

# Obituary: John Bisagno

August 14, 2018

**John Bisagno**, longtime pastor of First Baptist Church in Houston, died Aug. 5 in Nashville, Tenn., after a battle with cancer. He was 84. Bisagno was born April 5, 1934, in Augusta, Kan. He earned a bachelor's degree in music at Oklahoma Baptist University and received multiple honorary doctorates. Following an early career as a Dixieland jazz trumpeter, Bisagno gave his life to Christ in 1952 and accepted a call to ministry. He served as an evangelist—primarily in music evangelism—before he became pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., in 1965. He began his 30-year pastorate of First Baptist Church in Houston in 1970. During his time there, the church grew from fewer than 400 members to more than 22,000, baptized about 15,000 people, gave \$250 million to missions and relocated from downtown to west Houston. While he was pastor at the Houston church, about 500 members entered full-time Christian vocations, including 100 international missionaries. Bisagno was president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Pastors' Conference and a frequent preacher at state Baptist evangelism conferences. He spoke at the World Congress on Evangelism and conducted 37 overseas evangelistic crusades. He was preceded in death last year by his wife of 63 years, Uldine. He is survived by two sons—Tim of Franklin, Tenn., and Tony of Tyler—and daughter Ginger Dodd of Fremont, Neb., eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

