



For the past few months I've been writing about four Great Commission shifts that many churches must make as they go "back to the future." **The first of these shifts was a shift from small vision to big vision. The second is a shift from come to go. The third shift is from teaching about to teaching to obey. The fourth shift is from religion to relationship.**



Jesus said, "Remember this I am with you always, to the end of the age," The difference between Christianity and all other major religions is relationship. I am with you always to the end of the age—That's grace. You love God and you give yourself back to God—That's faith. Mentally, we understand that our calling is to help people move from spiritual lostness to maturity through a relationship with Christ. Yet, in the midst of our church activity it's easy to trip over the fine-line dividing relationship from religion. Great churches of the future must understand that the our goal is to lead people to relationship with Christ as opposed to a religion of membership.

Sadly, there are many Christians who spend their entire life in a maximum-security prison called religion. Over the years there have been many prisoners that have served their time in the cells of law: Saul of Tarsus, Martin Luther, John Wesley, the list goes on and on. The prisoners of religion are told that they will find their freedom through their good behavior. Obey the words of the self-appointed guardians of faith; follow the teachings of the Judaizers, the Pharisees, and the Legalistic and you will find freedom. But what the prisoners of law discover is that the harder they swing the hammer of works in the chain gang of faith, the deeper they dig their pit of misery. After a while, they either surrender their freedom of thought and become guardians of law themselves, or they cry out to the warden of Grace and find freedom through a relationship with Christ.

In religion man first comes to God. In relationship God comes first to man.
 In religion we are slaves to a set of laws. In relationship we are free to the leading of the Spirit.
 The destiny of religion is temporal; it vanishes with time. Relationship endures forever.
 Religion worries about earthly kingdoms. Relationship worries about God's eternal kingdom.
 Religion is about your good works. Relationship is about Christ's good work.
 Religion is about pride and exalting yourself. Relationship is about humility and exalting God.
 Religion finds vision in holding onto the past. Relationship finds vision in the path of faith.
 Religion redeems people with rules. Relationship finds redemption in grace.
 Religion spreads through fear. Relationship spreads through love.
 Religion will always lead you to a slow death. Relationship leads to source of eternal life.

So the church of the future must make a choice: do we lead people to religion or do we lead people to Christ? Do we lead them to believe that the goal of Christianity is to be a good church member or do we lead people to understand that the goal of Christianity is to know and love God through a relationship with Christ. It amazes me that the most powerful thing we have as Christians is grace. And so often grace is the one thing we refuse to extend. Aren't you glad Jesus isn't that way—he says I want to be with you to the end of the age. I want to bring purpose to your life; I want to bring you a future, but you must trust me, you must place your faith in me and allow me to guide your life.

"Remember this, I am with you always to the end of the age. . ." Jesus.



BAPTIST STUDENT MINISTRY

We are so grateful to the people of Grayson Baptist Association for your continued support of campus ministry in our area. We have had a great school year and the Lord has blessed in many ways. With the addition of BSM on the GCC South Campus, we now have a BSM ministry at all three campus locations: Grayson College (Denison), Grayson College (Van Alstyne), and Austin College (Sherman). Combining all three locations we have had an average of three hundred students participating in some BSM activity every month. Of course, our most popular event is the weekly Wednesday Luncheon on the GCC (Denison) campus. In addition to the luncheon and weekly Bible study groups, we have also seen a significant increase in the involvement of international students due to the work of Brad McClenny, our International Student Minister. However, none of this could happen without Grayson Baptist Association. Once again – thank you – for the investment you are making for the Kingdom in the lives of college students.

SUMMER ENLISTMENT

High School graduation is only a few weeks away. Every summer we attempt to contact as many high school graduates as possible to encourage them in their walk with the Lord and to invite them to be involved in Baptist Student Ministry if they are planning to attend college. BSM organizations exist on over 100 college campuses in Texas and over 900 campuses through the United States. Please contact us if you know of any students planning to attend any college campus this fall and we will do our best to share with them how they can be involved in serving Christ on the campus through BSM.

FOCUS STUDENT CONFERENCE

It is not too early to begin planning for the annual *Focus Student Conference* that will be held in Tyler, Texas during the weekend of September 5-6, 2008. This conference is purposely scheduled at the beginning of the school year to encourage student to *focus* on Christ throughout the year. This conference is open to all college students and high school seniors. Please contact the BSM or visit the website at focustexas.org for more information.

GBA Upcoming Team Meetings

Properties Team--May 7, 9:30 AM @ GBA
 Leadership Team--May 13, 9:30 @GBA
 Support Team--May 29, 10 AM @GBA
 Strength Team--May 29, 1PM @GBA
 Strategy Team--May 29, 2PM @GBA

GBA MINISTRY TEAMS

CHURCH STRENGTH TEAM

Paul Ryan, Leader.....903.892.1568
 Carl Bilderback
 Bobby Fletcher
 Bernie Gallagher
 John Hall
 Dan Kemp
 Terry McLaughlin

CHURCH SUPPORT TEAM

Phil Barton, Leader.....903.465.4886
 Stacey Banks
 Bernie Gallagher
 Mark Mitchell
 Harvey Patterson
 Dennis Stewart
 Roger Tidwell
 Leon Veazey

CHURCH STRATEGY TEAM

Mike Flanagan, Leader.....903.564.3546
 Jerry Davis
 Sammy Garcia
 Bobby Hancock
 Chet Haney
 Shawn Kemp

PROPERTIES TEAM

Steve Kretzer, Leader.....903.465.1686
 Carl Bilderback
 Victor Bishop
 Billy Kelley
 Roland Ouellette
 Delbert Vest

You are still invited to sign up for one of these teams if the Lord so leads. You can call the team leader or the association office, 903.868.9361.

News From GBA Churches
Around the County

BETHEL...has called Randy McBroom as pastor.
COLLINSVILLE FBC...is needing a youth minister.
GUNTER FBC...is hosting North Texas Prayer Summit with Dr. T. W. Hunt on May 2-4. For more information and to RSVP go to www.fbcgunter.org or call 903.433.3335.
NORTH HILLS...is needing used video and audio equipment. Please call the church, 903.564.5574 if you have some to donate.
PILOT GROVE...is celebrating their 150th anniversary & homecoming on May 4.
SHERMAN FBC...is in the search for a full-time youth minister.
WEST SHERMAN...will be holding revival services May 4-7.

ANNIVERSARIES

45th **Houston Garner**, pastor, Hebron, 5/63
17th **Bobby Fletcher**, pastor, Dorchester FBC, 5/26/91
6th **Russell Clemons**, pastor, Faith Fellowship, 5/12/02
1st **Randy Thompson**, youth, Tom Bean FBC, 5/13/07



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 903.965.7312

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 600 S. Dewey Ave.
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 903.892.9700
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CALVARY BAPT.
 300 W. Acheson
 Denison, TX 75020
 903.465.6003
 Interim: Jeff Lancaster

FOREST AVE. BAPT.
 106 W. Forest Ave.
 Sherman, TX 75090-8813
 903.892.3506

CANNON BAPT.
 6971 FM 121
 Van Alstyne, TX 75495
 903.482.6761
 Interim: Scott Jordan


HYDE PARK BAPT.
 2501 Sunset St.
 Denison, TX 75020-5717
 903.465.2081

COUNTRY CHAPEL
 c/o Jerry Adams
 3423 Bethany Rd.
 Sherman, TX 75090
 903.893.3107
 Interim: Brad McClenny

NORTH PARK BAPT.
 2505 Rex Cruse Dr.
 Sherman, TX 75092-2403
 903.892.8429
 Interim: Wendell Williams

News from the Executive Board

On April 18, the Executive Board of the GBA met at FBC Bells for our quarterly business session. Bobby Hancock, Pastor of Georgetown Baptist Church in Pottsboro, challenged board members to prayer and obedience with a message on the life of Hezekiah. The Church Strength Team reported that they are working on a leadership development module for pastors and church leaders and are seeking to provide quality continuing education opportunities as goals for 2008. The Board approved Phil Barton as the Church Support Team Leader and Barton shared with the Board the team's vision to emphasize a true prayer movement among GBA churches, as well as increasing opportunities for our churches to "love one another" by ministering, fellowshiping, and encouraging one another. In the area of church strategy, the Board approved a \$500 gift for Kings Trail Cowboy Church, a new church-start in Van Alstyne, to be used for the purchase of Bible-study literature. Team Leader, Mike Flanagan, shared a vision for area churches to begin praying and working toward a new church start near the Rock Creek development and praised God for the new church starts and spirit of cooperation He has brought to our association. The Board also approved two requests from the Properties Team. The first request approved the Properties Team and GBA personnel to negotiate a one-year lease-space agreement between the Baptist Student Ministry (BSM) and the Grayson County College. The second request allowed the Properties Team to use \$10,000 of contingency funds to make needed repairs and updates on the GBA and BSM buildings. Thank you to FBC Bells, and pastor Billy Neal for hosting the meeting and providing a great meal.



GBA Think Tanks

The Missional Church

With Randy Newberry
 Regional Consultant of the International Mission Board
 May 20 from 10:00-12:00
 at Kentuckytown Baptist Church

Discover Practical Ways to Lead your Church to Greater Involvement in God's Mission Work



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MAY 2008

- 7 Properties Team, 9:30 a.m., GBA
- 11 Mother's Day
- 13 GBA Leadership Team Mtg.,
9:30 a.m., GBA
- 20 Think Tanks & Baptist Feast,
10:00 a.m., Kentuckytown
- 26 Memorial Day, GBA Closed
- 29 Support Team, 10:00 a.m., GBA
- 29 Strength Team, 1:00 p.m., GBA
- 29 Strategy Team, 2:00 p.m., GBA

JUNE 2008

- 8-9 SBC DOM Mtg., Indianapolis
- 9-13 Area Youth Camp, Lake Lavon
- 10-11 SBC, Indianapolis
- 15 Father's Day
- 30-July 4 Area II GA Camp, Lake
Lavon

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LOY LAKE RD. OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY-THURSDAY.....8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
FRIDAY.....8:30 a.m.-12:00 noon