

# SENIOR PASTOR TRANSITION Update



**CANDIDATE**

***PRESENTED***

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## **Share with us your life story.**

I was born in Mt. Pleasant, Texas, on May 9, 1972, to Carl and Kay Rose. Both my parents worked in law enforcement for the State of Texas, and they were active at First Baptist Church in Mt. Pleasant. They provided a solid spiritual, emotional, and social home for me and my two older brothers, Steven and Joseph. I spent my entire life in Mt. Pleasant until moving to Natchitoches in 1990 to attend college at the Louisiana Scholars' College at NSU. I had a desire from an early age to practice medicine, and the Scholars' College had a successful undergraduate pre-med track. In 1988, at summer camp, I felt God's distinct call to ministry, and in praying over the two years prior to college, I felt that ministry would be through medicine. While at NSU, God opened doors for excellent educational training as well as a variety of ministry opportunities. He also blessed me with meeting Rachel Hancock, who would become my wife in 1995. When the timing was right for medical school testing and interviews, I had the privilege of receiving invitations to all the schools to which I applied. When the interviews were complete, all of the schools thanked me for my interest but told me I was not admitted for study. The plan I had most of my life was now uncertain. Doors had closed. Dreams were over. In searching for God's direction, He made a way to enter seminary in Ft. Worth and part-time ministry in Winnsboro, Texas. That part-time youth ministry role became a full-time youth-and-education role about two months before my wedding, so Rachel and I started marriage and ministry together. Our family began soon after that, and we spent seven fruitful years in Winnsboro. In 2001, God moved us to my hometown and childhood church, FBC Mt. Pleasant, to serve the saints there in education and senior adult ministry. We loved that place as much as Winnsboro and would gladly have stayed there the rest of our lives. In 2006, however, God moved us back to Winnsboro, where we have raised our three kids and built friendships and ministry for nearly 17 years.

## **Share with us what an ordinary day in your life looks like.**

My day begins usually at 4 or 5 with a time of study and growth. I read through several news sites and then spend time in prayer, Scripture study, personal devotional writing, and Scripture memory. I also spend a few minutes with a language-learning app, and I finish the routine with a perusal of the Dallas Morning News print edition. I often have small-group discipleship meetings over breakfast and then make my way to the office. My mornings and afternoons vary from day to day and week to week as ministry and family responsibilities vary for that week. My mornings often include administrative activities, counseling, and community or associational work. My afternoons are usually given to study and planning for the near- and distant-future. My evenings vary widely as well. Monday evenings, Rachel and I host a Bible study for 18-to-29 year-olds. During basketball season, I broadcast basketball games on Tuesday nights, and I do football and basketball games on Friday nights. Wednesday night involves Bible studies and other church activities. Thursday is usually my day off, so Thursday evenings are regularly a time at home with Rachel and the kids when they are home and available. Outside of radio broadcasting season, Tuesday and Friday nights are at home as well. Saturdays are typically very slow days, but when the kids were home, they were far from slow. There were often ball games or other activities on Saturdays as well as other evenings. Now, Saturday is usually a significant day of rest. Sundays are full days, starting with prayer with my deacons at 8:30, Bible study at 9, worship at 10:30, and evening activities at 5.

## **What is your passion?**

My passion is to glorify God by making disciples who make disciples. I know the power of Jesus to change lives and the power of the Spirit to make the Bible become transformative in the lives of those who spend time listening to Him through the word. This transformation works best through personal relationships, so I have several small-group men's Bible studies which I pray equip men to walk more closely with Jesus and to help others do the same. Teaching is the avenue for fulfilling this passion. I enjoy teaching one-on-one or large groups. Teaching requires others to be learners, so community is vital. I am passionate about the community in which God has placed us, and I enjoy teaching wherever I am able—in the church, at the schools, on the radio, or in a restaurant.

## **What do you do outside of work for fun?**

Outside work, my most enjoyable hobby is radio broadcasting for our high school athletics program. That has allowed me to broadcast more than 500 football and basketball games over the last 12 years. I also am involved in two foundations—one for the community and one for the school system—that work to raise funds from the community to invest back in the community. I also have been a part of our parks and recreation board that has sponsored dozens of activities to promote wellness for individuals and families. On my day off, I enjoy spending time with Rachel. We sometimes spend a slow day at the house. We enjoy watching tv and doing puzzles. Other times, we go shopping or have a picnic. We sometimes visit some of our homebound together, delivering baked goods and conversation with these saints. One of my favorite pastimes is napping. I'm particularly gifted at this. I can nap for 10 minutes or two hours. It's a skill I learned in college and have continued to hone over time. I enjoy listening to a variety of podcasts in my free time, and I wish I made more time for reading. I'm thinking that as our "nest" becomes empty, that maybe this will become a newly-added free-time activity. God has been gracious to allow me to use my gifts and skills—teaching, speaking, and training—through a variety of avenues during my leisure time.

## **Tell us about your prayer life.**

I have always admired those who are fervent, effective prayer warriors. I have longed to be one of those disciplined individuals who seek the Lord and see His answers. About five years ago, our church used 40 Days of Prayer for a six-week Sunday night group study, and the Lord began fulfilling in me those longings I had for years. At that time, I developed a prayer guide that I use each day as I begin my devotional time. Each day I begin with worship and confession and then pray for my family, my discipling relationships, and any emergency needs. Then, on Sundays, I pray for the church staff. On Mondays, I pray for local, state, and national leaders. On Tuesdays, I pray for local, associational, state, national, and international missionaries and agencies. On Wednesdays, I pray for extended family. On Thursdays, I pray for the weak—sick, homebound, nursing home residents, and hospitalized—as well as for those in need. On Fridays, I pray for ministries in our church and town. On Saturdays, I pray for local churches and my church's Sunday school classes. I try to maintain a continual state of prayer as well—pausing in those day-to-day moments to acknowledge His presence and goodness, to worship Him, to pray for His guidance and to be useful to Him, and to pray for those people and needs that come to mind.

### **What are your regular practices regarding spiritual disciplines?**

Each day I pray, read Scripture, and memorize Scripture. I worship weekly with my church family, and Rachel and I tithe and give above the tithe as we earn income. I observe my Sabbath on Thursdays as that is my usual day off. I have several men's groups which I lead with the goal of equipping them to begin their own discipleship groups.

I make it a goal to try to share the gospel at least twice each week, and as God prompts I fast from certain foods, drinks, or activities.

### **How do you describe God?**

God is holy. He is loving, and He is just. He is the Creator, Sustainer, and coming Redeemer. He is above all things, and in Him all things hold together. God is one God in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is knowable, but He is not fully understandable. There is no one like He is. He is the Shepherd and Overseer of my soul.

### **What do you believe are the non-negotiable, foundational beliefs of the Christian church?**

The Bible is the inspired word of God. God is one God in three persons. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone. Sanctification is non-negotiable for disciples of Jesus. The church is the body of Christ. Every believer needs to be an active member of a biblical church. The resurrection really happened and changes how we think about the present and the future.

### **What are your beliefs about the basic Baptist doctrines as stated in the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) and what would you change in it?**

I fully affirm the BFM 2000. There is nothing that I would change.

### **What is your position regarding the authority of the Bible?**

The Bible is God-breathed. He inspired it, so it carries His authority. It is inerrant and infallible. As the BFM says in Article I, "It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy."

### **What is your position regarding how salvation works?**

This is what I believe: Jesus put on flesh so that He became the God-man. He, thus, became the Great High Priest because He was fully aware of the human condition—he was one—and fully able to enter the presence of God—because He was God. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the penalty of sin. When He rose from the grave, He proved His innocence—because guilty people stay dead. He, thus, died someone else's death. His resurrection then put Him in the Holy of Holies and allowed Him to send the Holy Spirit to live in the souls of those who confess their sin and their need for forgiveness and a Savior and Lord. The work of Christ is complete. Those who recognize their need for salvation need only to confess, and they will be saved. Then, however, they work out that salvation with fear and trembling

(Philippians 2:12-13). Salvation is a moment of justification, a lifetime of sanctification, and a coming glorification.

### **What is your position on whether salvation can be lost or not?**

In Ephesians 1 and Ephesians 4, Paul speaks of those who are saved as being sealed by the Holy Spirit. This is a permanent condition. The Holy Spirit makes the soul His home. In Ephesians 1, Paul uses two images for the gift of the Spirit—one is an engagement ring and the other is earnest money on the purchase of a house. The engagement ring is the promise of a present relationship with future abundance. In Paul's day, they gave engagement rings similarly to ours today. Paul also knew about earnest money. Someone intent on buying a house pays a portion of the price to guarantee full payment later. Paul says the Holy Spirit is God's earnest money—His promise to make the transaction fully complete. In Paul's day as today, if the potential buyer backs out, the potential buyer loses the earnest money. This means God the Father would "lose" God the Holy Spirit if God decided we were no longer worthy of being saved. Since God can't "lose" Himself, the sealing is permanent. True salvation cannot be lost. I do believe, based on the parable of the sower and the soils (Matthew 13) that people may present certain characteristics, choices, or lifestyles that seem to point to salvation. Because they are not truly rooted, however, they fall away. They were not truly saved. Salvation cannot be lost because salvation is the work and gift of God.

### **What is your position regarding baptism?**

I believe baptism is the outward symbol of the inner covenant a person makes with God at the time of salvation. Baptism is not necessary for salvation, but it is necessary for obedience. As circumcision was the sign of being born into the first covenant, so baptism is the sign of being born again into the new covenant. Non-believers, therefore, can't be baptized. They have not been born again.

### **What is your position regarding tithing?**

I believe the tithe is the starting point for the believer in the discipline of giving. In Matthew 23, Jesus commended the Pharisees for tithing even the smallest of items, but He rebuked the condition of their hearts. They were giving to follow rules, but their hearts were far from God. The tithe, therefore, is to be a regular practice fueled by a heart devoted to God. Some will argue that the tithe is an Old Testament practice, but if those under law gave at least 10 percent, why would those under grace not be thrilled to give at least that amount?

### **What is your position on Calvinism/Reformed theology?**

There is much about Calvinist/Reformed theology that has brought new life and discipline to the 21st-century church, but there has also been a great deal of consternation as a result. Through the years, I have never been able to find a single source that lists all the things one has to believe to be Calvinist or Reformed, so I don't know that I can fully define it. What I do appreciate about my C/R brothers is their commitment to Scripture, their desire to build a biblical church, and their commitment to shaping the family and other disciples to the glory of God. I don't think I would fall into the full C/R camp because

I don't believe as most of them do about the limited nature of the atonement and the irresistibility of grace. I believe Jesus died so that all could be saved. I believe Jesus makes every person in His image—meaning they all have the ability to know Him and be in a saving relationship with Him. I believe in the mystery of His sovereignty that He knows those who will answer His call of election and yet doesn't force that decision on them. Somehow it is irresistible and yet a choice. Peter says Jesus wants all to be saved. John says Jesus died for the world. Paul says God chooses and elects. All of these brothers are correct. This is the divine mystery of God's grace.

### **What is your position regarding the church's role in social issues?**

The Great Commandment says we are to love God and love people. The Great Commission says we are to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them and teaching them to obey. Chuck Colson said we have a Cultural Commission as well. Matthew 5:13-16 says we are to be salt and light. I believe it was Stott who decried the decay of culture as being the fault of the church. If a place is dark, we have to take the light. If something is decaying, we have to salt the decay. You can't blame the dark or the decay for the condition. That improves nothing. You can, however, address the dark and decay with the gospel.

The church, thus, HAS to address social issues. We live in a world that needs the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. We have to meet needs AND share Christ. The church has always done both. We must continue to do so. Social justice activity is limited without the message of the gospel. We may meet a need or right a wrong by being socially active, but if we don't accompany that action with the reason we are doing it—the Savior and Lord who defines what is just—we are falling short of our potential. If we only share the gospel but don't reach the hurting woman or hungry man or orphaned child, we tell them their soul is important, but their body is not. Jesus put on flesh because the body is as important as the soul. We will, after all, have a glorified body and soul. The gospel has to be socially active.

### **What is your position on divorce?**

God hates divorce. He permits it, however, because of the hardness of human hearts. The failure of spouses to fulfill their covenant vows is a tragedy. God knew that people would be trapped and, in some cases, in danger if they remained in a relationship that was called marriage but did not fulfill its responsibilities. He, thus, allowed divorce to put an end to the charade or the danger. God permits it but does not demand it. Divorce is avoidable if the spouses can recognize their flaws, repent of those, and pursue the Lord and one another. This is the power of the gospel—to reconcile estranged partners just as we were reconciled to God. Divorce should, therefore, not be a first choice or rushed decision.

### **What is your position on gambling?**

Gambling is the desire for wealth without investment. Hard work produces results. Endurance comes from the character of Christ. Those who are gambling are hoping to receive in a moment what would normally take a long period of time. It expresses the spirit of the age—something for nothing. Investing for retirement is different from gambling because it is placing personal wealth into the hands of trained professional for a known commodity. This is a plan for long-term, disciplined, principled growth. Is there risk? Of course. Is there expectation for wealth? Of course. It differs from gambling in that it is based on



the principles of investment and not the luck of the draw.

### **What is your position on abortion?**

Abortion is the intentional ending of a human life in the womb. As God commands us not to take life because He is the author of life, abortion is tragic and to be avoided. Intentionally ending life is evil. There are rare instances where the life of the mother may be at risk or the pregnancy is known not to be viable. In those moments, spiritual and medical wisdom are paramount. The decision has to be made about saving one life to avoid losing two.

### **What is your position on consumption of alcohol?**

I grew up in a home that did not use alcohol. I have been in ministry for 32 years and have met few people who have used alcohol in ways that promoted the health of their body, their family, or their friends. Scripture does not forbid the use of alcohol. It forbids getting drunk. There are, then, self-disciplined individuals who are able to drink alcohol without any negative effects. I personally do not drink alcohol in any form. If Jesus said He would not drink from the fruit of the vine until He returned, I believe I'll be fine waiting with Him.

### **What is your position on marriage?**

Marriage is the first relationship in Scripture. It comes before the family, and it comes before the church because a church is made up of people who are the result of marriage and family. Marriage is God's idea and is to be one man in covenant relationship with one woman for a lifetime. God designs marriage in this way because it is the best display to the world of the relationship of Christ with the church. In marriage, Stott says the couple make a public commitment, a personal covenant, and physical connection—in that order. As Genesis 1 says, "A man shall leave his father and mother (public), be united to his wife (personal), and the two shall become one flesh (physical)." It is only with this arrangement that a couple displays the unity of Christ and the church (two different natures coming together), and it is only with this arrangement that one can have children to provide the next generation for the church and the Kingdom.

### **What is your position on role of women in the church?**

Women have been vital to the health and growth of the church from its beginning. Women were the last at the tomb on Friday and the first on Sunday. Women served in the early church, and they were responsible for prophecy and prayer in their gatherings. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul gives an interesting view of the role women are to play. I believe Paul is highlighting the importance of men's leading well in their homes and the church so the women of the church can serve under the leadership of godly men as they use their gifts to build up the body. I believe the pastors of the church are to be men so the headship of God is displayed over the body, but I believe women are to be used in every area where they are gifted so their gifts are not wasted and God's Spirit is not quenched.

## **What is your position on LGBTQ issues?**

I believe God loves everyone in the LGBTQ community. He understands the issues at work in their hearts and lives. He wants them to be saved and sanctified like anyone else. As a result, I don't believe LGBTQ issues are to receive any special dispensation of grace or acceptance. At the heart of their issues, I believe, is pride. They would rather express their sexuality as they feel or desire rather than by God's standards. They would rather be fulfilled than holy. Heterosexuals deal with the same drive—to fulfill self rather than honor God. Because the LGBTQ issues are based in sexual identity and activity, they grip the heart and the mind in ways other sins do not. The church has to discuss these issues. The church has to love people dealing with these issues. The church cannot compromise on God's design for personal holiness and sexual activity.

## **What is your position regarding politics in the pulpit?**

Paul discussed politics in Romans 13 and in Titus 3. Baptists in America were instrumental in having the First Amendment, guaranteeing religious liberty, added to the Constitution. To be biblical and Baptist is to be concerned with politics. In the pulpit, the pastor has to be biblical but not partisan. The issues of the day are the issues of the day because the culture is in decay. The gospel is the answer to those issues, and a pastor who does not preach those truths and help his people address them will be doing a disservice. Both political parties are flawed, so a pastor or congregation who is convinced that a Christian would support only this party or vote only for that candidate and not give any consideration of other ideas is short-sighted. If Jesus could have Simon the Zealot, who wanted to rid the country of the Romans, and Matthew the tax collector, who wanted to aid the Romans with the Jews' money, in His circle of disciples, then the church can see that the Kingdom is greater than any political party or pursuit. Pastors must talk about political issues to combat the "discipling" their people receive from the endless news cycles on cable networks. They must help people think biblically and not politically or culturally.

## **What is your position regarding other Protestant denominations?**

I have had the privilege of creating fellowship between several denominations in Winnsboro. We have done that to remind ourselves and our people that our work is for the King, and not for our denomination. There are enough lost people for us to go after. We are not competing for one another's sheep. That fellowship does not mean we agree on the secondary issues of church polity or missions funding or spiritual gifts. It does mean we see the need for faith in Jesus, the leadership of the Spirit, and the connection to a local body. I am a Baptist by conviction. I believe we practice biblical faith. I am proud to call myself Baptist, but I am not so proud to think God only works through us.

## **Why did you enter ministry?**

When I was at youth camp in the summer of 1988 in Roach, Missouri, the camp pastor, Mike Curry, made an appeal to all of us attendees. He said, "Some of you need to surrender to the ministry tonight." In that instant, I felt a conviction from the Spirit that I had felt four years earlier at R.A. Camp. I knew God was calling me, and I knew the conviction would not ease until I responded. I went forward during the invitation and later spoke to my youth minister. I said, "I know He's calling me to ministry, but I don't know

what that means. I've been planning to be a doctor most of my life, so I'm not sure how ministry and medicine fit together. I know I have to say, 'Yes,' regardless." My youth minister assured me the important thing was to agree. God would make the details clear in time. He was right. I had several part-time opportunities in college that paved the way and equipped me for full-time ministry after the medical schools to which I applied all thanked me for my application and interview but failed to offer me a spot in the school.

### **What is your definition of a pastor?**

A pastor is the lead shepherd for a local congregation of believers. He is the primary source for leading and feeding. He oversees the spiritual nurture and maturity of the people over which God has given him responsibility.

### **What is your favorite part of your pastoral ministry?**

My favorite part of pastoral ministry is interacting with individuals and groups around the word of God. Whether preaching, teaching a class, or having Bible study, I enjoy watching truth transform, convict, inspire, and challenge the people I love.

### **What is your least favorite part of your pastoral ministry?**

Dealing with conflict is my least favorite part. I don't like disappointing people, and I don't like making people feel guilty or defeated. Conflict is a part of human relationships and often the result of spiritual warfare, so it is something I've dealt with throughout ministry. It remains my least favorite part.

### **How do you define success in ministry?**

Success in ministry is remaining faithful to the Lord's call and walking in holiness. Paul said God's will for us is sanctification. Jesus says He has appointed us to bear fruit that will last. That requires remaining faithful to Him and His word so that the fruit of salvation and the fruit of the Spirit can develop. Numbers are what people can measure, but numbers only tell part of the story of success. A church can have large numbers but shallow members. A church can decrease in number precisely because they are being faithful and holding members accountable to faithfulness and growth, causing uninterested and unsaved to find another place to attend. A decrease in numbers may also result because the church is equipping members and sending them out to plant church or be on the mission field. To glorify God and make disciples who are making disciples is the simplest measure of success.

### **Give an example of how you have addressed a current/political issue from the pulpit. How did you encourage the congregation to react or respond to the issue?**

I preached a series of Sunday night sermons (so I could be a bit more in-depth and cover some sensitive issues) based on a book entitled "The Secular Creed." We looked at Black Lives Matter, homosexuality, transgender issues, women's value in the church, and abortion. We examined the secular views and why they held them and then explored the biblical texts that refute the secular views and promote truth and

flourishing. Those Sunday night settings then allowed me to refine them into a slightly different form for a Sunday morning series a few months later. My encouragement was to see people with opposing viewpoints as being valuable in God's eyes because they were made in His image. Then, I encouraged them to know what the basis of those opposing viewpoints were because, in reality, the gospel answered the need represented in each of those views. Finally, I encouraged them to live by Scripture despite the cultural opposition because the truth is always the truth.

### **How do you encourage people to read scripture?**

At the beginning of each year, I distribute a chronological reading plan to the church and encourage them to join me on the journey. I write and distribute a daily commentary to help show them my accountability and encourage them to dig in for themselves. I also mention frequently from the pulpit the value of reading the Word, and I inform all those in our new-member class about the reading plan and their ability to sign up for the email encouragement. In my men's discipleship groups, we use the Bible as the basis for our discussion each meeting, so we have a reading plan for each group.

### **What is your most effective way to teach the congregation how to share the gospel?**

Teaching a method is effective. Teaching and modeling it is even more effective. We have trained our people in a variety of methods through the years, but the most effective thing has been their watching me share the gospel at a front door or at McDonald's or on a mission trip. Seeing the gospel shared in action is most effective.

### **What is your view on the church's role in missions?**

Missions only happens when the people of the church obey God. Missionaries come from the church body. Missions agencies don't send missionaries. Churches send missionaries. Agencies provide equipping and accountability. Without the church, missions won't happen.

### **What is your vision for effective discipleship in the church?**

Discipleship happens in relationships. Pastors can preach about discipleship. Teachers can equip for discipleship, but the listeners and study must respond. They are not to receive the information and not be changed. They must form relationships intentional about shaping one another in the character and action of Jesus, or there won't be new disciples formed. The church has to cast the vision for discipleship. Then, the church has to provide the training and resources. Finally, the church has to have a goal and measure for discipleship. Because what gets measured gets done, the church will be effective in discipleship when it regularly assesses whether disciples are being made and celebrates those who are being obedient.

## **Whom do you influence?**

My prayer is that I influence my wife, my children, my church, and my community. The fruit of 28 years of marriage, 27 years of parenting, and nearly 17 of pastoring this body proves there has been some significant influence. The advent of social media and using it to present my thoughts and promote our ministries has shown that influence has spread beyond my immediate world to a variety of places—some near and some far.

I have had the privilege over the last 10 years to have more than 30 men in our church in small-group discipleship groups. We have met at local restaurants for prayer, Bible study, and accountability. The purpose of these was to influence them to personal growth and developing their own discipleship groups. The community has afforded us a great deal of influence among the local pastors as we meet to pray and plan community efforts together. Our association is close-knit and effective, so my influence extends to a variety of those pastors as well. My community involvement and longevity in Winnsboro have also provided a significant level of influence with our city administration and school district leaders. After 17 years, there are a number of people at every level whom I can call friends.

## **Who or what inspires you?**

I'm inspired by those who are disciplined and press forward to reach goals. I'm inspired by those who are faithful despite the difficulties. I'm inspired by those who work hard, learn much, and make beautiful works of their passion.

## **What role, if any, does your wife play in your ministry?**

Rachel has been the heart behind much of my pastoral ministry. While I have done the front-line work, she has been the prayer warrior, note writer, cookie baker, and record keeper. She has never felt the pressure to be “the pastor’s wife,” and our church has never placed demands on her. She has simply done what God has gifted her and moved her to do in order to supplement my ministry and make me better.

## **What about this time in your life makes you open to considering a move to a new church?**

When I finished college, God made clear it was time to lay aside my dreams for medical school and to go to seminary. After seven years of ministry in Winnsboro, God gave a feeling I had not had in seven years. It was time for something new. He opened the doors to Mt. Pleasant. After five years in Mt. Pleasant, that “feeling” arrived again. As we sought the Lord, He led us back to Winnsboro. Now, after nearly 17 years with this precious body, He is telling us something significant needs to change. About 18 months ago, I came back from a month-long sabbatical in acknowledgement of my 15th year at the church. I began to pray about what themes to place before the body and what truths I needed to preach. God did not give the clarity He had given in the previous 15 years. For the last 18 months, it's been unclear. Within the last two months, He seems to be saying that vision was unclear because He was closing out our time here.

**What do you consider to be the greatest upcoming struggle that the church will face in the future? What is your plan to address it?**

The church is increasingly an option rather than a necessity. Teens decide they enjoy social life more than the church in college. Families give more commitment to travel ball than Sunday school. Adults decide weekend recreation or virtual attendance are more convenient than weekly connection. Politics stir far more passion than the gospel. The church will continue to face more “competition” for the hearts and minds of people, so the church will have to teach the non-negotiable necessity of weekly worship and small-group accountability. These are the biblical models of the book of Acts that allowed the church to spread from Jerusalem throughout the Roman Empire and to flourish under evil dictators. The church, through fervent prayer and faithful preaching, will have to raise up more and more pastors for the local body who can provide care for the souls of every individual and hold high standards. This deep love and true discipleship will help people see that the gospel changes everything and nothing is more important than the church.

**How would you describe your leadership style?**

I’m a coach at heart. I want to set the example. I want to show how the task is done, and I want people to follow the example. I’ve never been one to delegate and sit on the sideline and watch (though that’s what a coach typically does). I suppose my style would be more “player-coach,” therefore, as I want to be involved as well. My style is one of experimentation. If a staff member wants to try something, I say, “Let’s try it and see how it goes.” Of course, if it’s unbiblical or dangerous, I won’t approve it, but if there’s no reason to pause, we move forward. I want people to know the work does not always have to be my idea. When the Spirit leads and guides, I want people to be able to respond. If it fails, we learn from it and try something different. If it succeeds, the people learn the power and joy of listening to the Lord and obeying.

**How do you handle negative attitudes?**

If someone is negative, it’s either because they’ve not achieved the results they’ve wanted or they’ve become bitter over a period of time. I try to understand the person’s perspective so that I don’t become negative myself simply because someone is being negative. When I can understand the cause, I can understand the solution. Sometimes that solution is worth pursuing. Sometimes that solution is selfish. Then, I have to help them understand that I understand. Their negativity has a cause. If it’s righteous disappointment, we can agree things should change, and we can work toward a solution. If it’s sinful disappointment, I have to help them see their missteps or selfishness and work toward repentance or maturity. I’m a naturally positive, optimistic person, so negative attitudes can be a challenge for me. I am not a fan of negativity, so I try to address it and solve it as quickly as possible.

**What is the most important thing you want to accomplish in your first year at Trinity?**

During my first year at Trinity, the most important thing I want to accomplish is establishing relationships with as many people as possible. I want to learn names. I want to hear the history of the church. I want people to share dreams, frustrations, victories, and failures. I want to know the sheep God has provided

so I will know best how to lead. Those connections will tell me much about why God has brought me to Trinity. He will be revealing the direction by revealing how He has prepared and equipped the people. The vision and journey will not simply be about me as the pastor but about all the people He has called as priests in His Kingdom.