



WACO REGIONAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Family News

———— FROM YOUR DIRECTOR ————

You will be hearing a lot about the **4 X 4 Challenge** in the coming weeks. The **4 X 4 Challenge** is actually explained with four words that start with the letter “**T**”. I’ll tell you what those four words are later. But for now, let me simply say that church leaders regularly complain of being too busy. We all have more meetings, more commitments, and more responsibilities than we can keep up with every week. We run like little hamsters on the exercise wheel all year long. At the end of the year we ask ourselves, “Is our church really in a different place? Are we making measureable progress against darkness?”

So before we talk about adding another challenge, perhaps our first conversation should be about what is keeping us so busy but is not producing much fruit for the Kingdom of God. Maybe the first set of New Year’s Resolutions should be about things that we will **stop doing**.

An honest look at our calendar or our personal journal would surely reveal those low-value activities that would not even be missed if they disappeared! Only after honestly eliminating those time-fillers will we be ready to take on something like the **4 X 4 Challenge**.

So here are the four words that summarize the 4 X 4 challenge: **IDENTIFY, INTERCEDE, INVEST, INVITE**. The challenge is for us to develop *and* practice these four habits with PEOPLE ... people who currently do not have a vital relationship with the Lord.

How would the culture of our churches change if every member was actively and perpetually identifying un-churched PEOPLE...interceding for them, investing in their lives, and inviting them to events where they could meet Jesus?

You and your church leadership can learn more about this **4 X 4 Challenge** on Wednesday, February 22, from 10:00 AM till 2:00 PM at the First Baptist Church of Woodway.

In His Service,
Tim

— Starting Over —

For most of us, each New Year brings with it a certain optimism. Something akin to a default mechanism kicks in and we face what lies ahead with more anticipation than dread. What a gift! Grace abounds when somewhat automatically we look forward to better days and either thrive on or at least tolerate the accompanying drive toward self-improvement. Such life enhancement may be



as simple as mental assent to specific New Year's resolutions, or as deliberate and demanding as physical commitment to change and personal advancement. Whatever the case, change seems within the grasp or at least within reach of most of us. One of the major concerns for us in Community Ministries is for those who face the New Year with more dread than joy, with more regret than hope, for those who see change as impossible. This may describe individuals and families confined to hopelessness by dense poverty, those confined behind bars facing an uncertain future, or those released from literal confinement but still held by seen and unseen forces. For these, change is much farther than a resolution away, and more complex than simply deciding change. Thank you for your commitment to doing whatever it takes to bring hope to the hopeless and help to the helpless. Together, the Baptist churches of Waco Regional Baptist Association really are making a new day possible and hope tangible for many. It is a joy to work with you in this endeavor. And we look forward to our best year ever in making a prophetic impact in our communities.

Happy New Year!

Dane Fowlkes
Associate Director

— Hunger Ministry Spotlight —

MLK Day of Service in the Garden! The Heart of Texas Urban Garden Coalition is sponsoring and coordinating a day of service for local gardens. Two of the sites include WRBA churches: Lake Shore BC and Calvary BC!

Visit the Coalition website for more details and to register yourself, you family, and your church group: MLK Day of Service in the Garden (<http://hotugc.org/projects/martin-luther-king-day-of-service/>) and UGC's Eventbrite (<http://www.eventbrite.com/org/1752432757>).

Merry Christmas Friend!

Jenny

— The Body of Believers —

A glimpse of how God is at work in the Waco area.

The Waco Regional Baptist Association has worked with several churches in the Church Strengthening process. The hope of each session is to find where God is leading the church body, knowing it will be the best and most worshipful course to take.

One of the churches to just finish the formal sessions and begin on their own is First Baptist Church of West.

Pastor John Crowder said, "We were excited about the opportunity to be one of the first churches to participate in it."

In the 17 years he has been at the church, Crowder has watched it grow, requiring a new sanctuary and two services.

"Our church has developed a healthy fellowship and we see ourselves as a true church family," he said.

While there is a committee, this process requires the church body to work together.

Crowder said, "That is one of the strengths of the process. Everyone had numerous opportunities for input and participation. The process was led primarily by a committee of 6 which we called the 'Strategic Planning Committee.'"

While FBC West took seven months to work through the process, they stayed actively involved. The various committees and organizations worked on meeting short-term goals while planning for future ministries.

Crowder said, "Our church has already become stronger because everyone is working with a shared sense of purpose. We are more united and are working together better. There is also a positive outlook on our future. We are looking forward to becoming the church we believe God would have (us) to be."

He feels the church is being led to have each resident member involved in "an important and valid ministry." The pastor hopes the local community will come to find meaningful relationships with the church and ultimately, Christ.

Church member Reggie Whalen said, "I think for the most part it's been a very positive experience. It's taken some time and has provoked some thought in areas that we probably didn't expect when we first started."

He felt the church was doing well, but this has reinforced them.

"I think that this is going to give us clear directions in some areas that we wanted to strengthen and improve in our church," Whalen said. "It gives you almost a roadmap on what you want to do to strengthen and guide the church."

Shelly Miller has been a member for 15 years and joined the church strengthening committee.

"For me personally, it has taught me that sometimes we just see what's on the surface and we might need to ask different questions in order to dig a little deeper," she said.

"For our church, I think it will help us to focus on our goals. If something doesn't line up with our goals, then it is not something we need to spend our time and/or resources on. It has been very helpful for us to be able to set goals that maximize our strengths by utilizing our resources; instead of focusing on strengthening our weaknesses."

Crowder asked for prayer with one of their long-term goals.

"One of our biggest goals is to build a Family Life Center," he said. "We need prayer that God will show us what to build, provide the resources and help us keep our priorities and motivations right throughout the building process."

Upcoming Events

Discipleship Now

Please remember these youth groups in prayer as they take a weekend to reflect on our glorious God.

Church	Date
Highland	January 12-15
FBC Woodway	January 12-15
Columbus Avenue	January 13-15
FBC Hewitt	January 13-15
Meadowbrook	January 20-22

Ministry Fatigue: Building Your Coping Skills

January 9-10 at the Inn of the Hills, Kerrville

An additional certification program in “Special Needs Ministry in Your Church” will be offered on Wednesday, January 11.

More information can be found at www.texasbaptists.org/childhood.

Tim Hawkins Concert

6:00pm on Sunday, January 15 at FBC Woodway

Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$25 for premium seats, and \$20 at the door.

More information can be found at www.fbcwoodway.org.

Children’s Worship University

January 20-21 at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Cedar Hill

Children’s Ministers can find more information at

www.texasbaptists.org/events/childrens-worship-university/ or contact

Karen Witcher at 214-828-5247 or Karen.witcher@texasbaptists.org.



[un]Apologetic Conference

February 3-4 at Grace Point Church, San Antonio

Leaders for the conference include Lee Strobel, Mark Mittleburg and Dr. Mike Licona. Information can be found at texasapologetics.com.

Financial Information

2011 Budget	\$227,918.00
Receipts as of Dec. 22, 2011	\$224,874.42

Thank you for your continued support of WRBA.

Other January Events

January 1-31 — Power Project, Acteens Mission Project.

Wednesday, January 11, 11:15am — Executive Board Meeting. Truett.

Wednesday, January 11, 12:00pm — Pastors' Conference. Truett.

Monday, January 16 — WRBA Office Closed. Martin Luther King Day.

Tuesday, January 17 — Administrative Team Meeting. WRBA.

Thursday, January 19 — 50+ Camp Day. Latham Springs.

Thursday, January 19, 3:00-5:00pm — Leadership Development Team Meeting. WRBA.

Thursday, January 19, 5:30pm — Community Ministries Team Meeting. WRBA.

Sunday, January 29 — World Hunger Offering.

Wednesday, February 1, 12:00pm — Pastors' Conference. Truett.

January and February Pastors' Conferences

12:00pm on January 11

Truett Seminary

\$7.00 for the meal

Speaker: Dr. Nika L.J. Davis, Sr.

Pastor of Second Missionary Baptist Church

Please make a reservation by January 5.



~~12:00 noon on~~ February 1

Truett Seminary

\$7.00 for the meal

Speaker: Ron Durham

Interim Pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church

Please make a reservation by January 26.

Contact Katelyn at admin@wacoregionalbaptistassociation.org or 753-2408. **-OR-** Pre-pay at www.wacoregionalbaptistassociation.org.

Community News

Continue to pray for WRBA churches seeking a Pastor:

Beverly Hills, Columbus Avenue, Emmanuel, FBC Riesel, Highland, Hilltop, Shiloh, Western Heights, Westwood

Congratulations to West Robinson and their new Pastor, Ron Garner!
Congrats to Bridgepoint Fellowship and their new Youth Minister, Lee Goble, as well as their new Children's Director, Angela Jackson!

Online Community



To receive this newsletter only by email, contact Katelyn at 753-2408 or admin@wacoregionalbaptistassociation.org.

Find information on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.