

## **THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD**

### **A Short History of Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ**

*Our gratitude is extended in remembrance of Bill Stewart for his research, compilation, and development of this historical record. Published October 6, 2002 for the Jubilee Celebration*

In 1976, midway in the fifty-year history of Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ, the writer of the forward to the church directory reports one of the most frequently asked questions about Brentwood is "What do you folks do?" As the writer responds, "the simple, but true answer" is that "We worship God."

The worship of God and Bible study brought sixty Christians together on Sunday morning, September 14, 1952, in the Brentwood Elementary School on Arroyo Seca in Austin, Texas. The worshippers came primarily from the University Avenue and Northside (now Hyde Park) congregations. The quadrupling of membership in the congregation by July 1953 from the original 34 members was perceived in a 1962 history of Brentwood as the direct result of "good preaching and well supervised Bible teaching." Worshipping God and receiving healthy instruction from the Bible under the lordship of Christ remain the way God has made His faithfulness known for fifty years through the believing people at Brentwood.

Among the earliest recorded memories of the unity of that small congregation are "harmony, zeal, and optimism in a group from disparate places." A people who gather to worship God in Christ and persist in allowing worship to shape their character may only glimpse the great faithfulness of God -but that glimpse is overwhelming. Worship and unity have characterized the congregation from the beginning.

Eleven months after that first Sunday, ground was broken for a 260-seat auditorium and classroom building on three lots across the street from the school provided by University Avenue Church of Christ. In February 1955, the elders determined that growth in numbers required two worship services on Sunday morning with a Bible study hour between. After the building of a new classroom wing, finished mostly by members in fall 1956, the elders began efforts in spring 1957 to build a new building "so all can worship together." These intentions were fulfilled on February 16, 1958, with 630 souls worshipping together and 371 in Bible class. At the formal opening on the first Sunday in March, all congregations of the Church of Christ in Austin were represented.

For the second time the elders determined that a second worship service was necessary in August 1965. Two Bible study hours had already become necessary in March 1962 when efforts to increase the number of people in Bible class resulted in 853 people attending Sunday morning Bible class on April 17, 1966. Although death claimed some and some moved away during the first ten years, God was adding to the congregation at an average rate of 87 believers each year through baptisms and believers placing membership. In 1964-65, baptisms accounted for 73 members and 263 placed membership. Even with these increases, in December 1966, the "two worship services were halted" by a plan that provided separate but simultaneous worship services for adults and children. Unity in worship together continues to characterize the congregation.

Serving within the community of faith also characterizes the congregation. The 1976 directory ends the description of the programs at Brentwood with "anyone who attempts to list all programs and activities formal and informal-and keep the list current, is in for frustration!" A new member to Brentwood Oaks early in the 1990's reported that every time he turned over a stone, he found someone with a ministry. In our limited perception, ministries seem to arise, live for a while, and then die. But, God has woven a seamless cloth through the believers at Brentwood so that His faithfulness stretches from 1952 to the current time. Ministries come and go, but God remains faithful.

## **A HIGHER VISION**

God has provided Brentwood with faithful leaders from the beginning. Upon completion of the classroom building in fall 1956, rather than resting upon the accomplishment, the leadership set a higher vision and at the same time clearly defined the purpose of buildings.

With these material facilities ready for use, the congregation is no longer limited in its opportunity to teach the Word of God in the local community. Accordingly, further progressive plans are being made to further the Lord's work.

As had been done in July 1953 when a meeting facility was needed, the gifts God provided within the community of faith were called upon with the prayer: "Granted zeal and harmony the Brentwood congregation, under the leadership of three good shepherds, expects to carry the Word of God, at an ever increasing rate to souls in this community and others, wherever the fields are white to the harvest." The seed was planted for a community of faith in which God would work through worshipping, teaching, sharing, caring for people, and passing on the faith.

### **1952-1964**

During the twelve years from 1952 to 1964 God's faithfulness through worshipping, teaching and passing on the faith was evident. Faithful preachers served the congregation. In addition to regular Bible classes for adults and youth, time before Sunday evening worship was reserved for Bible drill for pre-school children. Weekday summer classes for junior and senior high school youth were established along with vacation Bible school. The church was paying for any Bible class teacher's participation in Bible teacher workshops at Abilene Christian College, and youth in the tenth<sup>grade</sup> and up had the opportunity to student teach in a Bible class for a quarter. Brentwood Christian school began. Contributions toward the preparation of ministers were made, and a relationship developed with the Biblical Studies Center near the campus of the University of Texas. With steady growth of the congregation, additional elders and deacons were added, and as early as 1961 a special building fund was established.

In the same period, ways to serve within the community of faith and to care for others emerged. The members were organized in zones in 1956. The women met to get acquainted the same year. In 1955, 1957, and 1958 foreign and domestic mission efforts were initiated. Regular contributions to children's homes began. A pantry was stocked for emergency needs, and a disaster relief effort was mounted when Hurricane Carla struck the Texas coast. As early as 1956, Brentwood cooperated with the black congregation in outreach. The East Austin mission to the Hispanic community began in 1963, and a community awareness program for members began.

## **A BROADENED VISION**

In 1965 the elders broadened the vision of worshipping, teaching, caring for people, and passing on the faith with a master plan for Brentwood including "a 5,000-seat auditorium, educational facilities, a [60-bed] nursing home, a home for unwed mothers, a day-care facility, and a ten-story professional building to house out-patient clinics and offices for Christian guidance counselors, doctors, and other service personnel." The first challenge to the vision came in January of the same year when suit was filed and injunction granted to stop the transfer of the property at U.S. 183 and North Lamar purchased by the congregation. By the summer of 1967 after a clear title had been secured on 12 of the 30 acres, the description of the worship, educational, and benevolent complex read as follows: "auditorium and classrooms for 3,000 people and the nucleus for a home for the aged;" a day school, a home for unwed mothers, a building for treatment of the indigent ill, alcoholics, and emotionally disturbed." The delays caused by the title dispute prompted the leadership to seek land elsewhere. God has been faithful in bringing this vision to pass, though not exactly in the way the congregation envisioned.

### **1966-1969**

As God had worked in previous years, His hand may be seen in this broadened vision casting a glow over the ministries of the congregation in the late 1960's. He was faithful in helping us to focus on biblical instruction in preaching and study. To teach and pass on the faith, the congregation planned and sponsored not only an annual Youth Day, but also a spiritual emphasis effort for adults referred to as "Adult Day." An era of larger gatherings of Christians emerged with participation in area wide Campaigns for Christ and banquets for area high school students and their guests to honor the seniors. Brentwood used a house at the Arroyo Seca address for its Youth Center. The St. John's bus ministry began. A church administrator and an education minister were employed. Personal work teams were formed for local outreach. Cottage Classes and Home Bible Study efforts emerged; and by 1968 members of the Twenties Class had begun sharing a monthly meal together after Sunday evening worship.

The nursing home entry in the 1966 budget for the congregation is not the only indication that the broadened vision included caring for people. The elderly from the Central Texas Nursing Home were brought in a bus to worship. A bus brought students from the University of Texas area to worship, too. A visitation program included nursery care so mothers could make hospital visits. An Away-from-Home correspondence ministry emerged aimed primarily at college students and Christians in the military. The number of children's homes to which Brentwood contributed rose from one to as many as five.

### **1970-1979**

Efforts to teach, pass on the faith, and care for people under the broadened vision continued in the 1970's. A Christian camp for children and younger adults on land owned by Brentwood Oaks was realized. Support of the Institute for Christian Studies (now the Austin Graduate School of Theology) increased. Several paid ministries began; a youth director was named in 1970, followed by a Minister of Education in 1972, which changed to Educational Director when a Minister of Human Concerns was employed to provide the counseling services envisioned. In fall 1973 a Program Planner began working to further the broadened Brentwood vision; and in 1974 Brentwood became a preparation site for the Meals on Wheels program for the homebound, a ministry that continued into the 1980's.

While pursuing its broadened vision, Brentwood maintained a sense of the past and built relationships within the congregation. Annual homecomings in the early years resulted in its first minister preaching at the twentieth anniversary and homecoming. The first Brentwood family retreat at the Echo Valley campsite in the HEB Foundation Camp was in summer 1972. Youth and youth-and-parent retreats to smaller campsites of the HEB Foundation Camp and elsewhere occurred during this period. The first women's retreat was held in January 1974.

Ten years after it was first articulated, more components of the broadened vision were realized. Early in 1975 a telephone reassurance program for the elderly began and later an Adopt-A-Grandparent program was initiated. In the summer, an alcoholics rehabilitation program began. Then in November a licensed day care center began. In the early 1980's, the day care center became the Developmental Preschool. Other ministries involved members in fasting one meal each week and contributing the money for that meal to a famine relief program and in the Saturday Samaritans, who help members move and who repair houses in the community for those without the resources. A revived ministry to hospital patients and shut-ins became active. A Coordinator of Education began working with Bible classes and a Ministry to the Church Task Force was at work. Weekly love feasts for new members were underway.

### **Village Christian Apartments**

The dream of a Christian retirement home received full impetus in 1975 when Brentwood learned it could apply for a direct loan from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The budget for 1976 included funding of a retirement home for 150 to 200 people. Building the retirement home at Valley Oaks seemed ideal; but various ordinances required nearby bus, grocery, and shopping services for the elderly; consequently, land on Rockwood Lane with access to a shopping center on Anderson Lane was purchased for the home. In September 1978 the first unit of a facility for the retired

and handicapped was ready for occupancy; the second, in June 1979; and on July 1, 1979, all 106 units of the Village Christian Apartments were dedicated "to the glory of God and service to mankind in the spirit of brotherhood within a Christian community of friends and neighbors and the security of home." Village Christian Apartments continues to serve the church and community.

### **New Facilities for Service**

On June 4, 1969, Brentwood purchased the 56-acre Valley Oaks Golf Course, which became Valley Oaks Christian Camp. The elders named a 22-member Land Development and Program Planning committee within two-weeks of the purchase of the land. With funds from donations by members, the sale of property at U.S. 183 and North Lamar, and the sale of 12 acres of Valley Oaks to the City of Austin for a park, ground at Valley Oaks was broken on November 4, 1979. Later, the Arroyo Seca property was sold. The facilities built became home for Brentwood Oaks Church of Christ, Brentwood Christian School, and the Developmental Preschool. On Sunday August 9, 1981, the elders carried the communion out of the auditorium at the Arroyo Seca location with the congregation following. When the communion arrived at the new facility, the first worship began in the Family Life Center with an old church bell in the courtyard ringing the call to worship. The current auditorium was completed early in 1982 and the facilities were dedicated on Sunday, May 16, 1982.

1980-1999

The faithfulness of God in the congregation's worshipping, teaching, caring for people, and passing on the faith infused the congregation with a host of ways to serve within the community of faith in the 1980's and 1990's. A Brothers Keeper program, "a network of mutual ministry through which members seek to meet the needs of one another," began with a Family Life Minister. The elderly and widows received attention, and a single-again fellowship began. A prison ministry began. From small donations collected during Bible class, an emergency assistance fund was established. Ministries for men and women were developed; the men's encouragement groups (E-Groups) began. Expanded nursery services became a reality, and, with roots back to December 1966, worship for young children became Sunshine Hour. Community meals in the Youth Center, formerly the Valley Oaks golf course clubhouse, began.

The first congregational "First Sunday Meal" together occurred on April 1, 1984. A monthly rotation of women members through the hospitality committee to provide care and meals to members during periods of suffering and to prepare for the First Sunday Meal together and a rotation of men through the men's work crews to keep the grounds were established. During this period the annual men's retreat began. A food pantry resumed with groceries from members and the annual Thanksgiving canned goods drive by Brentwood Christian School students. Contributions to Life Care Pregnancy Services and counseling services of a member working with Reconciliation Ministries fulfilled part of the broadened vision of 1965.

God's faithfulness in biblical instruction through preaching and study were invigorated. Youth participated in Bible quizzes at other churches; later participation of the youth in Leadership Training for Christ (LTS) gave full expression to this effort. Monthly family night suppers for youth and their families began, and "Friday Night Live" provided a place for Christian youth on Friday evenings at the Brentwood Oaks facilities. During this period vacation Bible school became Camp Agape, involving adult teachers and youth counselors at the Brentwood Oaks facilities. A new class for beginners in the faith began in 1983, and a Love and Logic class on parenting began. The care groups of the early 1980's, small neighborhood gatherings, were revisited and reorganized as branch groups, which began meeting in October 1987. Instruction in singing and song leading for youth yielded to LTS activities, and youth leading worship received impetus on Sunday evenings of the months having a fifth Sunday. Sunday morning adult Bible classes received emphasis as the teachers began to prepare together on Wednesday evenings with healthy instruction from those in the congregation having gifts of biblical scholarship. The designation of February for an emphasis on missions focused the attention of all age groups on opportunities to serve.

### **DOMESTIC MISSIONS**

Brentwood's first Gospel meeting, conducted less than six months after the congregation began, signaled the beginning of a vital domestic outreach God has graciously continued to this day. Two years after that first Gospel meeting the congregation began assisting the church in LaGrange, Texas. That assistance

continued for at least twelve years. When television arrived in Austin in 1952, Brentwood participated in "The Gospel Light" television program, which became the "Book of Books" in August 1956. Brentwood's preacher and various members were sent to hold meetings in the Pacific Northwest in January 1957, to help a small church in Miles City, Montana, in April 1957, and to preach in Bastrop and Giddings in August 1958. Contributions to assist the congregation in Benson, Arizona, occurred in May 1958. In December 1961, four Churches of Christ, Brentwood, Highland Village, Cameron Road, and Northside, cooperated to present a 15-minute radio program on Sunday morning.

### **The East Austin Mission**

Then in Spring 1963, Brentwood began a three-part domestic mission in East Austin involving its members and members from Highland Village and University Avenue Churches of Christ. The East Austin mission eventually included evangelism and worship, benevolence, a children's well clinic, assistance in reading English, a Saturday Bible Story Hour and Vacation Bible School for children, and a radio program in Spanish with a follow-up "Study the Bible by Mail" program. Funding for the well clinic continued twenty years later. In June 1964, thirtynine people had assigned responsibilities in the East Austin mission including an East Austin minister. Christian students from the University of Texas played a significant role among the volunteers helping with the mission. Enhancing the mission was a community awareness program, which included a tour of East Austin. By 1966 the East Austin mission had touched an estimated 5,000 souls. For a period of time, Brentwood supported a minister at the Iglesia de Cristo congregation at Fourth and Pedernales.

### **Use of Media**

On Sunday morning, September 5, 1965, *Life's Third Dimension*, a television series produced by Brentwood, aired on KHFI-TV, Channel 42. Each of the 16 programs in the series included a 15-minute talk by Brentwood's preacher and choral singing by Brentwood members. In January 1969 Brentwood participated in another television program aired on Sunday afternoon entitled *Let the Bible Speak*.

### **The St. John's Mission**

When two Brentwood missionaries in training invited black, Hispanic, and white children to the summer Vacation Bible School in 1968, another ministry, this time to black children in the St. John's area of Austin, began; over 100 children packed the bus driven to pick them up. When the children asked to attend Sunday morning worship and then Wednesday evening classes, the bus ministry grew. Few of the children knew the Bible stories and class disruptions prevented progress. With the elders' assurance, the ministry continued with the implementation of Wednesday evening devotionals to calm the children before classes began. This worked. Baptisms occurred, a few parents accompanied their children to church for a while before participation dwindled. One participant eventually attended Abilene Christian College.

### **The Hispanic Mission**

For a number of years Brentwood Oaks sought to establish a Spanish-speaking congregation, this time in Northeast Austin. In July 1994, a preacher was brought to Austin with his family to begin that work with the goal of producing a self-sustaining Hispanic church by 2003. Through God's faithfulness, the Iglesia de Cristo de Norte Austin, which worships in a portion of the Cameron Road Church of Christ building, is well established and growing.

### **UT Outreach**

In the early 1990's an outreach effort to foreign graduate students on the campus of the University of Texas began. Graduate students from China, Korea, and India have received instruction in the Bible, and some have been baptized into the body of Christ and are faithful members today.

### **Brentwood Christian School**

With the naming of a board of trustees in July 1963, Brentwood Christian School (BCS) began. School opened in the fall with fourteen students enrolled in kindergarten and first grade. Thirteen years passed before a second grade class was added followed by the addition of a third grade class in fall 1977. In July 1978, the board recommended to the elders hiring a fulltime administrator, seeking accreditation from the Texas Education Agency, and adding one grade per year beginning with the fourth grade in fall 1978.

Accreditation came in January 1981. In August 1982 the school added an eighth grade class and a Mother's Day Out program, which was renamed The Children's Ark in 1997. The addition of a ninth grade class had to await the completion of a high school building in 1984. In August 1992, the elders approved an additional section for each grade permitting potential enrollment of 790 students. The Christian Heritage Building and the Athletic Center were dedicated in 1997 and 2000 respectively to accommodate the students. For the first time the school will graduate two sections of seniors in May 2003. Since its first graduating class in 1988 the school has produced three commended scholars and two National Merit Scholars.

The full influence of the school reaches beyond the campus itself. In March 1993 the National Christian School Association adopted sponsorship of the Crown Award for children's books, a program begun by BCS to address non-Christian values presented in books published for children. With the addition of the Lamplighter Award for books for junior high school students, public school librarians in several states use the Crown Award and Lamplighter Award book lists; and authors and publishers send books to the school for review in the programs. Christian schools in a number of states participate in the program. The Christian influence of the school is not limited to one such program or to devoted teachers. The Christ-centered academic environment and the curriculum, prepared and taught by the faculty from a Christian perspective, have far reaching influence. Although difficult to know precisely, since 1980, at least 130 students, parents, and former students have been baptized into Christ as a result of the school's influence. Other Christian schools in the brotherhood have requested and received from BCS instruction via seminar and video examples of teaching from a Christian perspective. Instruction in teaching from a Christian perspective has been carried as far as Christian schools in Zambia, Africa.

### **FOREIGN MISSIONS**

God's faithfulness has blessed the foreign missions at Brentwood Oaks. In January 1957, Brentwood supported a native Korean in mission work in Korea, a Korean student in school to become a minister, and a missionary in Klanpenborg, Denmark. The congregation also contributed to work in South Africa. Support of the Denmark mission continued for seven years. In 1959 the congregation contributed to the work in Jamaica, provided funds for a vacation Bible school in Paris, France, and helped purchase a church building in Stockholm, Sweden. The following year it contributed to the building fund for the church in Oslo, Norway. In 1966 it provided funds for a mission in San Salvador.

### **The Guatemalan Mission**

Then in 1967 seven missionary couples seeking a congregation to sponsor them arrived at Brentwood. This was the beginning of a mission to the Quiche Indians of Guatemala, a mountain people steeped in animism. In January 1970 four of the seven families were ordained for the work and fully supported by Brentwood for many years to come. The mission included evangelism and health care, one of the missionaries being a physician. After a devastating earthquake in Guatemala in early 1976, Brentwood headed an area-wide relief effort featured on the local evening television news. Political unrest forced the missionaries to leave in November 1981. Again in 1993 Brentwood Oaks sponsored a physician and his wife in Guatemala. A Brentwood Oaks sponsored teacher worked in the school at Quetsaltenango, Guatemala, during the fall semester 1994 and also assisted with the medical mission. A Brentwood Oaks member serves as president of the board of Health Talents International, which continues to work in Guatemala. God's faithfulness has reached thousands in the mountains of Guatemala who now worship Him and reach out to others.

### **Other Foreign Efforts**

Other foreign efforts were engaged during this time. Brentwood contributed to the mission seminar at Abilene Christian University in 1972. In fall 1973 Brentwood members began participating in the World Bible School (WBS); by 1974 there were between 200 and 300 students of the Bible taught by Brentwood members; those requesting Bibles received them. By the 1990s WBS had reached people in Africa, Bulgaria, India, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, and seven regions and Sakhalin Island of the Russian Federation. In 1984 two adults and four youth members were sent to Global Camp in San Jose, Costa Rica. The following year a contribution was made for work in Thailand and a missionary was sent to Belize, Central America. Members whose business sent them to work for short periods in Berlin, Germany, and Singapore in Malaysia encouraged congregations in those cities.

From 1993 to 1996 Brentwood Oaks sponsored a family in Montevideo, Uruguay. For several years it sponsored a former servant in its East Austin mission and his wife along the Texas-Mexico border. The purpose of the mission was to strengthen Spanish-speaking congregations up and down both sides of the border. In 1994 Brentwood Oaks assisted a family to plant the church in Prague, Czech Republic. The son of a member and a member of Brentwood Oaks moved to China to teach English in 1997 and 1999; one remains in China teaching English and business ethics. In the late 1980's Brentwood Oaks began supporting Christian radio broadcasts in Zagreb, Croatia; and in 1997 it began supporting a native of Ghana trained at the Institute for Christian Studies and Abilene Christian University who has become the principal at Ghana Bible College and a leader in the Oforikrom Church of Christ in Kumasi, Ghana. For two years beginning in 1996 support was provided to a missionary in Scotland. In 2000 Brentwood Oaks began providing one-fourth of the support of a Brazilian missionary couple in Urberlandia, Brazil.

### **Youth and Member Missions**

The foreign missions have provided opportunities for Brentwood members to experience work in the mission field during the summer months. These shorter missions can be traced to members participating in domestic missions in 1957. Many have participated in the Let's Start Talking program. Adult and young adult members, with the support of the congregation, have helped spread the Christian message to twenty-two countries and five continents. Brentwood youth groups have carried the Christian influence to Costa Rica and cities in Mexico and Texas. Other members participate in the Sojourners program. These shorter missions have greatly enriched the congregation and made spreading the Gospel real in the minds of Brentwood Oak's Youth.

### **The St. Petersburg Mission**

In the 1990's, a group of four missionaries came together from disparate places to work in St. Petersburg, Russia. Brentwood Oaks sponsored two and supported one. The results of this effort provided preaching for the Church on the Neva in St. Petersburg and the planting of new churches in Gatchina, Sverskii, and Lotnonosov in the St. Petersburg area. God is now raising up Russian evangelists and church leaders in St. Petersburg.

### **The Russian Bible School**

In the mid 1990s representatives from World Christian Broadcasting (WCB), the Eastern European Mission and Bible Foundation (EEM), and the Herald of Truth, Brentwood Oaks elders, Brentwood Oaks mission committee members, and others met at the Institute for Christian Studies to discuss a way to evangelize Russia. Given the size and population of Russia, it appeared that traditional means of evangelizing the Russian people could not handle the sheer numbers of cries for spiritual help. The idea of evangelizing Russia via correspondence seemed a way to reach the many Russian people asking for help.

Two events had converged in 1991 to help the situation. WCB opened an office in St. Petersburg, Russia, to handle correspondence generated by a weekly national radio broadcast; and for a year ending in 1991 children's Bible classes at Brentwood Oaks had collected coins in small coin purses to fund the translation of the *Beginners Bible* into Russian. EEM printed the Russian *Beginner's Bible*, which were mailed to people seeking spiritual food for their children. In 1994 the WCB office in St. Petersburg was inundated with requests to study the Bible resulting from another radio program. Fifteen thousand Russians enrolled in a Bible correspondence course. In 1995 members of Brentwood Oaks, one of whom had participated in the Study the Bible by Mail in the 1960's, began responding to correspondence translated from Russian to English.

To raise funds for EEM's publishing and distribution of Bibles, Brentwood Oaks assisted EEM's hosting of three dinners in 1997, 1999, and 2000. In 1999 a new Russian radio program entitled *Bible Drama* produced tens of thousands of letters. Brentwood Oaks assumed oversight of WCB's St. Petersburg office; and, in February 2000, committed to supervision of the *Russian Bible School* to teach the Gospel through the mail and the Internet. EEM provides packets of biblical materials including the *Beginner's Bible* to many of those in the Russian Bible School.

### **The Leipzig Mission**

God willing, this month, a Brentwood Oaks member, who knows the German cultural heritage and is fluent in the language, will move to Leipzig, Germany, to plant the church.

### **RESPONSE TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS**

Written histories of Brentwood in the 1950's indicate that the congregation and its leadership have had a strong sense of who they are and whom they serve in the world. Statements such as the following appear in the 1950's:

with true love for God and an equally true appraisal of ourselves, the future will be filled with God's supreme purpose for the church -the spread of the gospel and the salvation of souls.

These kinds of statements were reformulated in the 1960's in a statement entitled "Who We Are." In 1975 the elders issued a statement entitled "Come with us for the Lord has given wonderful promises" placing the congregation firmly within the Restoration Tradition. In January of the following year, the elders provided the congregation with comments, commendations, and admonitions. The "Who We Are" and "Come with Us" statements, annual encouragement statements from the elders, and the vision for Brentwood were repeated in church directories and occasionally in bulletins. To protect the unity of the congregation in the 1970's, each new member and all members were encouraged to submit to the authority of the elders, to shun divisiveness, to live their lives faithfully in public and in private, and to work together to increase the love of God to all people. The rehearsal of these intentions continues.

A brochure introducing the congregation published in 1981 for the move to a new neighborhood characterized Brentwood Oaks as a covenant people, and at the dedication service for the current facilities in 1982 the elders stated

The Brentwood Oaks community is a covenant people, a people who are attempting to respond in faith to the love of God. We seek constantly to reaffirm and define through lives of love and service our identity as a church of Jesus Christ. The elders of this church want this community of people to be a warm family of real people who are in touch with the holy.

Subsequent brochures introducing the congregation have a section entitled "This We Believe."

Efforts begun as early as 1963 to have a thoughtfully planned and theologically integrated worship with a printed order of worship have served to focus the congregation on worshipping God. Encouraging a faithful response to God, the elders initiated a service of prayer for the newborn, which became an annual dedication of young children to God and their families to Christian parenting on the first Sunday in March. Remembering those of the congregation who died during the year began with the reading of their names during Sunday morning worship at Easter time. The congregation began the practice of remembering God's faithfulness in December and each January renews its covenant by pledging loyalty to God who is faithful. The Lord's Supper receives special emphasis during worship three or four times each year. On a Sunday evening worship in 1994, the elders encouraged the congregation with a paper prepared by the elders and read by an elder entitled "That your love may abound to the glory of God." This reading was subsequently read on Sunday mornings and then published annually in the order of worship to remind the congregation of whose they are and their purpose in the world. In February 1999, the congregation affirmed its role as partners in covenant service. All of these things resonate through the year, reminding the congregation not only of the truly great faithfulness of God but also of a faithful response to His great faithfulness.



| Elders              | Ministers           | Missionaries - Brentwood Oaks sponsorship  |
|---------------------|---------------------|--|
| <u>Current</u>      | <u>Current</u>      | <u>Current</u>                             |
| Roland Beasley      | David Gregersen     | Saturnino Gonzales (Austin)                |
| *Bob Burgess        | Britt Hadley        | Igor Kravchenko (Russia)                   |
| Ross Davis          | Roger McCown        | Mark Martin (UT Austin, Germany)           |
| *Frank Hill         |                     | Joel Pettv (Russia)                        |
| Alan Towler         | <u>Former</u>       | <u>Former</u>                              |
| Rayford Walker      | Tony Ash            | John Davenport (Austin)                    |
| Michael Weed        | Joe Baisdon         | Pat Hile (Guatemala)                       |
| Mike White          | Jim Baumgardner     | Jerry Hill (Texas-Mexico border)           |
| David Worley        | Jeff Boyd           | Ralph McCluggage (Guatemala)               |
|                     | Kurt Boyland        | Roger McCown (Guatemala)                   |
| <u>Former</u>       | David Bradfute      | Kevin Moore (UT Austin)                    |
| Ernest Allen        | Larry Brown         | Jim Rackley (Guatemala)                    |
| Robert Baker (d)    | Brad Brumley        | Richard Rheinbolt (Guatemala)              |
| Robert Bluethman    | Ray Chester (d)     | Dan Rojas (Austin)                         |
| Ray Chester (d)     | Paul Easley         | W. L. Stradley (Austin)                    |
| Cecil Child (d)     | Jerry Hill          | Russell Whisenhunt (Belize)                |
| Neil Craig (d)      | Kathy Jordon Towery |  |
| Lowell Davis        | David King          |  |
| Otha Dent (d)       | Paul Learned        |  |
| Ron Durham          | Horace Little (d)   |  |
| Walter H. Hill      | Fred McGinn         |  |
| David Huff          | Gary Moss           | Missionaries - Financial or prayer support |
| Bill Leach          | Don Phillips (d)    |  |
| Earl Mitchell (d)   | J. Leathel Roberts  | <u>Current</u>                             |
| Gene Patterson      | James Tolle         | Ryan Bitikofer (China)                     |
| Bill Quigley        | Michael Weed        | Mladen Jovanovic (Croatia)                 |
| Rex Scoggins        | Jack White          | Daniel Negro (Brazil)                      |
| Delvin Sparks       | James R. White      | Y.B. Nkansah (Ghana)                       |
| Ray Stewart (d)     | John B. White       |  |
| M. I. Summerlin (d) | Cled Wimbish (d)    | <u>Former</u>                              |
| Ralph Sweet (d)     |                     | Eric Brandt (Russia)                       |
| Travis Weathers (d) |                     | Clinton Davis (Denmark)                    |
| George Wilhite (d)  |                     | Jason Locke (Czech Republic)               |
|                     |                     | Stephen Melton (Scotland)                  |
|                     |                     | Matt Quigley (China)                       |
|                     |                     | Greg Sparks (Uruguay)                      |
|                     |                     | Kara Stokes Capps (Guatemala)              |

\* To be ordained Oct. 20, 2002