

**2016 Annual Conference Journal**  
**Northwest Texas Conference**



**One Hundred Seventh Session**  
**Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe, Presiding**



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## Conference Theme: “REFINE”

God equips disciples for ministry using a refining process. It is a journey. This week, our prayer is “REFINE us, O God.” Three stories will help us on our journey this week. When God refines us as disciples, we are molded, taught and challenged. The process produces fruitful ministry.

Every disciple is molded according to God’s purpose. In Jeremiah 18, God directs the prophet to enter the workshop of a potter. As the potter shaped the clay, a flaw emerged in the shape. At this point, the potter had two choices. As Jeremiah stood watching, he realized the potter used his experience and judgment to determine what to do in light of his purpose and would mold the clay according to that aim.

In what ways are we being molded according to the purpose of God?

The second story is a familiar encounter. In Luke 10:38-42, two sisters have invited Jesus to come into their home. Mary sits at the feet of Jesus listening to his every word. Martha is distracted and becomes irritated because she is busy with the tasks of a hostess. Martha asks Jesus to instruct Mary to do her share of the required tasks. But Jesus responds that Mary, not Martha has chosen the better way.

Martha behaved as though Jesus were a guest. She went through all of the normal preparations for a guest of honor. Mary on the other hand, behaved as though Jesus were Lord. She sat aside the protocols for a guest in favor of learning all she could from him.

In what ways are we listening for God’s word with an open heart or a preconceived idea?

The third story is also a familiar one. In Matthew 14:22-33, the disciples of Jesus are in a boat in the midst of a storm. They see Jesus on the water, but he seems to be a ghost. In the midst of uncertainty, Peter boldly states “If it is you, Lord, order me to come to you on the water.” He overcomes his fear through an act of faith. In order to grow in faith, we must face the challenges that are filled with fear.

In what ways are we growing in discipleship as we face the challenges of the journey?

Jimmy Nunn

### Resources

**Annual Conference Hash Tag:** #NWTXAC16

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## **NORTHWEST TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE HISTORY**

*The following was written by Dr. Darris L. Egger when he was the Conference Historian*

The present Northwest Texas Conference came into being in 1910 out of the old Northwest Texas Conference. That conference was established in 1866 and extended from south of Waco northwestward to all the Panhandle. The present NW Texas Conference extends from Abilene on the south, Midland on the west and Vernon on the northeast, and then to the top of the Panhandle.

Albany is the oldest existing church in the Conference, having been organized in 1873, a year before Shackelford County was organized. The first district in the present Conference was Belle Plaine, which lasted only three years, 1881-1883. The Abilene District came into being in 1883 and is still going strong. The "Pan Handle" District was also created in 1880, but lasted only one year.

The Vernon District was established in 1888, and until 1894, when the Clarendon District was formed. The Abilene and Vernon Districts administered all the work in what would become the Northwest Texas Conference. In 1904 the Colorado District was organized and known as "The Jumbo District" extending all the way north to Tulia and west to the New Mexico line. The year 1906 saw the creation of the Plainview District, and the Stamford District was formed soon after in 1908.

When the huge Conference was divided into the Central Texas and the present Northwest Texas Conferences in 1910, the latter had six districts: Abilene, Clarendon, Colorado, Plainview, Stamford and Vernon. At the first session of the new Conference, three new districts were added: Amarillo, Big Spring and Hamlin. Throughout the 85-year-old history, there have been new alignments in districts and name changes made, but all covering the same territory as in 1910.

Through dedicated lay and clergy, the Northwest Texas Conference has attempted to carry the Gospel to the 66 counties within its boundaries, to the nation and the world. This has been done with missionary zeal and mission dollars, by evangelistic fervor, through higher Christian education. The Methodist zeal for Christian higher education was manifested by the establishment of five colleges: Belle Plaine, Seth Ward, Clarendon, Stamford and McMurry. Only McMurry succeeded in the struggle for existence and has since become a university.

In addition, Wesley Foundations have provided Christian campus ministries at Texas Tech and West Texas A & M. Youth camps at Ceta Canyon Camp and Butman Methodist Camp and Retreat Center, Youth Assemblies at McMurry, the ministry of healing at Methodist Hospital in Lubbock and in its affiliates throughout West Texas and Eastern New Mexico, and Golden Cross are only a few of our channels of ministry.

Local churches are where ministries begin and take place. None could have happened without local church interest and commitment. Sunday Schools teaching the age-old truths, pastors in pulpits challenging people to live the Christian imperative have fueled the work of the church in the world.

This is a "bare bones sketch" of the history of the Northwest Texas Conference.



**Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe**



### **Ministry Cabinet**

Front Row Paul Edward Bauernfeind, Murray Murphy, Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe, and Derrell Wayne Patterson  
Back Row (Left to Right): George Copeland Price, Jr., David "Dave" Weldon Anderson,  
James "Jimmy" Gregg Nunn, and Richard Wayne Edwards



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+++ 2016 INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICE AGENCIES +++  
NORTHWEST TEXAS/NEW MEXICO AREA BISHOP'S OFFICE

**Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe**  
*Diane Lippitt, Ministry Assistant*, dlippitt@nmconfum.com  
11816 Lomas Blvd, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112-5614  
Phone (505) 255-8786•FAX (505) 255-8738

**NORTHWEST TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS**

***George Copeland Price, Jr., Abilene***  
george@abilenedistrict.com  
*Katie Edwards, Ministry Assistant*  
katie@abilenedistrict.com  
1389 Santos St, Abilene, TX 79605-4253  
Phone (325) 675-6672•FAX (325) 675-6673  
www.abilenedistrict.com

***Paul Edward Bauernfeind, Amarillo***  
paul@amarillodistrict.org  
*Suzy Compton, Ministry Assistant*  
suzy@amarillodistrict.org  
PO Box 108, Amarillo, TX 79105-0108  
Phone (806) 376-7271•FAX (806) 553-7855  
www.amarillodistrict.org

***Derrell Wayne Patterson, Big Spring***  
bigspringds@sbcglobal.net  
*Karen Wilson, Ministry Assistant*  
bspdistumc@sbcglobal.net  
PO Box 3239, Big Spring, TX 79721-3239  
Phone (432) 263-1259•FAX (432) 263-1250  
www.gbmg.umc.org/bigspringdistrict/

***Donald "Don" Carl Boren, Lubbock***  
dboren@lubdistumc.com  
*Jennifer Andersen, Ministry Assistant*  
admin.assistant@lubdistumc.com  
3403 21<sup>st</sup> St., Lubbock, TX 79410-1213  
Phone (806) 796-1336•FAX (806) 797-9215  
www.lubdistumc.com

**CONFERENCE SERVICE CENTER STAFF**

***Wendell Lewis Horn***, Interim Director of Mission and Administration, Ext. 11•horn@nwtxconf.org  
***David "Dave" W. Andersen***, Chief Financial Officer/Chief Benefits Officer, Ext. 12•andersen@nwtxconf.org  
***Leia Danielle Williams***, Director of Discipleship/Director of Communications, Ext. 23•ldw@nwtxconf.org  
***Jorge Ochoa***, Director of Hispanic/Latino Movement, Ext. 18•ochoa@nwtxconf.org  
***Rosemary Prumer***, Administration and HCI Coordinator, Ext.11•rprumer@nwtxconf.org  
***Janie Davis***, Accountant and Assistant Chief Benefits Officer, Ext. 14•davis@nwtxconf.org  
***Jaime Montgomery***, Digital Media Specialist, Ext. 16•montgomery@nwtxconf.org  
***Levi McKay***, Video Production Specialist/Photographer, Ext 17•mckay@nwtxconf.org  
***Beryl Waddell***, Archivist, Ext. 15•archives@nwtxconf.org  
***Lauren Hughs***, Youth, Missions, and Hospitality, Ext. 10•hughs@nwtxconf.org  
1401 Avenue M, Lubbock, TX 79401  
Phone (806) 762-0201•FAX (806) 762-0205  
Web Address - www.nwtxconf.org

**Area Resource Center**, same address, phone, and web address as above

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**Archives of Northwest Texas Conference**

Beryl Waddell, Archivist  
1401 Ave M, Lubbock, TX 79401-3939  
archives@nwtconf.org 806-762-0201 ext. 15

**Butman Methodist Camp and Retreat Center**

Brad Street, Executive Director  
158 County Rd 674, Merkel, TX 79536-6512  
butman@butmancamp.org 325-846-4212  
www.butmancamp.org FAX: 325-846-3231

**Ceta Canyon Methodist Camp and Retreat Center**

Mike Wentz, Executive Director  
37201 FM 1721, Happy, TX 79042-3417  
mike@cetacanyon.org 806-488-2268  
www.cetacanyon.org FAX: 806-488-2594

**Cokesbury**

201 8<sup>th</sup> Ave South, Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202  
www.cokesbury.org 615-799-6113 or 800-672-1789

**Covenant Medical Center, Lubbock**

Main Phone Number 806-725-1011  
3615 19<sup>th</sup>, Lubbock, TX 79410 806-725-0579

**Discipleship Ministries**

PO Box 340003 Nashville, TN 37202-0003  
info@UMCdiscipleship.org Toll Free 877-899-2780  
www.umcdiscipleship.org/

**Four Corners Native American Ministries**

Paul West 505-368-4402  
Box 400, Shiprock, NM 87420 FAX: 505-753-7830

**General Board of Church and Society**

100 Maryland Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002-5664  
www.gbcs.org 202-488-5600 or 5621

**General Board of Global Ministries**

475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115  
www.umcmmission.org 800-862-4246  
FAX: 212-870-3748

**General Board of Global Ministries Field Representative for SCJ**

Rick Hawkins, 6060 N Central Expressway, Suite 228, Dallas, TX 75206  
214-373-1554 FAX: 214-361-9329

**General Board of Higher Education and Ministry**

PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007  
www.gbhem.org 615-340-7400  
FAX: 615-340-7048

**General Commission on Archives and History**

36 Madison Ave, PO Box 127, Madison, NJ 97940  
www.gcah.org 973-408-3189  
FAX: 973-408-3909

**General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns**

Room 1300, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115  
www.gccuic-umc.org 212-749-3553  
FAX: 212-749-3556

**General Commission on Religion and Race**

100 Maryland Ave NE, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20002-5620  
gcorr@erols.com 202-547-2271  
www.gcorr.org FAX: 202-547-0358

**General Commission on the Status and Role of Women**

77 W. Washington St, Suite 1009, Chicago, IL 60602  
www.gcsr.org 800-523-8390  
FAX: 312-346-3986

**General Council on Finance and Administration**

PO Box 340029, Nashville, TN 37203-0029  
1 Music Circle North  
www.gcfa.org 866-367-4232  
FAX: 615-329-3394

**General Council on Ministries**

601 W Riverview Ave, Dayton, OH 45406  
gcom@gcom-umc.org 937-227-9400  
www.gcom-umc.org FAX: 937-227-9407

**Huston-Tillotson University**

Larry L. Earvin., President, 900 Chicon St., Austin, TX 78702  
tsm@htu.edu 512-505-3001  
FAX: 512-505-3195  
www.infoserv.umc.org

**Info Serve**

**King's Manor Methodist Home**

Shelly Moss, CEO  
PO Box 1999, Hereford, TX 79045-1999  
smoss@kmmrs.com 806-364-0661  
kings@wtrt.net FAX: 806-364-0656

**Lydia Patterson**

Socorro de Anda, President, Box 11, El Paso, TX 79940-0011  
sdea@aol.com 915-533-8286

**McCurdy School**

Patricia Alvarado, Superintendent,  
261 McCurdy Rd, Espanola, NM 87532-6731  
pialvarado@mccurdy.org 505-753-7221  
FAX: 505-753-7830

**McMurry University**

Sandra Harper, President,  
1 McMurry Station, PO Box 98, Abilene, TX 79697-0001  
harper.sandra@mcm.edu 325-793-3801  
www.mcm.acu.edu FAX: 325-793-2015  
Jeff Lust, University Chaplain and Director of Religious Life  
1 McMurry University, #128, Abilene, TX 79697-0128  
lust.jeff@mcm.edu 325-793-4997  
325-793-4775

+++ 2016 INSTITUTIONS AND SERVICE AGENCIES +++

**Methodist Children's Home, The**

Tim Brown, President  
1111 Herring Ave, Waco, TX 76708  
Outreach Office, 4601 50<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 109, Lubbock, TX 79414

tbrown@mch.org  
www.mch.org

254-753-0181  
FAX: 254-755-7609  
806-792-0099  
FAX: 806-792-2608

**Methodist Service Center and Food Pantry**

Jean Butler, Director, PO Box 863, Abilene, TX 79604-0863

jhbutler@camalott.com

325-665-1444

**Navajo Methodist Mission**

Jan Loesch, Executive Director  
1200 W Apache, Bldg. #17, Farmington, NM 87401

505-325-7578

**New Mexico Conference Office**

Randall Partin, Provost/Director of Congregational Vitality  
11816 Lomas Blvd, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112-5614

randall@nmconfum.com  
www.nmconfum.com

505-255-8786  
FAX: 505-265-6184

**Perkins School of Theology, SMU**

Craig C. Hill, Dean,  
PO Box 750133, Dallas, TX 75275-0133  
Course of Study 214-768-2362

craighill@smu.edu  
www.smu.edu

214-768-2138  
FAX: 214-768-2117

**Providence Place**

Judith Bell, President & CEO, 6487 Whitby Rd, San Antonio, TX 78240  
Maternity and Adoptive Services Information  
Nancy Shipley, Lubbock Area

judith.bell@provplace.org  
www.provplace.org

210-696-2410  
800-842-5433  
800-497-8520

**Sacramento Methodist Assembly**

Bill McCuaig, Executive Director  
Sacramento, NM 88347-0008

sma@pvtnetworks.net  
www.sacramentoassembly.org

800-667-3414  
505-687-3414  
FAX: 505-687-4219

**Saint Paul School of Theology**

Dr. Kevin LaGree, Acting President  
5123 Truman Rd, Kansas City, MO 64127

www.spst.edu

816-483-9600

**Scarritt Bennett Center**

1008 19<sup>th</sup> Ave S, Nashville, TN 37212-2166

615-340-7471

**South Central Jurisdiction Office**

David Severe, Director  
3160 W. Britton Rd, Suite F, Oklahoma City, OK 73120-2037

scjdirector@scjumc.org  
http://scj.umportal.org/main/index.asp

405-202-9846  
FAX 405-208-5612

**Southern Methodist University**

Gerald Turner, President  
PO Box 750100, Dallas, TX 75275

mjj@mail.smu.edu  
www.smu.edu

214-768-2000  
FAX 214-768-3844

**Southwestern University**

Edward B. Burger, President  
Georgetown, TX 78626

president@southwestern.edu  
www.southwestern.edu

512-863-6511

**Texas Conference of Churches**

100 E. 27<sup>th</sup> St., Austin, TX 78705-5711

tcc@txconfchurches.org  
www.txconfchurches.org

512-451-0991  
512-708-0660

**Texas IMPACT**

Bee Moorhead, Executive Director  
200 E 30<sup>th</sup> St., Austin, TX 78705-3809

www.texasimpact.com

512-472-3903

**Texas Methodist Foundation**

Thomas (Tom) R. Locke, President  
11709 Boulder Lane., Suite 100, Austin, TX 78726-1808

tmf@tmf-fdn.org  
www.tmf-fdn.org

512-331-9971  
FAX: 512-331-0670

**Texas United Methodist College Association**

Dr. Darrell Loyless, President  
c/o Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX 78627

dmloyless@gmail.com

512-819-8799

**Texas Wesleyan University**

Frederick G. Slabach, President  
1201 Wesleyan, Fort Worth, TX 76105-1536

fslabach@txwes.edu  
www.txwes.edu

817-531-4444

**UMCommunications**

PO Box 320, Nashville, TN 37202-0320

www.umcom.org

615-742-5400  
FAX: 615-742-5469

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<b>United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)</b> 475 Riverside Drive, Room 1522, New York, NY 10115	umcor@gbgm-umc.org	212-870-3951
<b>UMCOR International Field Offices (NGO)</b> 475 Riverside Drive, Room 1530, New York, NY 10115	www.umcor-ngo.org umcor_office@umcor.org	212-870-3552 FAX: 212-870-3508
<b>UMCOR Emergency Services Office, USA</b> 100 Maryland Ave. NE Suite 315, Washington, DC 20002		202-548-4002
<b>UMCOR Sager Brown-Emergency Supplies</b> 101 Sager Brown Road, PO Box 850, Baldwin, LA 70514		800-814-8765
<b>UMCOR Gulf Coast Office</b> 917 Western America Circle, Suite 105, Mobile, AL 36609		251-344-0124
<b>UMCOR West Office and Depot</b> 1479 South 700 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84104-1605		801-973-7250
<b>Wesley Community Center</b> Liz Rascon, Director 1615 S Roberts, Amarillo, TX 79102-4330	liz@wesleycc.com www.wesleycommunitycenter.com	806-372-7960 FAX: 806-376-7985
<b>Wesley Foundation - South Plains College</b> Chelsey Jones, Director PO Box 1507, Levelland, TX 79336-1507	jacoby_jones@hotmail.com www.spcwesley.com	806-891-5596 806-762-8749 214-706-6900
<b>Wesley Foundation - Southern Methodist University</b> Andrew Beard, Director, 3220 Daniel Ave, Dallas, TX 75206	awbeard@mail.smu.edu	
<b>Wesley Foundation - Texas Tech University</b> Al Martin, Campus Minister 2420 15 <sup>th</sup> St., Lubbock, TX 79401-3636	al@ttuwesley.org www.txwes.edu	806-762-8749 FAX: 806-762-8788
<b>Wesley Foundation - West Texas A&amp;M</b> Mikey Littau, Director Box 60806, WT Station, Canyon, TX 79016-0001	mikey@wtwesley.com www.wtwesley.com/history.htm	806-655-3535
<b>Wespath Benefits and Investments (formerly General Board of Pension and Health Benefits)</b> 1901 Chestnut Ave, Glenview, IL 60025-1604	www.gbphb.org	800-851-2201

