

DBU's Cook reflects on 28-year "sacred trust"

May 4, 2016

We recently held our annual Norvell Slater Senior Adult Hymn Sing at Dallas Baptist University. This has been such a special worship service for many of us the last 28 years. Byron Williamson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Pampa, came up to me at the Hymn Sing to express a word of gratitude for assisting his son, Colby, who is one of our finest students at DBU. I soon realized it was I who should be thanking him. Colby serves as a student worker in my office, and his dad particularly wanted to thank me for giving him a job and taking an interest in him.



Gary Cook
Pastor Williamson told me that in 2007, when it was announced in the Baptist Standard I had leukemia, he and his congregation prayed I would be healed. Colby would have been in the fifth grade then, and his father had no direct affiliation with DBU. Here was a wonderful Texas Baptist pastor who wanted to pray for a Texas Baptist college president who was his brother in Christ. Little did he know that the man he prayed for later would be able to help his son as a college student.

Rev. Williamson prayed for me as many others did because of the bond we all share as Baptist Christians. It is a deep bond of love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. We all are a part of the Baptist family, and in times of need, we come together to pray for each other.

My goodness, I am so grateful to Rev. Williamson and thousands of other Baptist pastors and church members who prayed for me during my hour of need. After 32 days in Baylor University Medical Center and five months of chemotherapy, I was relieved to go into remission in the spring of 2008. I always will be grateful to the members of Texas Baptist churches who prayed for me and for my healing, even though most of them did not know me personally.



If you are one of those individuals who prayed for me back in 2007 when I was at the lowest point of my life, I want to say a very special thank you to you for your prayers, care and concern. My health is good now, and hopefully, I will be able to live a lot longer and be able to serve the Lord for a number of more years.

It is so amazing to reflect on how the Lord prepares us for the future. As a student at Baylor University, I was a member of the Baylor Chamber of Commerce. We had a motto in our organization that came from the famed Christian medical missionary Albert Schweitzer, who gave his life in ministry in Africa: "I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: The only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who have sought and found how to serve."

When I came to Dallas Baptist University as president in 1988, the first sermon I ever preached in chapel was on servanthood, and I used this quote by Schweitzer. I had been influenced to serve my fellow man as a Baylor student, and now I had an opportunity to lead others in recognizing their need to serve God by serving their fellow man.

We soon began our emphasis at DBU on servant leadership and developed our mission statement, which reads: "The purpose of Dallas Baptist University is to provide Christ-centered quality higher education in the arts, sciences and professional studies at both the undergraduate and

graduate levels to traditional-age and adult students in order to produce servant leaders who have the ability to integrate faith and learning through their respective callings.”

What a privilege it has been to serve as president of Dallas Baptist University the last 28 years with a dedicated group of faculty, staff, trustees, alumni and donors. The Lord has sent to us some of the most wonderful young people and adults in the world to educate and mentor. I consider this to be a sacred trust given to us by the parents and families who have counted on us to help transform these students’ lives as Christian servant leaders.

We have more than 5,300 students studying at DBU, and only in eternity will we know how our alumni have been able to transform the lives of many others as they go into all of the world to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

All of us at Dallas Baptist University are so pleased to be a part of the Baptist family. Our trustees, faculty and staff are committed in the years ahead to serve our Lord faithfully alongside our Baptist brothers and sisters around the world.

Gary Cook now serves as chancellor of Dallas Baptist University after leading the school as president almost three decades.