

Church transitions from roping events to skateboarding

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WAXAHACHIE—It wasn't too long ago that Brandon Jones was watching men gallop by on horseback with lassos twirling over their heads. Now, he watches as teenagers whir by on their skateboards, building up speed for their next trick.

[keApO4VdA4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keeApO4VdA4)

A year ago, he was minister of missions at Frontier Cowboy Church in Waxahachie. Now, Frontier is a lot less cowboy.

For Jones, it's really not a big deal.

"Our mission is the Great Commission," he said. "We feel like Christ told us to go and reach people and make disciples, and that's what we're trying to do here."

Moving from roping events to a skate church targeting teenagers marks a significant transition—one that mirrors a transition taking place in the congregation overall.

The change has not occurred suddenly, Pastor Ken Ansell said, but rather gradually as the congregation has sought to follow God's leading.



Frontier Church in Waxahachie is offering youth a "skateboard church" on the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant.

The church dropped "Cowboy" from its name and now just calls itself

[Frontier Church](#). The church has sold its building on the south side of town and has moved near downtown into a leased building.

The beginning of the changes “didn’t come out of any kind of burning bush experience,” Ansell said.

“The leadership didn’t hold any sort of meeting and plot a new course. It definitely came out of a desire to reach the greatest number of people,” he explained.

While many churches successfully have reached unchurched people who identify with the cowboy culture through rodeo-style events and worship geared toward western heritage, the approach did not work for Frontier Church as well as its leaders had hoped it would.

“The roping events and other things we were doing just weren’t being effective for us. Sure, they would come and rope, but that was it,” Ansell said.

The desire to reach more people started Ansell and the congregation looking for strategies to reach a residential area of Waxahachie that had about 2,500 homes and little church presence.

The church tried to start Bible studies in homes there, but after a while, they fizzled, Jones said.

As Jones and Ansell drove through the community looking for other ways to connect, they noticed a lot of children and teenagers skateboarding, and they decided to use that hobby to try to reach families.

At first, they set up ramps at the church.



Teenagers gather in a fast-food restaurant parking lot to test their skateboarding skills. Frontier Church in Waxahachie—formerly a cowboy church—uses the approach to attract young people from a neighborhood with little church presence.

“But you could tell as the parents dropped their kids off that they never considered us as a place for them to go to church,” Ansell said.

Not long after that, Jones contacted the manager of a fast-food restaurant who agreed to let the ministry use a portion of its parking lot for a couple of hours each Monday afternoon.

While there have not been any professions of faith yet directly resulting from the “skate church” outreach, Jones has seen attitudes of many youth change over the last several months through the Bible studies that are a part of the afternoon of skating.

“A lot of these kids get to see how God is really relevant to them, and talk about him, and ask questions and get those questions answered,” he said.

While “Cowboy” isn’t part of the name anymore, Ansell said Frontier Church still has a bit of western flavor, just because of who he is and who the people are who attend.

“We’re trying to treat western heritage as definitely part of who we are but not the whole sum of who we are,” he explained.

While Ansell admits the transition sometimes is uncomfortable for many, including him, he feels good about where the church is headed.

“God is definitely leading us on this track,” he said.

Jones had no problem explaining why a church associated with western heritage might start a skate church: “If we limit ourselves to cowboys, we limit God and what he can do through us. There is a whole world of people who need to know Christ.”