



# WACO REGIONAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

## Family News

### — FROM YOUR DIRECTOR —

According to Paul Stripling's book Turning Points in the History of the Waco Regional Baptist Association, our Association was formed in 1860 with FBC Waco, FBC Marlin, Bosqueville, Bold Springs, Union Springs, White Rock, Blue Ridge, Cow Bayou (now Mooreville), Caddo and Perry (now Moody). Throughout the 154 years of its history, it has demonstrated remarkable resiliency and responsiveness to the needs of the moment and has continued to make a significant impact in this region of the state. I am very proud to serve with this organization that has helped establish important institutions and churches throughout central Texas. The Waco Regional Baptist Association continues to be the place where Baptists "do stuff together". Whether it is in the area covered by one of our ministry teams or just an informal gathering for fellowship or information, our staff, website, emails, and newsletters continuously connect churches and church leaders so we can cooperatively extend and embody the Good News of Jesus. Our Ministry Teams include an Administrative Team, Church Strengthening Team, Community Ministries, Leadership Development, Missions Development, and Networking and Missions. The Community Ministries Team includes Hunger, Jail, and Student Ministries at MCC and TSTC.



This is all funded by voluntary contributions from your church. This means that each year, your church determines the future of the WRBA and its ministries. This also means that through the WRBA every day your church is extending its ministry in the name of Jesus all over McLennan County and beyond—even to many other nations as we network our churches with mission projects and trips from Mississippi to Kenya. Today, the WRBA has 97 member congregations that worship in five different languages.

If you would like to learn more about the history of the WRBA, you can purchase a copy of book for \$5 at the WRBA office.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Waco Regional Baptist Association!

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In His Service, Tim

## — Upcoming Events —

Is your church planning a mission trip, summer camp or Vacation Bible School? We'd love to share the news and pray as your group ministers to others. Contact Katelyn at 753-2408 or [admin@wacobaptists.org](mailto:admin@wacobaptists.org).

FBC Woodway has a mission trip to East Asia May 17-30.



## Save the Date Literacy Missions Training Event

September 12-13

FBC Hewitt (301 S. First Street, Hewitt, TX)

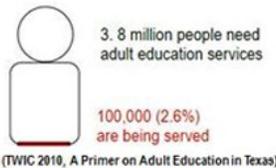
### Training Options

Option 1: Basic workshops, both days for certification. \$30 (early registration) includes materials, lunch, ESL and Adult Reading & Writing sessions.

Option 2: Training updates for experienced teachers and special interest sessions. \$20 (early registration) includes materials, lunch and multiple session options.

To register, contact the WRBA office at 254-753-2408 or [admin@wacobaptists.org](mailto:admin@wacobaptists.org).

Sponsored by Waco Regional Baptist Association Missions and Networking Committee



## Other May Events

**Thursday, May 1, 6:30pm — CWJC 10th Anniversary Concert/Fundraiser featuring the Booth Brothers.** FBC Woodway.

**May 5-10 — BGCT Bike Out Hunger.** [www.outhunger.org](http://www.outhunger.org).

**Wednesday, May 7, 12:00pm — Pastors' Conference.** Truett.

**Thursday, May 8 — CWJC Spring Graduation.** [www.cwjcwaco.org](http://www.cwjcwaco.org).

**May 18-24 — Baptist Association Emphasis Week.**

**Tuesday, May 20, 4:00pm — Administrative Team Meeting.** WRBA.

**Thursday, May 22, 12:00pm — Networking & Missions Team.** FBC Waco.

**Monday, May 26 — WRBA Office Closed.** Memorial Day.

## — Community News —

**Continue to pray for WRBA churches seeking a Pastor:**

Bosqueville, Concord, Lakeview, Lorena FBC, Mart FBC, Old Time, Pleasant Olive MBC, Woodway FBC

You can find more about church positions at [www.wacobaptists.org](http://www.wacobaptists.org). We keep a resume file and can post listings online. Truett's Office of Church Services (710-7344 or [church\\_services@baylor.edu](mailto:church_services@baylor.edu)) can also help.

## — Jail Ministry Spotlight —

Dr. Mary Neal has been a faithful volunteer at the Waco County Jail. Recently she told me that she would be relocating with her daughter's family to Alabama. I was blessed to have the opportunity interview her and glean some wisdom from her before she left.



*When did you get started in jail ministry?*

I guess around '91 or '92, I was actually doing Mary Kay at the time. I was on my way to a meeting at the Hilton Hotel, so Jim Braun and I were just walking across the parking lot and we just started talking. He asked me where I was going and I said to a meeting. He was also on his way to a meeting and asked, "Have you ever thought about doing jail ministry?" "Jail ministry? No." So he said, "Why don't you just come down and see if you like it." That's how I got started. I've been doing it ever since, but it really surprised me because I was very shy.

*When you went to the jail, what was it like? I know it's not like it is now. It was set up differently. What was different about jail then and now?*

When we first started we were going on 5<sup>th</sup> Street in downtown Waco. When we first walked in there it is was so frightening. We walked in and the doors were going "wham, wham, wham, wham," and you know you would just shake. When I started there you were actually able to go into the cell and sit with the people at the table. There we had contact with the people, but over here they don't let us go inside. At the beginning over here we could reach our arms through the bars and touch the girls, shake their hands, lay hands on their heads to pray, until the officers saw that we were doing that and put a strip of tape down on the floor and told us to stay on the other side of the line. But we still share the same gospel message.

*Where were you in your walk with the Lord at that time? Were you already a pastor?*

At that time I was running an outreach ministry with the youth at the Bledsoe-Miller Park. We would pick up the youth on Saturday and have Bible Study and feed them, taking them to the zoo or roller skating. I was actually teaching Bible Study.

*What qualifications do you think a jail ministry volunteer needs to have?*

Well first you need a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. But you need to know the Word of God. When I started I had read through the Bible three times.

In 1995 Dr. Mary had a spiritual renewal and was re-baptized. Since then she has been involved in every kind of ministry. When she and her family visited Alabama to look for housing one of her first questions was, **"Where's the nearest jail?"** Surely all who come behind her will find her faithful to the glory of God! Amen!

Audrey Wauson  
Jail Ministry Coordinator

## — Hunger Ministry Spotlight —

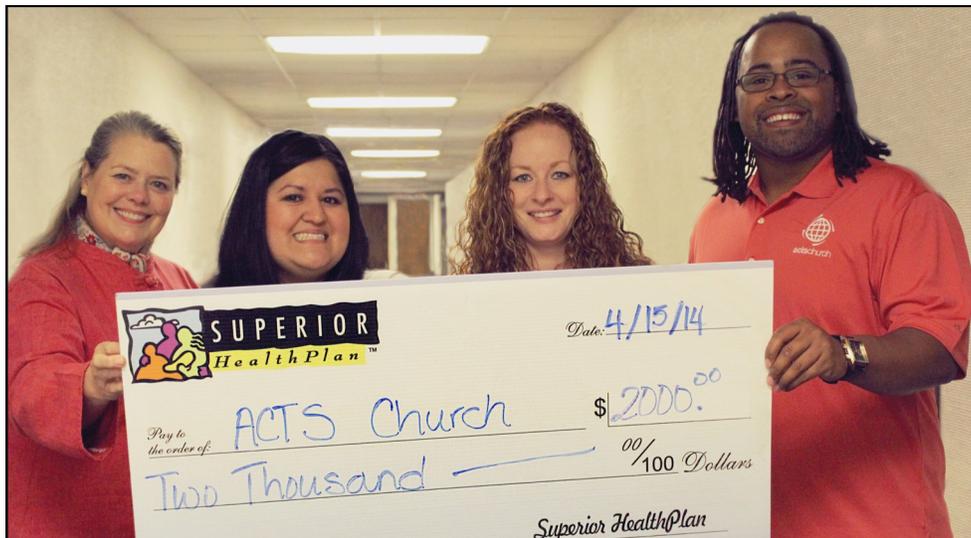
More than 40 college students from Acts Church stayed in Waco during spring break to minister to children in the Kate Ross Housing Complex at a day camp called ‘Catalyst’. This is the camp’s third year and is held on the property where more than 1,000 children under the age of 18 live. Superior Health Plan has made a \$2,000 donation each year to the WRBA church to pay for the food so the children have a healthy lunch and snack. “We love to see this kind of activity in the community,” said Maria Solano, from Superior. “Kids thrive on nutritious food, healthy fun and learning. It is a pleasure to partner with community groups working together to make this kind of healthy fun happen for children.” Superior Health Plan is one of the largest providers of health care benefits in Texas for children on Medicaid.

Associate and College Pastor of Acts Church Omari Head has a team of students who plan recreational activities for ‘Catalyst’ like soccer, basketball, stomp dance, kickball and flag football. They also give the kids time to reflect on the day and wonder what God has to do with it all. God’s love is shown and taught so children develop their God-given talents in a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. Music, Bible study, creative writing, arts and crafts have been taught. “Lots of these kids have parents who work full time and still struggle to put enough food on the table. We give them a fun place to be during spring break, with a healthy meal and snacks. This is like a vacation for a lot of the children, and parents get peace of mind knowing their kids are safe. The parents and children look forward to Catalyst every year now, and some of the mothers even volunteer during the week,” said Omari.

Acts Church moved from China Springs eight years ago to a downtown warehouse, two blocks from Kate Ross. Pastor David Booker lives a block from the church and Kate Ross. “We felt God called us to minister to the poor in this area,” says Booker. This is Acts third year to have a community garden, located between Kate Ross and the church. Their hunger ministry includes a community meal every Sunday evening at 5:00pm at the church.

I’m proud of this church’s hunger outreach and the support it receives! Tell me about your church’s hunger ministry. We want to share the news!

Peace, Conway Del Conte, CVM and Hunger Ministry Coordinator



WRBA Hunger Ministry Coordinator Conway Del Conte, Maria Solano and Deedra Coker-Long of Superior HealthPlan, and Acts Church Associate Minister Omari Head display the donation check.



## — THE BODY OF BELIEVERS —

From the small town of Crawford, TX to the many mission opportunities in Romania, FBC Crawford has been active in the various ministries God has brought to them. The church formed a tie to Romania through Earl Murphy and Maranatha Missions. A few church members had gone before, but FBC Crawford sponsored its first trip in the summer of 2012.

"Each trip looks different based on the needs of Maranatha Missions and the skill set of the group making the trip," said Pastor Jeff Gravens. During our 2012 trip we did food distribution, children's ministry and led revivals. I provided two sessions of training for the 18 pastors of Maranatha Missions. We also had a team member lead one evening of Bible study for women."

They just had another trip to Romania from Feb. 17-25.

He said, "Due to the success of the pastor training and the Bible study for women, the 2014 trip still contained food distribution, children's ministry and revivals, but had much more pastor training and Bible studies for women."

The church plans on returning to minister to the Romanian people in the summer of 2015.

This year they mostly worked in small villages. The normal lifestyle was eye-opening.

Gravens said, "The majority of the people we worked with are subsistence farmers – meaning they farm each day simply to feed their family. This leads to a very simple life when viewed through American eyes.... Yet, on many levels these simple lives allow them to truly value work, family and worship. The people that attend church truly want to be there and worship with passion and sincerity."

The group worked through a translator for everything. Gravens knew that the language barrier was something they'd have to work through.

"In our preparation for the trip we discussed how all people, of any culture, share the same basic needs," he said. "We all have needs of food, housing, family, love. We worked on connecting through these shared needs. Ultimately, we shared how we all are connected by the savior we have in Jesus Christ."

Gravens was impressed with how the group worked together and used each of their gifts.

He said, "Mission trips can be difficult. The team never allowed the difficulty of the trip to play a role in group dynamics. Of course we had moments of tension and disagreement, but it never interfered with the task at hand."

The group found that the trip was difficult but also a blessing. Culturally, the people are hospitable and will offer what they can to others. Gravens said they would take food to people and be blessed in return.

"It was typical for a family struggling to make ends meet to invite us in and share whatever they had available – bread, snacks, apples. It is a pleasure to serve such people. The difficulty came in accepting their hospitality and generosity knowing it came at a great cost to them."

He thought of Eph. 3:30 when looking at what he took away from the trip.

Gravens said, "God continues to prove to be more powerful than I can ever imagine."