

# **Chad Chaddick: ‘Love reaches the whole person, and ministry must too.’**

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Since May of 2015, Chad Chaddick has been pastor of [First Baptist Church in San Marcos](#). From deep in the heart of one Texan, he shares his background and thoughts on church and ministry. To suggest a Baptist General Convention of Texas-affiliated leader to be featured in this column, or to apply to be featured yourself, [click here](#).

## **Background**

### **Where else have you served in ministry, and what were your positions there?**

Prior to serving in San Marcos, I was the pastor at Northeast Baptist Church in San Antonio for seven years, and, prior to San Antonio, I was the pastor of Fairlanes Baptist Church in Borger, Texas, for eight years.

### **Where did you grow up?**

I was born in Dallas, spent elementary school in the country between Forney and Terrell and graduated high school in Clovis, New Mexico.

### **How did you come to faith in Christ?**

I came to faith in Christ as a child in Casa View Baptist Church. Dr. Roy Fish was the interim pastor there, and I remember a sermon he preached titled “Rooms of the Heart” based on Revelation 3:20.

He captured my imagination, and I could see that my heart was filthy with sin. The bad news was that I could not clean it up, but the good news was that Jesus was knocking at the door. He would come in and clean up the sin if I would let him. I determined right then that I wanted Jesus in my life.

## **Where were you educated, and what degrees did you receive?**

I received my bachelor's degree from Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas. I received my masters of divinity from Truett Seminary in Waco, and I received my doctor of ministry from Beeson Divinity School (Samford University) in Birmingham, Alabama.

## **Ministry / Church**

### **Why do you feel called into ministry?**

If you are asking why God called me to ministry, I'm not sure I can answer that. Why does God call any of us for any specific task except that it somehow fits his divine purposes (which we may only understand in hindsight, if at all)?

If you are asking *how* God called me to ministry, I would say that he called me through a series of events. A Bible study while I was at youth camp may have sown an important seed. In that study we memorized part of the first chapter of Jeremiah — Jeremiah's call passage. This would become important to me later.

My initial thought that perhaps I could be a vocational minister actually grew out of a negative experience in church. I said to God, "Even I could do better than that." Later that night I felt as if God asked me, "Do you mean it?"

At that point I had to be honest about whether my earlier statement was

merely youthful bravado or a sincere expression of faith. I opted for the latter, and that was the first night I ever considered vocational ministry.

From that point, though, God opened a number of doors to leadership — in my youth group, with other youth and in my local church. At one point, prior to speaking before a group of (primarily) senior adults, I remember asking God what I could possibly say to them that they did not know already. After all, “I was just a youth.” It was at that moment that a verse from Jeremiah, memorized a few years prior, came to my mind: “‘Do not say that I am a youth, because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you,’ declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 1:7).

From that moment, I began to seriously consider vocational ministry as my long-term future. There were several other confirming moments in the years to come, but that has been the foundation of what I perceive to be my calling.

## **What is your favorite aspect of ministry? Why?**

There is so much I enjoy about ministry that the answer to this question might depend entirely on the day.

I enjoy preaching — both the study that goes into it and the act itself. I enjoy talking with people about faith and praying with people to accept Christ. I enjoy celebrating baptism.

I enjoy seeing the church deliver care and help and hope and love to those in need. I enjoy seeing people grow in their faith. I enjoy witnessing the church being strong and beautiful in the face of a broken world.

## **What one aspect of ministry gives you the greatest**

## joy?

The “greatest” joy is hard to say, but it gives me great joy to see faith awaken in the lives of broken people and families. To see joy come in the midst of hopelessness, and to see dignity arise in people who have been dehumanized by the powers of sin, this never ceases to amaze me.

## **How has your ministry or your perspective on ministry changed?**

Early on, I failed to appreciate how ministry touches whole persons and whole communities. My initial impulses were shaped by my earliest experiences that focused on a narrowly defined spiritual side of life — “being saved.”

So much of that emphasis focused on what we were saved *from*. As I have grown in faith and in the ministry, though, I see that the bulk of Scripture is about being saved *for*.

We have been saved for a purpose, and so much of ministry is about embracing those purposes and freeing people to be what God has called them to be, doing what God has called them to do.

We are saved to love our neighbors as ourselves, and, if we take that seriously, then love will lead us into the fullness of life: family, finances, justice, forgiveness, birth, death, graduations, retirement, promotions and prison.

Love reaches the whole person, and ministry must too. This is what discipleship means.

The forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus is the essential first step — but it is only a first step. All of life now stands open before us, and we are saved to walk in the newness of this life.

## **How do you expect ministry to change in the next 10 to 20 years?**

It is always difficult to see the future. Those who claim to be able to do so are nearly always wrong, so let me speak to the issues that seem most pressing at the moment.

I think American Christianity is going to have to grow up in regards to our appreciation for and association with American politics. The idolatry of nationalism and party loyalty is robbing the church of its true power and authority which comes only from Christ.

I hope that in the next decade or two, the church will come to a more humble appreciation of the power of Christ, recognizing that the kingdom of God is bigger than our own nation, bigger than our party politics and bigger than any special interest group (which is what we always become when we seek to stand among the earthly powers).

## **About Baptists**

### **What are the key issues facing Baptists—denominationally and/or congregationally?**

First, I think that Baptists struggle with a “brand” problem. Our years of infighting and the unkind actions of some who bear the name “Baptist” do not help us.

Second, the rise of the new Calvinism is and will continue to be divisive in Baptist life — not helping with the “brand” problem.

Third, racial diversity is a big deal. Within the whole family called “Baptist,” we are enormously diverse, but, as individual churches, we still struggle. We need to do better for the sake of unity in the name of Jesus.

# About Chad

## **Who were/are your mentors, and how did/do they influence you?**

My mentors/influencers are legion, but here are a few.

At Wayland Baptist, I was profoundly influenced by many of my professors: Rick Johnson, Paul Sadler, Fred Meeks and several others helped give me a foundation for theological education and ministry.

At Truett Seminary, I think of A. J. "Chip" Conyers, Ruth Ann Foster, Brad Creed and Raymond Bailey, and I appreciate their influence in me. Fisher Humphreys was my doctor of ministry supervisor, and he inspired me to careful thinking about aspects of life and ministry, while Calvin Miller reminded me of the poetry of life, faith and the soul.

Henry Mitchell and James Earl Massey taught me a lot about preaching, and some Texas and New Mexico pastors like Travis Hart, Tom Martin and Howie Batson taught me about pastoring.

I appreciate all of them, and I seem to appreciate them more as the years go by.

## **What did you learn on the job you wish you learned in seminary?**

If I thought about it long enough, this could fill a book!

I am extremely grateful both for Truett and Beeson in that they not only taught me what to learn but how to learn. That being said, recently I have been reminded of my lack of knowledge about buying and selling commercial property, working with city planning and zoning commissioners and city managers, interacting with a diverse business community and

navigating tax and insurance issues.

A few years ago, I was walking down a hallway toward the church nursery on a Wednesday night. Our nursery workers were caring for a number of Burmese infants and toddlers, and we were having some communication problems with the parents regarding what the parents needed to provide for their children when they dropped them off in the nursery.

I remember hearing one of the workers comment to another about a child who was without a particular piece of clothing, and the worker wondered aloud if this lack was a “cultural thing.” The other replied, “I don’t know. We should ask Pastor Chad. He knows these kinds of things.”

I immediately thought, “How? How do I know about the parenting practices of Burmese refugees?” Apparently, this was one of the things I missed in seminary.

It is something I know now.

## **Other than the Bible, name some of your favorite books or authors, and explain why.**

C. S. Lewis has been influential in my life, providing a thoughtful approach to Christianity and demonstrating that a person can and should take the intellectual life seriously in matters of faith. “Mere Christianity,” “The Chronicles of Narnia,” “The Weight of Glory,” “God in the Dock” — all have and continue to be influential in my life.

G. K. Chesterton’s “Orthodoxy” has provided a more romantic vision of the Christian life and adventure.

I have found N. T. Wright to be persuasive in his narrative approach to the New Testament. His lesser-known “Climax of the Covenant,” along with his magisterial five-volume series (if you count the book on Paul as the two

volumes — it is!) “Christian Origins and the Question of God,” provide a framework for unlocking an enormous depth in the Scriptures.

Paul Scott Wilson’s “The Four Pages of the Sermon” has helped to shape my own preaching style.

Alasdair MacIntyre has provided key components of my moral reasoning in “After Virtue” and “Whose Justice? Which Rationality?”

And Eugene Peterson has produced a number of soul-enriching books — obviously written from a pastor’s heart and with a keen attunement to the themes of Scripture.

## **Who is your favorite Bible character, other than Jesus? Why?**

I am impressed with the usual cast of characters: Moses, David and Peter. One of the lesser-known characters that I love, though, is Naaman the Syrian.

I see in him the struggle that so many of us face, particularly in ministry. We know we are broken and in need of healing, and we desire to do something great. We want to be part of something world-changing.

But healing came to Naaman, not because of great deeds, but in response to simple faithfulness. What a picture of life and ministry for us all! Being faithful in the little things matters most.