage: one man to one woman. I affirm a biblical view of everything."

"With most interviews I've done," he said in his follow-up statement, "I generally ask for questions in advance and respond in writing. That's where I am most comfortable. When put on the spot by this particular interviewer, I said yes in the moment."



But on further reflection and prayer, I would like to retract that. That's not something I would do out of respect to the congregation, the larger church body, and the historic biblical Christian view and teaching on marriage. That said, I would still love such a couple as their pastor. They'd be welcome at my table, along with everybody else."

Peterson also told RNS of pastoring a congregation that was willing to consider hiring an open homosexual as minister of music.

"We didn't have any gay people in the whole congregation," Peterson said. "Well, some of them weren't openly gay. But I was so pleased with the congregation. Nobody made any question about [the applicant's sexuality]. And he was a really good musician."

—Christianity Today/Baptist Press

### Raiders' QB Carr says tithing tops priority list

When Oakland Raiders quarterback Derek Carr signed a contract extension making him the highest paid player in NFL history, he was quick to identify one of his top priorities—tithing.

"The first thing I'll do is I'll pay my tithe like I have since I was in college getting \$700 on a scholarship check," Carr said at a June press conference following the signing. "That won't change."

Carr and the Raiders agreed to a five-year, \$125 million extension that will keep him on the team through 2022.

"First and foremost, I'm just blessed and honored to be sitting here today," Carr said in his opening comments at the press conference. "I dreamed of this day when I was a little kid, and it's here. I just thank God for this opportunity."

An outspoken Christian, Carr said he was excited about the contract because he wanted

to continue playing for the Raiders, and because of how he and his wife Heather would use the money.

"This money's going to help a lot of people," he said. "I'm very thankful to have it, that it's in our hands, because it's going to help people not only in this country but in a lot of countries around the world. That's what's exciting to me."

—Baptist Press

### National Park backtracks, gives permit to Christian geologist



The National Park Service reversed course in late June and agreed to give a Christian geologist a permit to conduct studies at the Grand Canyon after a lawsuit was filed against the federal agency. The scientist, Andrew Snelling, had wanted to obtain fist-sized rock samples at the park but was denied.

Alliance Defending Freedom, the legal organization that filed the suit, said Snelling was denied the permit because of his faith and his scientific positions. Snelling is a scientist for Answers In Genesis, which rejects evolution and affirms a young earth view.

"When the government refuses to allow a Christian geologist simply to collect information because it dislikes his views, it undercuts science and violates the law," said ADF attorney Gary McCaleb. "We commend Park Service officials, Interior Secretary [Ryan] Zinke, and the Trump administration for understanding that specifically targeting Dr. Snelling's faith as the reason to stop his research was both inappropriate and unconstitutional. As the Park Service finally admitted, 'Dr. Snelling's proposal is well stated with methods that are similar or equal to standard scientific practice to test the hypothesis provided,' so it is the right choice to let the research go forward."

—Alliance Defending Freedom

### Hobby Lobby returns ancient artifacts, pays \$3 million fine to feds

Hobby Lobby agreed in July to surrender thousands of ancient artifacts, including cuneiform tablets and seals, after federal prosecutors determined the material came from war-torn Iraq and not Turkey or Israel as customs forms had claimed. The company also paid a \$3 million fine in a settlement.

Laws in the United States and Iraq ban the purchase of cultural artifacts suspected of being illegally removed from the country, deeming it property of the state instead.

The settlement involves a slice of its massive library: \$1.6 million in "tablets and bricks, clay bullae, and cylinder seals" marked with Sumerian cuneiform, one of the earliest known forms of writing. The company faces no criminal liability.

"We should have exercised more oversight and carefully questioned how the acquisitions were handled," Hobby Lobby president Steve Green said in a statement. "The Company was new to the world of acquiring these items, and did not fully appreciate the complexities of the acquisitions process. This resulted in some regrettable mistakes. The Company imprudently relied on dealers and shippers who, in hindsight, did not understand the correct way to document and ship these items."

None of the artifacts were part of the collection in the Museum of the Bible, which is scheduled to open in November, Green said. The museum located in Washington, D.C., was launched by Green and his family.

—Christianity Today

### Life-size Noah's ark park celebrates 1st anniversary



A modern-day, life-size Noah's ark attraction in Kentucky celebrated its first anniversary July 7, having drawn more than 1 million visitors in its first year.

Known as the Ark Encounter, it was built by Answers in Genesis.

"We've had an excellent first-year attendance," said Mark Loy, spokesman for Answers in Genesis, which a decade ago built a sister attraction, the Creation Museum.

"We're predicting that the second year will be perhaps much higher than the first, approaching perhaps 2 million people," Loy said.

The economic impact of the ark and the museum led the Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau to award Answers in Genesis the Star of Tourism Award this year. The ark's first-year economic impact is estimated to be around \$200 million.

"What strikes me as I walk through the parking lots of both attractions is that about 95 percent of the vehicles have out-of-state license plates," said Ken Ham, head of Answers in Genesis.

"On a given day," he said, "more than 10,000 guests will visit one of our attractions."

The ark has three decks of exhibits in more than 120,000 square feet. The park also includes the Ararat Ridge Zoo, zip lines, live entertainment, a 1,500-seat theme restaurant and shopping.

—Kentucky Today

### Nat'l CP 5.96 percent above projection

Year-to-date contributions to Southern Baptist national and international missions and ministries are 5.96 percent above the year-to-date SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget projection, and are 2.05 percent above contributions received during the same time frame last year.

As of June 30, gifts received by the Executive Committee for distribution through the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget through the first nine months of the convention's fiscal year (October to September) totaled \$150,193,673.05. This was \$8,443,673.05 above the \$141,750,000.00 year-to-date budgeted projection and was \$3,015,786.16 more than the \$147,177,886.89 received through the end of June 2016.

Designated giving of \$171,637,079.63 for the same year-to-date period was 8.67 percent, or \$16,286,005.48, below the \$187,923,085.11 received at this point last year.

—Baptist Press

# SBC DALLAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“There will be vision tour opportunities in key cities in June for pastors, mission leaders and church members as they visit our state.”

With more than 28 million people in the state and 18 million of those lost and without Christ, Calhoun said the 25,000 to 40,000 people moving to Texas every month increases that ratio.

“We can’t plant enough churches to keep pace with the population growth, so we need other states partnering in Texas to help us reach the nations that have come to us,” he stated.

The Reach Houston Initiative combines church planting and revitalization in the fourth largest city in the United States. Houston is home to more than 350 ethno-linguistic people groups speaking more than 220 languages, making it the most diverse city in North America.

“We also have the longest border of any southern state,” Calhoun said, “and our borderland strategy helps to carry the gospel of Christ into Mexico from the Rio Grande Valley to El Paso, without us ever crossing the border as part of our Reach Houston and Borderlands Reach initiatives.”

With more than 300 languages spoken in Texas, mission team volunteers can make use

of the 1Cross app produced by SBTC as an evangelistic tool for sharing the message of the gospel in multiple languages. The three-minute gospel testimonies in video form feature native speakers, making it possible to overcome a language barrier when witnessing.

Prior to the SBC meeting, pastors can take advantage of training for revitalization and replanting. Mark Clifton, senior director of replanting at the North American Mission Board, said the June 9-10 lab will feature “actual practitioners leading conferences and breakouts on every aspect of how to replant a dying church for God’s glory.”

Participants may include “a pastor who is in a church that

is really declining, a pastor who thinks he might want to enter this type of ministry and help replant dying churches, or a pastor whose church would like to be a supporting, sponsoring or sending church to help recover churches that are about to die,” Clifton said.

After the first day’s training on June 9 at Criswell College in Dallas, the pastors will spread out across the Dallas-Fort Worth area to worship with churches being replanted or revitalized as well as hear their strategy over lunch. The closing session moves to Texas Stadium in Arlington prior to the Harvest America crusade featuring Greg Laurie.

NAMB President Kevin Ezell appealed for thousands

of volunteers to be a part of proclaiming the name of Jesus in Dallas. “What if we left Dallas next June and people were talking more about the impact we had for Christ than they were about the fact that we held an annual meeting?” asked NAMB President Kevin Ezell.

“Our revitalization and replanting lab, the Crossover Crusade partnership with Harvest America and mission opportunities with Texas churches will be among the many ways Southern Baptists can make that happen.”

More information, including details of opportunities for mission teams, will be posted at [sbtexas.com/mobilization](http://sbtexas.com/mobilization).

# SAM PORTER NAMED NATIONAL DIRECTOR FOR DISASTER RELIEF

By Josie Bingham  
NAMB

ALPHARETTA, GA. The North American Mission Board has named Sam Porter as the new national director for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief. Porter will replace Mickey Caison, who will officially retire Aug. 31.

NAMB noted Porter has been a proponent of SBDR for years



Sam Porter

and was one of the first disaster relief leaders to respond after the 9-11 attacks in New York City. He made numerous trips to the area for two years and served as a chaplain in the morgue at Ground Zero.

Porter also has led more than 100 volunteer mission projects and more than 40 international relief missions. He’s headed recovery efforts for a year in Haiti following 34 volunteer teams from Oklahoma in the wake of the devastating earthquake Jan. 12, 2010.

“We’ve been praying and looking for Mickey’s replacement for about 18 months,”

said David Melber, NAMB vice president of Send Relief.

“Sam has been in the disaster relief world for a long time working around the nation and throughout Oklahoma,” Melber noted. “He’s proven to be a great leader. I’m excited to see how he’s going to continue unifying our state disaster relief leaders during crisis and how he will bring a new direction for disaster relief that’s go-

ing to further build its future.”

Porter currently serves as volunteer missions specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO), which includes responsibilities as the director of Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief. His resume of SBDR efforts is extensive. Porter plans to retire from the BGCO Aug. 15 and begin his role with NAMB in mid-September.

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# MEN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Additionally, Munton added, men's natural proclivity toward passivity combined with society's devaluing of the roles of men have made the need for discipling all the more necessary.

The practice of men's ministry is changing, SBTC church ministries associate Lance Crowell said.

"There was a day when large men's events like Promise Keepers were the norm. We are seeing fewer of these. Fewer churches have men's ministers. Men's ministry is incorporated into other areas," Crowell explained.

"Churches are rethinking how to engage men holistically," Crowell added, noting that many churches emphasize smaller groups to create and sustain community. Familiarity encourages participation in church events as men attend functions with their life groups or Sunday school classes.

"The buy-in is a lot higher when you are in relationship. Relationship is where we must engage men," Crowell added.

A relational discipleship approach requires a solid foundation in the basics of biblical manhood, Reed and Munton told the TEXAN. The Roles of a Man curriculum is a six-week series taught to men of all ages in groups of varying size at Houston's First.

"We teach from [ages]18 to 80," Reed said.

The series grew from material Munton discovered in the late 1980s in David McLaughlin's book *The Role of the Man in the Family*. With McLaughlin's permission, Munton adapted the curriculum, adding material from other teachers, including Kanakuk Kamps' Hank Harmon. When Reed joined Munton on staff at Houston's First, they adopted the team approach to teaching Roles of a Man.

As its title suggests, the material is for all men, not simply husbands or fathers.

"Single or married, old or young, single again or empty-nester, the biblical role of the man is for every man in every season of life," Munton explained.

"Men's ministry is a three-legged stool," Reed said, requiring a vision of biblical manhood, faith skills and a supportive, intergenerational community to help when life becomes difficult.

Based on more than 20 Scripture passages, including Colossians 1:28-29



and Genesis 2-3, Roles of a Man declares that men are loved by God and play valuable biblical roles as provider, protector, discipler and servant leader, Munton said.

The series can be taught at a weekend conference, although Reed called the material too "intense" for that setting to be optimal. Six weeks works well, Munton said, adding that initial sessions focus on "perspective," a term he clarified with sports analogies, likening men's roles to positions on a team.

The two prefer to teach together. "We share stories from each other's lives, ... pass the baton to each other, interrupt each other if necessary," Reed said. "We want to model biblical friendship. We don't believe the world encourages that enough."

Crowell, desiring to make the resource available through the SBTC, approached Reed and Munton about doing a video series.

Reed and Munton were initially reluctant since the curriculum is evolving and they thrive on audience interaction. Eventually, though, they decided the video would be "healthy" to do.

"The Holy Spirit will interpret for the men watching," Reed said. "We will be faithful to prepare our hearts and deliver it with passion and truthfulness. We decided to create a resource, not replicate a weekend."

The curriculum has proved meaningful to thousands of men, single and married, Munton said.

The church as a whole benefits when all men are disciplined, Reed and Munton insisted.

"Ultimately, men's ministry is a min-

istry to the whole church. It's not a church inside the church. It is a ministry to the church itself," Reed said.

At Houston's First, after each week of class, the men are asked to put into practice what they have learned. The application of theology—called "ap-plicology" by Reed—encourages men to apply their knowledge in Sunday school, community groups or elsewhere at church.

"After the six weeks of classes, these men are stabilizing and enhancing classes and the church," Munton said, adding that families and work places also benefit long-term.

Men who catch the vision of biblical manhood "step in as a big brother to the [fatherless] children" and participate more fully in the life of the congregation, Reed said. "The more men grow, the more they should be giving their lives away. We see men grow up, and they begin to serve. It's a beautiful thing."

"Biblically speaking, I want to equip and train men to walk out of this church to their office space, to their neighborhood, to the little league team, to their families," Reed added.

As for the Roles of a Man video resource, just as McLaughlin originally gave Munton permission to use his original material without charge, the SBTC videos are available at no cost.

"We want to do whatever we can to lift men up and help them play their role in the game of life," Munton said.

Roles of a Man is designed for groups of all sizes and is available online or in a two-disk DVD set, with a downloadable guidebook, at sbtexas.com/rolesofaman. 📺

## TRAINING

### EQUIP sessions to address multigenerational men's ministry, victory over sexual sins

By Jane Rodgers  
TEXAN Correspondent

**HOUSTON** The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's EQUIP Conference on August 12 at Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston will feature 60 speakers offering 240 sessions geared to train lay leaders, church volunteers and staffs in a variety of ministry areas, including men's ministry.

EQUIP is the convention's annual major training event for churches, said Lance Crowell, SBTC church ministries associate.

Three speakers—Josh Proctor, Denny Autry, and Eric Reed—will address issues relevant to men's ministry through breakout sessions that include engaging multigenerational groups of men, reaching men in today's culture, building a men's ministry and helping men overcome the loss of spiritual passion. Three sessions will address pornography and sexual addiction and include an overview of CRAVE, the SBTC's new online 30-day program for helping men gain victory over sexual sin.

"CRAVE is a 30-day spiritual detox for men caught in pornography," Crowell said, adding that the resource is scheduled to go online in August. For additional information on CRAVE, see sbtexas.com/crave.

The EQUIP conference runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration before Aug. 7 is \$10 and includes lunch. Registration after Aug. 7 is \$15, with lunch based on availability depending upon the number of walk-up registrations.

For more information on EQUIP, see sbtexas.com/equip. 📺

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Written by Eric Reed & Don Munton & Published by SBTC Men's Ministry

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# BOYS CAMP PROVIDES HANDS-ON SKILLS, SPIRITUAL MENTORSHIP



By Morgan Collier  
TEXAN Correspondent

**NEWTON** Churches must shape the young boys of today into the godly leaders of tomorrow. For this reason, around 120 boys entering first through seventh grades gathered at East Texas Baptist Encampment in Newton June 11-15 for the fourth annual Boys Camp.

"It is a life application and skills camp, where there are things from welding, forging, changing tires, mechanical work, wood working, and more that they can carry home with them and start using those skills," said Jason Glenn, boys camp director and pastor of Call Junction Baptist Church. "We disciple them with life applications so they can relate these things in order to grow in Christ."

"I LIKE TO SEE THESE BOYS FORM A PASSION FOR DIFFERENT LIFE SKILLS WHILE ALSO LEARNING ABOUT THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST."

—ALEX RODRIGUEZ, BOYS CAMP COUNSELOR

Glenn said the camp was started to grow adult men in churches as leaders by creating opportunities for evangelistic and mentoring relationships to form between the men and boys in their churches.

"I remember growing up and the mindset I had toward Christian men, and at no fault of their own, they were stand-offish," he said. "A lot of times in my generation, as a kid, we

saw ladies taking leadership roles in the churches where men should have been taking that role."

Alex Rodriguez, a camp counselor, said he enjoys being able to help out and set an example for the boys.

"I like to see these boys form a passion for different life skills while also learning about the love of Jesus Christ," Rodriguez told the TEXAN.

One memorable spiritual application was taught through the inner workings of a turbo engine, and the devotion was followed by a visual representation of a truck burnout on the basketball court.

The purpose of the turbo engine lesson was to help the boys understand that if Christians crucify the flesh and allow God to give them a clean heart, good things will come out of allowing Christ to change them, Glenn explained.

"Everybody at this camp has the same vision, which is to spread the gospel and the love of Christ with all the students who come," Glenn said. "Not many camps are going to let you put a truck up on the basketball court and do a burnout, but everybody is working in harmony toward a common goal."

This year's camp theme was "Overflow" with the camp verse

being Luke 6:45: "A good man produces good out of the good storeroom of his heart. An evil man produces evil out of the evil storeroom, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart."

"We are learning about the good and bad people of the world and that if you let Jesus into your heart that you will become good," 11-year-old camper Garret Cruse said.

Glenn said that everything they are working on is to point them to grow and allow Christ to expand inside of them so they can share him with others when they go out into their communities.

"These men that are working with them are godly men, so whether the boys are standing off or they are really working hard, they can be encouraged in whatever way that they need to be ministered to, these men can do so," he said. ✨

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# LOCAL CHURCHES REACH MEN WITH THE GOSPEL THROUGH MAN CHURCH



I REALIZED THAT BEING A GODLY MAN FOR ME MEANT I NEEDED TO BE MORE LOVING AND CARING TO THOSE AROUND ME, TO MY WIFE AND KIDS ESPECIALLY. I NEEDED TO LEAD IN BEING A BIBLICAL MAN. IT'S BEEN AN EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE."

—BRIAN SIZEMORE

By Jerry Pierce  
TEXAN Correspondent

**LONGVIEW** Just a couple of years ago, Brian Sizemore wouldn't have dreamed of leading a Sunday school class, much less a roomful of young married couples trying to build their homes around their faith in Jesus Christ.

Neither would Wes Moyers have thought he'd be leading a Sunday night home fellowship group, helping fellow church members chew on the message their pastor preached that morning through discussion and Bible study.

Both men credit Holy Spirit-inspired moments of clarity from God's Word delivered at something called ManChurchETX (ETX stands for East Texas) for spurring them to take unprecedented steps to follow Jesus.

They are far from alone in profiting spiritually from the bimonthly worship gatherings held at rotating church venues in the Longview area.

Since ManChurchETX was launched more than two years ago at Joy Baptist Church in Gladewater, more than 100 men in a handful of nearby towns have received Christ as Savior; many more have committed themselves to biblical discipleship and greater ministry involvement in their local churches.

Sizemore and Moyers were both saved prior to participating in ManChurchETX, but neither man was emulating Jesus all that closely at work and, more importantly, in their homes.

Sizemore, a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in White Oak for eight years, says he is much more involved in his church than before, and he has a new understanding what it means to be a real man.

"I was raised in a tough, stern kind of way," Sizemore told the

TEXAN. "Those are good qualities to an extent, but I realized that being a godly man for me meant I needed to be more loving and caring to those around me, to my wife and kids especially. I needed to lead in being a biblical man. It's been an eye-opening experience."

A few months after coming to some of these realizations, Sizemore said he felt a strong leading to begin teaching a young marrieds Bible study at his church. He also realized following Jesus and leading by example meant he had to provide servant leadership in his home and be the catalyst for prayer and spiritual conversation in his family.

Wes Moyers of Joy Baptist Church in Gladewater said he was moved by a message from Shane Pruitt, SBTC missions director, who during a ManChurchETX gathering in 2016 encouraged the men to continue building on what God had started, reminding them that a movement of God cannot be stopped.

"It really resonated with our men's group," Moyers recalled. Soon, Moyers was seeking God's direction on how he could grow in his faith and serve fellow church members. He ended up

volunteering to lead a home group fellowship. He said his wife, Katherine, is reaping the benefits of deeper relationships at church by hosting the group in their home.

"She's growing right along with me," Moyers said.

Additionally, Moyers saw one of his younger brothers receive Christ at the first ManChurchETX meeting more than two years ago.

Teddy Sorrells, the pastor who had the vision for ManChurchETX and whose church, Joy Baptist, hosted the first meeting, says he was motivated largely by his friendship with the man who led him to Christ years earlier, the late Chris Rodgers.

Rodgers, who was diagnosed with terminal cancer in the months before ManChurchETX was birthed, was a consistent witness for Christ who wanted his legacy to be leading men to the Savior.

With only a few months to live, Rodgers spoke at the first ManChurch meeting, sharing with the men his journey through addictions and false concepts of manhood before his conversion and call to become a pastor.

"Teddy," Rodgers told Sorrells, "I just want to show men what it means to finish strong."

Sorrells, likewise, says ManChurchETX in many ways reflects what Rodgers wanted to do.

During a typical ManChurch, the men eat "man food," followed by a worship band leading in music that appeals to men, and then a straightforward Bible-focused message that challenges the Christian men there and extends the offer of the gospel to the unconverted.

The first meeting more than two years ago drew 80 men. These days, between 200 and 250 men will show up.

"At every event," Sorrells said, "men are being saved, men are repenting of sin, and chains are being broken."

Chad Richardson, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist in White Oak, said he has seen the fruit of ManChurchETX in his own church.

"The great thing about ManChurch," Richardson said, "is they are able to speak to a man the way men need to be spoken to on a range of issues: sexual purity, a man's marriage, fatherhood, just general living for Jesus kinds of messages."

"The overall central theme is that Jesus is the answer to whatever problem you face, and guys are responding to that awesome call of Christ in their lives."

ManChurch is not unique to the Longview area. Different variations of the concept are held in churches elsewhere, a few using the ManChurch moniker.

But Sorrells is hoping more churches around Texas will capture the vision of bringing the message of the cross to guys in a man-friendly environment.

Two decades ago, the Promise Keepers movement was successful in engaging men in large stadium events, but no large-scale revival or awakening occurred. Sorrells is praying that God might spark true revival and awakening in a movement of godly men, but this time driven by local churches rather than large parachurch groups.

"Promise Keepers tried, but it was top down," Sorrells said. "This is a bottom-up effort involving local churches. These men are discipling the men they are bringing to Christ."

For more information, visit [manchurchetx.com](http://manchurchetx.com). ✚



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# HISPANIC CONFERENCE AIMS TO REACH MEN OF ALL AGES



By **Tammi Reed Ledbetter**  
*Special Assignments Editor*

**GLEN ROSE** Hispanic church leaders, laymen and students will gather for *Hombres de Impacto* at Riverbend Retreat Center in Glen Rose, Oct. 27-28. Heriberto Hermosillo, pastor of Semilla de Mostaza in McAllen, will be the featured speaker. The theme of this year's men's ministry conference is "Words of Life," based on Psalm 19:7-10. SBTC Hispanic Ministries Associate Jesse Contreras outlined

the breakout sessions on characteristics of a soldier of God; addressing the importance of Scripture, prayer and sacrifice; avoiding temptation; and achieving victory in Christ. "We live in a very tumultuous world and there are many oppositions to the cause of Christ," he told the TEXAN, "so this is a time for men to get together to be encouraged and realize they are not alone in this battle." With young men who are 15 years of age and older invited to participate, the

conference will feature a specific track for youth on Saturday offered in English. The conference gets underway with a dinner at 7 p.m. on Friday prepared by the SBTC Disaster Relief volunteers. A soccer tournament for participating churches starts at 1 p.m. on Saturday as the closing event. Further details are available online at [sbtexas.com/hombresdeimpacto](http://sbtexas.com/hombresdeimpacto) or by calling 817-552-2500. Churches are encouraged to register by Oct. 17 at a cost of \$70 per person. 📧

## Reaching Millennial Men: Show, Don't Tell



By **Jane Rodgers**  
*TEXAN Correspondent*

**FORT WORTH** Ministry to Millennial men at Fort Worth's Christ Chapel embraces a "show me" rather than a "tell me" approach, which aligns with the church's philosophy that life in Christ is a story meant to be shared. "We want to transplant the DNA of a missionary into the [everyday] young adult world," young adult pastor Ben Fuqua explained. This approach involves bringing church to unlikely places. During the academic year, Christ Chapel's college ministry meets on Sunday mornings in the Aardvark bar on Berry Street near Texas Christian University. Services draw more than 200 college students weekly. The bar is closed till noon on Sundays. Its location inspired the outreach to TCU students when the church's facilities were full during a building project. The bar owner, not connected to the church, opened his doors. "One of my favorite parts ... has been building a relationship with the owner and his bartenders," Fuqua said. Fuqua called the ministry the "front-line" of what Christ Chapel is doing to reach Millennials. College and young adult home groups are also available, as is mentoring by older believers. For those beyond college, Christ Chapel began Renovate, a Wednesday night service attended by 230-240 young adults, average age 26.

Fuqua preaches three out of four Wednesday nights and said the services are designed to give Millennials a platform to reach co-workers, neighbors and friends for Christ. "We spend a lot of time, energy and prayer trying to make Wednesday night disarming, not over anyone's head, where the gospel is shared, where it's relevant, really holding up the Bible and biblical preaching," Fuqua said, voicing the church's intention that services provide "conversation starters" at offices and neighborhoods. Each June, Renovate meets outside church walls with activities such as worshiping at parks, feeding the homeless at community centers and partnering with an African-American congregation. On June 28, Renovate sent groups to Waterside, an entertainment complex popular with Millennials and featuring a central park surrounded by restaurants. "The plan was to mingle and love our neighbors well, maybe buy a few people food and just eat with them," Fuqua said. "We had a lot of great conversations. Some of our guys picked up the tab for some meals as we engaged with our city and other young adults. "A big part of our ministry is going to them. We need to enter into [Millennials'] world, see where they hang out, where they do life, where they spend time," Fuqua explained. "We see Jesus doing this, entering into a world of broken people. He taught at synagogues, but he didn't only teach at synagogues."

"OUR APPROACH THAT WE DON'T WANT TO JUST TALK AT YOU, WE WANT TO WALK IT OUT WITH YOU, HAS ATTRACTED MORE MEN. TO TELL MEN THAT THEY NEED TO BE ON MISSION AND THEY NEED TO BE MISSIONARIES IS EMPOWERING."

— BEN FUQUA

Even after regular Wednesday night Renovate services, groups are encouraged to go out in the city afterward, "not to huddle together" but to present gospel community where one "can belong before you believe," Fuqua said. The American church's "default position" of waiting upon Millennials to return is concerning, Fuqua added, explaining that Millennials may have heard the truth as children, but they want more. They want to see "what it looks like to be a Christian, to live out the gospel." Fuqua admitted that Millennial women are quicker to participate in church programming, while men remain "a little more standoffish." "Our approach that we don't want to just talk at you, we want to walk it out with you, has attracted more men. To tell men that they need to be on mission and they need to be missionaries is empowering," Fuqua said. This philosophy has led to an unusually high participation rate at Christ Chapel of young men who thrive on community and challenge. In fact, more

men than women signed up for a recent coed mission trip to Belize. The missionary with whom the group worked remarked that in more than 20 years, he had never seen men outnumber women on a coed trip. Chase Distasio, a 24-year-old marketer for a private equity firm who attends Christ Chapel, agreed that reaching young adults is "tough for a lot of churches." Distasio became a Christian in college, afterwards spending a year in Residency, Christ Chapel's discipleship program. "Millennials struggle with pride," Distasio said, adding that he once found church "intimidating," assuming "everyone inside was perfect." "I wanted to have it figured out," he added, praising Renovate's commitment to meet Millennials "where they are." Christ Chapel has learned that with Millennials, if you challenge them to go, they will respond. "We tell our people, 'You are in the community. You are living in the world that God has put you in. See yourself as a missionary,'" Fuqua said. 📧





# MEET AN SBTC CHURCH PLANTER

**NAME:** JT Riley

**FAMILY:**  
Wife—Allison Riley  
Kids—Gia (11), Jerry (9), Sophia (7)

**NAME OF CHURCH:** Providence Baptist Church  
**CITY:** Providence Village  
**WEBSITE:** www.pbc380.com

**WHEN DID YOU PLANT THE CHURCH?** June 1, 2015 is when we began the work, and we officially launched in February.

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR CITY/NEIGHBORHOOD TO PLANT?**  
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**HOW CAN PEOPLE PRAY FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILY, AND/OR YOUR CHURCH?**  
Pray that I would continue to have wisdom in leading and developing future leaders and true disciples of Jesus Christ.

Pray that my wife would find her strength in the Lord when she feels all alone in church planting (it can be lonely). Pray that my children would grow to passionately pursue Christ all the days of their lives.

**DESCRIBE ONE WAY YOU'VE SEEN GOD MOVE MIGHTILY IN YOUR CHURCH OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS.**  
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## CHURCH POSITIONS

### PASTOR

- Antioch BC in Lovelady is seeking a FT senior pastor. Parsonage included. SS attendance 120, Worship 150-175. Affiliated with the Neches River Baptist Association and the SBTC. Send resumes to [ijatkinsonjr@hotmail.com](mailto:ijatkinsonjr@hotmail.com).
- FBC Hamlin is seeking a FT pastor. Average Sunday morning attendance is 130. Parsonage is available. We are an SBTC church. Send resumes to [pastorsearchcommittee@fbcchamlin.com](mailto:pastorsearchcommittee@fbcchamlin.com) or mail to First Baptist Church Hamlin, Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 8, Hamlin, TX 79520.
- FBC Garrison is receiving resumes for pastor. Worship style is slightly blended. Email resume as an attachment to [pastorsearchcommittee@fbcgarrison.com](mailto:pastorsearchcommittee@fbcgarrison.com) by Aug. 15, 2017. Include in the resume a testimony of salvation and calling. A seminary degree or partial degree is expected and 10 years of church leadership experience is preferred. [fbcgarrison.com](mailto:fbcgarrison.com).
- Timber Crest BC in Waco seeks a FT pastor. Send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, 1625 Crow Drive, Waco, TX 76705 or email: [tcbcwaco@aol.com](mailto:tcbcwaco@aol.com). The church office number is 254-799-5551. The church website is [timbercrestbc.org](http://timbercrestbc.org).
- Farley Street BC is seeking a FT executive pastor. Must be an ordained Baptist minister and possess experience and understanding of Christian education, leadership capabilities and general business procedures, and have experience in providing biblical counsel to families. Send resumes to [resume@farleystreet.com](mailto:resume@farleystreet.com).
- FBC of Loop is seeking a pastor for a small rural West Texas Southern Baptist Church. Nice parsonage and utilities furnished. Salary is negotiable. For more information contact Danny Yocom, Pastor Search Committee Chairman at (806) 752-6164.
- Barksdale BC is searching for a bi-vocational pastor for a church that serves a large community. Parsonage provided. Experience and education a plus. Youth ministry and mission-minded very important. Send resumes to G Moore, Chairman, Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 399, Camp Wood, TX 78833.
- Martinsville BC in Martinsville (Nacogdoches County) is seeking a PT/bi-vocational pastor that preaches sound Southern Baptist doctrine. Please submit resumes to [pastorsearch@martinsvillebc.com](mailto:pastorsearch@martinsvillebc.com) or mail to Martinsville Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 34, Martinsville, TX 75958.
- Bethel BC in Deer Park is seeking a PT/bi-vocational pastor. Please submit resumes by email to Randy McCartney, Pastor Search Committee Chairman, [bethelbaptistdp@att.net](mailto:bethelbaptistdp@att.net) or by mail to 2702 E. Pasadena Blvd, Deer Park, TX 77536.
- New Life BC in Cooper is seeking a PT pastor. Average Sunday attendance is about 40. parsonage

provided (4 bedroom/2 bath). For more information go to [www.newlifecooper.com](http://www.newlifecooper.com).  
North Hills BC in Whitesboro is seeking a PT/bi-vocational pastor with a strong sense of leadership to help our church grow. Preferring someone who likes blended worship services and has a passion for drawing families. Resumes can be emailed to [Northhillsbaptistchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:Northhillsbaptistchurch@yahoo.com) or mailed to North Hills Baptist Church, PO Box 649 Whitesboro, TX 76273.

### MUSIC

- Immanuel BC in San Angelo is seeking a FT music minister. Responsibilities include blended Sunday morning worship, sanctuary choir, various instrumentalists, media, and some technology. Send resumes to [pastortommy@ibcfam.org](mailto:pastortommy@ibcfam.org) or 90 E. 14th St., San Angelo, TX 76903.
- FBC in Junction is seeking a FT music leader for worship and church music program. Contact [jfbcmusicadmin@gmail.com](mailto:jfbcmusicadmin@gmail.com).
- San Saba's FBC is seeking a dynamic leader to nurture a strong worship culture that lifts up the name of Jesus. For more information and to apply, visit [SanSabaFBC.org](http://SanSabaFBC.org).
- Community BC in Crosby is seeking a PT worship leader who will lead a team for Sunday morning worship services. Also, he would be responsible for recruiting, rehearsing and training volunteers to lead in worship. Please contact pastor Robert Williams at [dwilliams@cbccrosby.org](mailto:dwilliams@cbccrosby.org).
- Westside BC in Corsicana is accepting resumes for a PT interim music minister for Sunday morning and evening services, and Wednesday nights. Email resume to [westside.church@sbcglobal.net](mailto:westside.church@sbcglobal.net) or mail to Westside Baptist Church, 1522 N 24th, Corsicana, TX 75110.

### COMBINATION

- FBC Garrison is a congregation of 140 people seeking a PT worship pastor and a PT student pastor or a combined FT minister. A full resume may be emailed as an attachment to [worshippastorsearch@fbcgarrison.com](mailto:worshippastorsearch@fbcgarrison.com) and/or [youthpastorsearch@fbcgarrison.com](mailto:youthpastorsearch@fbcgarrison.com). Please state the position you are applying for, and include links or attachments of video/audio of you leading.
- Canyon Creek BC in Temple is seeking a FT youth/college minister. Email resumes to [mary@creekfamily.org](mailto:mary@creekfamily.org).
- Custer City BC in Gainesville is searching for a PT music/youth minister. You may email your questions and/or resume to [rkwebb143@msn.com](mailto:rkwebb143@msn.com) or Custer City Baptist Church, 31 Custer City Lane, Gainesville, TX 76240.

### YOUTH

- FBC Buffalo is seeking a FT youth minister. Master's

- level is preferred. Seeking an evangelistic team player who loves students. Email [agrisham@fbcbuffalo.org](mailto:agrisham@fbcbuffalo.org).
- New Boston's FBC in northeast Texas is seeking a FT student minister whose primary responsibility is leading 7th-12th grade students with additional ministry to 3rd-6th graders. Must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college; seminary degree preferred. Submit resume to [search@fbcnewboston.com](mailto:search@fbcnewboston.com) or [fbcnewboston.com/student-minister-search](mailto:fbcnewboston.com/student-minister-search).
- Cornerstone BC in Lucas seeks a pastor of students in one of the fastest growing areas of DFW. We are praying for a mature, experienced, fun loving, theologically grounded and God-called youth pastor. Excellence in ministry required. Send resume and references to Darrell Edwards at [pastor@cbclucas.com](mailto:pastor@cbclucas.com).
- Southside BC in Bowie is accepting resumes for a PT/FT youth minister with flexible salary package for 6th-12th graders. Bowie is within commuting distance from DFW and Wichita Falls. Established youth program and very supportive congregation. Email resume to [therog@att.net](mailto:therog@att.net) or at <http://southsidebowie.weebly.com/> or mail to Southside Baptist Church, 311 W. Wilbarger St., Bowie, TX 76230.
- FBC in Silsbee is seeking a PT/FT youth minister to partner with our church and parents to build a foundation on the gospel for our youth. Good organization and communication skills are a plus. Send resumes to [parish.bob@gmail.com](mailto:parish.bob@gmail.com).
- FBC in Fruitvale is seeking a bi-vocational student minister. Please submit a resume to: First Baptist Church, PO Box 177, Fruitvale, TX 75127 or email to [garykaughn@aol.com](mailto:garykaughn@aol.com).
- FBC in Henderson is accepting resumes for a youth pastor. Please send resumes to [dhiggs@](mailto:dhiggs@)

[thefbc.org](http://thefbc.org) or First Baptist Church, 207 W. Main St, Henderson, TX 75654.  
FBC of Winona, a small town in the Tyler area, is seeking PT or bi-vocational minister of students. Parsonage is available. Submit resume to pastor Tony Watson at [pastor@winonafbc.org](mailto:pastor@winonafbc.org).

### CHILDREN

- Community BC in Crosby is seeking a PT director of children's ministry to create, manage and direct all aspects of children's ministry (birth through fifth grade) which includes Sunday school, children's church, summer Wednesday activities, special events, VBS and childcare. Please contact pastor Robert Williams at [dwilliams@cbccrosby.org](mailto:dwilliams@cbccrosby.org).

### OTHER

- Farley Street BC is searching for a PT outreach director who is passionate about outreach and missions. Seeking someone who has experience in local and community outreach, leading and caring for and pastoring people. Formal education and/or seminary training is a plus. Send resumes to [resume@farleystreet.com](mailto:resume@farleystreet.com).
- Faith Christian Academy in Palmhurst is in need of a secondary math teacher for the 2017-2018 school year. We have been around for 27 years. Contact 956-581-7777.
- FREE witnessing dolls for churches to use in VBS, mission trips, Sunday school, etc. We minister in New Mexico and Arizona to Native Americans and are in need of large quantities of beans, rice and new or used extra-large clothing for both men and women. Contact Bill & Bettye Roberts, 903-364-2515, 361 Harris Lane, Whitewright, TX 75491, [bbbrob921@gmail.com](mailto:bbbrob921@gmail.com).

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- ROCK CREEK BC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE:** Building a Culture of Biblical Femininity in the Home, Church & Community will be October 5-7 at the Riley Center on the campus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth. For more information or to register, please visit [RockCreekBC.org](http://RockCreekBC.org) or contact Pat Ennis at 817-923-1921 x3630 or [paennis@swbts.edu](mailto:paennis@swbts.edu).
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# LEAD CAMP DEVELOPS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INTO CHURCH LEADERS



Lead Camp students work on their event planning project during their leadership track time. Camp leaders evaluated the projects and provided feedback. PHOTO BY MORGAN COLLIER



SBTC Lead Camp students Kim Strasber (left) and Emily Leonard (right) practice their songs for the end of the week performance. PHOTO BY MORGAN COLLIER

**By Morgan Collier**  
*TEXAN Correspondent*

**LIVINGSTON** With open hands lifted high in surrender, young adults praised the name of the Lord with their gifts and talents during the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's LEAD Camp at Lake Tomahawk Encampment July 10-14. The summer boot camp designed for high school students trained them how to lead their churches and communities through multiple skill sets.

"The goal of this camp is to send these students back home to start ministries in their churches," Lance Beaumont, camp director and SBTC music and worship technology associate, told the TEXAN. "We try to do everything so that a student has tools and resources to go out and do something."

During the week students have opportunities to learn how to study Scripture, share their faith, work together to arrange a worship service and

utilize lights and sound in a worship service.

"We try to develop the leaders to go back and serve now, and not to wait," Curtis James, leadership track instructor, said. "We teach the importance of 'you're saved, it's time to get to work, right now.'"

Students choose between three tracks—worship leadership, worship technology and Christian leadership—where they develop leadership abilities and technical skills to apply after leaving camp.

"[This camp] has taught me first to be a better musician but also how to use that as a spring board to be better at leading people in worship and in ministry," Jacob Cates, a senior and LEAD Camp participant of four years, said. "It has taught me some awesome life lessons about the ministry and a Christ-filled life."

According to James, the Christian leadership track teaches topics such as team building, hermeneutics (interpreting the Bible) and apologetics, founda-

tions of faith, how to share your faith, event planning and having a global vision for missions.

"We are planning events as one of the things that we are learning. Each group is coming up with their own events, so we have to work together then present it to our leaders," Esther Par, a high school senior and Burmese refugee from Lewisville, said. "It is a way of spreading the gospel toward other people so we can evangelize, worship and grow with Christ."

Houston Arledge, a recent high school graduate and third-year LEAD camper, has sensed God's call to youth ministry and said the camp has helped prepare him for seminary.

"This camp has really helped me learn a lot more about the intricacies in our walk with Christ," Arledge said. "Apologetics was a huge thing last year, they brought in a speaker and covered it again this year. Hermeneutics has also been a big thing; we've learned how to study your Bible better. That is one thing that I am really tak-

ing away this year, just really looking at all of the context.”

For the worship leadership track, students collaborate to put arrangements of songs together, while also learning how each instrument contributes to the whole and what it means to lead in worship, Cates told the TEXAN.

"We do ensemble experiences where we actually put the students in bands and have them work with worship leaders to practice and perform a few songs at the end of the week," Beaumont said. "Each group has chosen different styles to play as well. One group took a reggae approach, another group chose to perform an old school country route, and the third group chose to play a more contemporary version of southern gospel music."


The worship technology track gives students the opportunity to work with video, sound and lighting equipment to enhance a worship service.

"At the beginning of the week, we taught the leader-

ship team how to tell their testimony in two minutes or less and then filmed them for the tech team,” Beaumont said. “So, not only has the tech team been able to see how audio and lighting work in a worship service, but they are also working on editing together a video of those testimonies at our showcase.”

Beaumont explained that the camp originated in 2003 by the SBTC for the purpose of training up student leaders so they will go back as the future leaders of the church, better prepared.

"The convention's commitment to funding this camp financially keeps this camp running every year," James said. "The convention helps pay for the camp, aids in renting equipment that we use, and they give us any materials that we need."

The camp will return to Lake Tomahawk next year, July 9-13, 2018. For more information visit [sbtexas.com/lead](http://sbtexas.com/lead) 



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# Archaeologists’ discovery supports Bible’s Gezer account

By David Roach  
Baptist Press

**TEL GEZER, Israel** A discovery of ancient human remains by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary archaeologists has helped confirm Scripture’s portrayal of the city of Gezer in southern Israel.

The discovery, unearthed this summer by Southwestern’s Tandy Institute of Archaeology, included remains of two adults and a child inside a building that appeared to have been violently destroyed by Egyptians in the 13th century B.C., according to media reports. Because the Egyptians in that period preferred to keep vanquished foes alive, “the heavy destruction suggests the Egyptian pharaoh encountered much resistance from the Gezerites,” Southwestern archaeology professor Steven Ortiz told the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.

That level of resistance, Ortiz told Baptist Press, suggests Gezer was among the more powerful cities in southern Canaan during Israel’s conquest of the Promised Land, as the biblical book of Joshua indicates. Egypt’s destruction of the city occurred either during or immediately preceding the period of Israel’s conquest, Ortiz said.

The new discovery “does fit in with what we know about Gezer in the biblical period,” said Ortiz, professor of archaeology and biblical backgrounds and director of the Tandy Institute. “The King of Gezer apparently was one of the leaders [in the region]. In the conquest accounts, we have him organizing other Canaanite kings. So the biblical narrative has this memory of Gezer being an important city.”

Gezer’s elevated position in central Judea allowed the city to control an important trade route running from the Mediterranean to Jerusalem and Jericho, Haaretz reported.

Joshua 10:33 states that “King Hiram of Gezer went to help Lachish” when Joshua attacked it, “but Joshua struck him down along with his people, leaving no survivors.” Some 200-300 years later, Israel’s King Solomon received Gezer as a gift from the Egyptian pharaoh and established it as a fortification (1 Kings 9:15-17).

Ancient Egyptian documents also mention Gezer as a key city in the second millennium B.C., according to media reports.

The newly discovered human remains were discovered inside the ruins of a large building, Haaretz reported. The ceiling of one room apparently collapsed, burying an



▲ Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary archaeologists unearthed remains of three humans this summer in the biblical city of Gezer. SWBTS PHOTO

adult and a child in a meter-thick layer of ash. The other adult skeleton was found in a separate room beneath a pile of collapsed stones.

Artifacts discovered along with the remains included an amulet etched with the names of great Egyptian pharaohs, Haaretz reported.

“We’re just finishing our 10th excavation season [at Gezer], and we’re looking forward to publishing our material,” said Ortiz, co-director of the Tel Gezer excavations. “The importance of this archaeologi-

cal excavation will highlight the work of the Tandy Institute and the archaeology program at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

“We look forward to a Southern Baptist seminary being one of the leaders in the archaeology of the land of Israel,” Ortiz said.

Both Southwestern and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary have conducted archaeological digs at Tel Gezer. Among Southwestern’s previous projects was an excavation of Solomon’s fortified city. ❧



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# CBF SEEKS DIRECTION AMID DIVERSE VIEWS ON LGBT ISSUES

**By David Roach**  
*Baptist Press*

**ATLANTA** A committee charged with recommending how the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship can “strengthen [its] unity” despite “differing beliefs and practices in matters of human sexuality” has said it hopes to propose in the next six months “a more faithful path forward” in the CBF’s discussion of homosexuality.

The six-member Illumination Project Committee was appointed in June 2016 by then-CBF moderator Doug Dortch to, among other tasks, recommend whether the CBF Governing Board should amend the Fellowship’s hiring policy. The policy currently “does not allow ... for the purposeful hiring of a staff person or the sending of a missionary who is a practicing homosexual.”

The CBF was founded in 1991 as a fellowship of churches that objected to the ideology and methods of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Conservative Resurgence.

The committee’s interim report, delivered June 29 during a session of the CBF General Assembly in Atlanta, did not include any specific policy recommendations but noted the committee’s general thoughts as it prepares a final report to be delivered in September 2017 or January 2018.

The Governing Board, which has full authority over the hiring policy, must then decide whether to amend that policy.

The Illumination Project—an emphasis broader than the committee—was launched in June 2016 by the Govern-

ing Board “to create a framework to seek out unity on issues where we may not all be of one mind,” according to a video shown as part of the report.

The committee said its work thus far has consisted largely of listening to the stories of Baptists involved in CBF life through a series of 31 two-hour “extensive interviews.” The report noted five personality profiles:

- Those who hold traditional views of human sexuality but want the CBF to emphasize other matters.
- Those who believe “God defined marriage very clearly in Genesis” and the CBF should not allow practicing homosexuals as employees or missionaries.
- Those who self-identify as homosexual and want “peace through affirmation” in the CBF.
- Those who sense tension between the Bible’s teaching on homosexuality and its command to love our neighbors. Fellowship Baptists with this personality profile are not comfortable with advocacy by either side in the homosexuality debate and want churches of differing views to cooperate.
- Those who believe the homosexual lifestyle is morally legitimate and think changing CBF policies to permit that lifestyle among employees and missionaries “will be hard, but it has to happen.”

Illumination Project Committee member Rebecca Wiggs, a Jackson, Miss., attorney, said the personality profiles “serve as witnesses to the profound diversity among us on these matters.”

“Every word” and “every experience” depicted in the profiles was drawn from a Baptist active in the CBF, Wiggs said.

Committee member Paul Baxley, senior minister at First Baptist Church in Athens, Ga., said the early church’s discussion in Acts 10-15 of whether Gentile believers must be circumcised is a model for the CBF to follow in navigating the issue of homosexuality.

“The early church did not rush to a resolution,” Baxley said. When a resolution was proposed, “James [Jesus’ half-brother and a leader in the Jerusalem church] does not ultimately offer an either/or solution. Instead, a way forward emerges that allows the early church to experience a unity strong enough that the mission can continue.”

Applying Acts to the CBF, Baxley stated, “Our committee lives each day in the hopeful waiting for the emergence of a more faithful path forward. We stand before you today not in fear, but rather in the hopeful conviction that together we will see a still more excellent way when the Holy Spirit reveals it to us.”

The CBF must learn from the early church as the fellowship considers human sexuality, Baxley said, because “many believe these matters will be divisive for us and threaten our global mission efforts.”

The committee said it will continue listening to the stories of fellowship Baptists in anticipation of a final report.

Committee chair Charlie Fuller, executive pastor of First Baptist Church in Washington D.C., said the group is “seeking to hear Holy Spirit speak from all of us and to all of us.” The Illumination Project, he added, “will not be telling any church what they are to do regarding this matter or any other.”



▲ Charlie Fuller, chairman of the CBF’s Illumination Project Committee, presents a report to the CBF General Assembly June 29. SCREEN CAPTURE FROM CBF.BLOG.COM

Fuller said “the overall objective of the Illumination Project is to develop a toolbox of possible methods that churches and organizations can use to deal with contentious issues. While we develop these approaches, we are also exploring a specific question: How can Cooperative Baptists strengthen our unity in the face of differing beliefs and practices in matters of human sexuality?”

The committee’s written report states, “The Illumination Project is not convened to make affirming statements or take other actions that would disrupt the balance of cooperation among CBF churches and global missions partners.”

Both a video of the committee’s report at the General Assembly and a copy of its printed report are available through the CBF website. 📺

## Texas Baptists Committed ceases operations

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
CITES LACK OF FINANCIAL  
SUPPORT, ‘BATTLE FATIGUE’

**By Keith Collier**  
*Managing Editor*

**HOUSTON** Texas Baptists Committed, an organization formed in the 1980s to promote moderate principles and leadership within the Baptist General Convention of Texas, announced on the organization’s blog July 8 that its board of directors had voted to cease operations at the end of July. TBC Executive Director Bill Jones cited lack of funds and ‘battle fatigue’ as factors.

“Funds have been tight at TBC at least since I first joined the Board in January 2006,” Jones said in the blog post. “With no visible ‘battle’ for control of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, as there was through most of the 1990s, many Baptists just haven’t felt the urgent need for a ‘watchdog’ like Texas Baptists Committed. ‘Battle fatigue’ was a factor, too.”

Jones said he told TBC leaders in January 2016 that he would be stepping down

as executive director in July 2017 and urged the board “to look for an executive director who is younger than I am and has stronger credentials, and provide that executive director with a staff, ... Unfortunately, the funds never materialized to support any of that.”

Saying the decision was “easy” from one standpoint because funds had run out, Jones also described the decision as “gut-wrenching.” In a separate blog post July 8, Jones relayed a brief history of TBC.

In the mid-1980s, during the struggle over control of the Southern Baptist Convention between conservative and moderate Baptists, a group of moderates formed the “Laity for the Baptist Faith and Message,” which eventually became “Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention,” or popularly known as “Baptists Committed.” The Texas chapter—Texas Baptists Committed—formed in 1987, naming David Currie as its first coordinator.

In 1992, the national Baptists Committed merged with the new Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and the Texas chapter continued to focus on resisting what it deemed attempts at a “Fundamentalist takeover” in the BGCT. Jones’ blog article stated that TBC worked “tirelessly” in the 1990s to prevent conservative lead-

ership within the BGCT. However, when conservatives formed the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention in 1998, the focus on running moderate candidates for the BGCT presidency shifted to working with pastor search committees in Texas churches.

In Jones’ blog announcing the closing of TBC, he criticized BGCT Executive Director David Hardage for renewing a relationship with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Jones went on to offer support for CBF’s new Fellowship Southwest regional network. 📺

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# WOMEN CHALLENGED TO EVANGELISTIC COURAGE

By **Tammi Reed Ledbetter**  
Special Assignments Editor

**FRISCO** Women need to own their piece of the pie in order to advance the gospel, Kathy Litton and Lori McDaniel told women's ministry leaders during a breakout session at the SEND Conference in Frisco, May 20. The two women took a tag team approach to their session, asking leaders of women's ministries to move beyond gathering, to actively going out to reach those in need of a Savior.

Litton, director of church planter spouse care at the North American Mission Board, and McDaniel, church initiatives leader at the International Mission Board, pulled no punches in asking the packed room of women whether they shared their faith with others.

Litton recounted Jesus' stated purpose: "I came to seek and to save that which was lost."

In contrast, the Pharisees "who were standing around making critical statements of Jesus" preferred a strategy that avoided the culture they disdained.

"They said, 'You come to us. You be like us,'" Litton taught, describing the Pharisees as insular moralists comparable to many churches in America.

However, Litton said, Jesus went to where the people were, searching high and low, crossing racial and gender lines "from the woman at the well to Zacchaeus to the disabled."

"We are players in the gospel ministry," she reminded. "We are called to the Great Commission."

While women "naturally gather together," no matter the culture or place in the world, McDaniel said Christian women can be distracted from the goal of discipleship.

"We gather to study the Bible, but the Bible was not given to us just to study and carry around."

Putting it even more bluntly, McDaniel admitted, "I fear, because I've done it myself, that I've taught women how to decorate tables for an event more than I've actually taught them how to declare the glory of God." Instead, she said, women's ministries ought to leverage a culture of women who naturally gather to advance the gospel, recalling the prayer in Acts 4:29 that believers would continue to speak the Word even after leaving their discipleship gathering.

"Women will gather, but we have to move them from gathering to going, from comfort to mission, from self-centeredness to thinking of other people," Litton said in calling for bold leadership that moves women to share the gospel.

For nearly a decade baptisms have declined among Southern Baptist churches, while women's ministry has exploded with more conferences, books and materials, as well as events, she observed. "As leaders we need to own our piece of the pie. What have we really created in our women's ministry if we're not seeing women come to Christ?"

Litton conceded that "evangelism has become complicated in a pluralistic, multicultural truth-rejecting world," and yet women's ministry leaders can take responsibility for turning the attention of women outward. "Stop the cycle of selfishness and self-centeredness of what they want from the church."

She warned, "We have a lack of conviction and practice in gospel sharing and creating gospel conversations."

McDaniel asked women to "reject passivity and accept responsibility," recognizing they were saved and sent with the same gospel message in order that others might also be converted. "That's where it becomes personal to us," she said, recalling a time when she realized the Great Commission was not something in which she participated.

"God began to show me that missions is not two verses in the New Testament that we pick out for the back of our t-shirts for a short term mission trip," McDaniel said.

By seeing people as "broken and in need of a Savior," Litton said, "We want to offer them the hope of the gospel that will free from their sin and give them purpose."

"It just takes three seconds of courage to launch into that," she explained, asking them to beg God for empowered bravery. "You know you should speak and you're going to ask a heart question" to create gospel conversations, Litton explained.

McDaniel added, "We've got to be okay and comfortable with the messy, the spiritual diversity conversations that we will have with people," recognizing the many barriers to sharing the gospel. "Ladies, risk something. The frontier of the kingdom of God is never advanced by men and women of caution." ❖



▲ Kathy Litton (right), NAMB director of church planter spouse care, and Lori McDaniel, IMB church initiatives leader, pulled no punches in asking women at the SEND Conference in Frisco whether they shared their faith with others. PHOTO BY MELISSA WILLIAMS

## West Texas church's summer lunch program serves kids in need



▲ FBC Hamlin church members Nicole Guerra and Debie Flores serve food to members of the community as part of the church's summer lunch program. PHOTO BY LISA OLIVER

By **JC Davies**  
TEXAN Correspondent

**HAMLIN** Each weekday since May, members of First Baptist Church Hamlin have arrived at the church at around 10 a.m. to prepare food, set tables and greet children as they file in, ready for a home-cooked meal.

Most of these kids don't attend FBC Hamlin, but they are welcomed in as part of the church's communitywide summer lunch program.

In December, the Hamlin Independent School District reached out to Brandon Carreon, a pastor at FBC Hamlin and member of the HISD Board of Trustees, to ask if the church would consider assisting with a pressing need among its student body.

According to Carreon, about three out of every four children in the school district qualify for free and reduced lunches, and many of these students go without adequate nutrition while school is out from May through August. To help fill in this gap, the district has historically provided free lunches during the summer, but due to budget restrictions, it was unable to do so this year.

The members of FBC Hamlin agreed not only to assist with the program but also to assume full responsibility of the initiative.

"As Jesus fed 5,000 people, he didn't turn them away," Carreon said. "He understood that he needed to feed their bellies before he had the opportunity to speak to their hearts. That's my hope, that we would feed (the students), but that it would be much bigger than that, that folks would come to see Jesus Christ."

On average, about 55 children participate in the program each day, as well as several parents.

In addition to leaving with full stomachs, these students are also being prayed for and showered with love and affirmation from the men and women who have volunteered their time each week to ensure the program is a success, said Cindy Reynolds, who coordinates the summer lunch program at FBC Hamlin.

"It's reaching further than what we could imagine, and what it possibly could do in our church and in our community is just amazing," Reynolds said. "I know God is doing a much greater work than just feeding children." ❖

## Texas Baptist Home Back to School Supply List



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**Ring Binders:** All sizes and colors. Zip binders are needed as well. For boys and girls  
**Pens and Pencils:** Pen colors black, blue and red. Pencils need to be American made #2 pencils and mechanical pencils  
**Markers:** Crayola, Expo (Thick and Thin), Highlighters  
**Scissors, Glue, and Playdoh:** Scissors need to be pointed 5". Glue needs to be Elmer glue sticks  
**Paper:** Graph, manila, and construction (9×12 and 12×18)  
**Composition Notebooks and Multi Subject Spirals only**

