

Jimmie Scott: Impacting students' lives for Christ

March 14, 2018

Since 2015, Jimmie Scott has served as president of the [San Marcos Academy](#), a BGCT-affiliated coeducational Christian college preparatory school in San Marcos, Texas. 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 worked, and what were your positions?

- Principal, grades 7-12, Navarro public schools
- Principal, grades 9-12, Burnet High School
- Associate Academic Dean, Academic Dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Executive Vice President, San Marcos Baptist Academy

Where did you grow up?

Prairie Lea, Texas, through the eighth grade. San Marcos, Texas, grades 9-12.

How did you come to faith in Christ?

Primarily through the influence of my mother, brother and grandmother. I was baptized when nine years old but began to really understand grace much later in life.

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

- San Marcos High School, 1954
- Baylor University, 1954-55
- Southwest Texas State University, B. S. Ed. 1959, M.Ed. 1963

Ministry/Profession

Why do you feel called to your particular vocation?

From early childhood, I felt God's leadership in my life, and, as I look back, the path has resulted in a number of occupations such as ranching, farming, oil field work and Dun and Bradstreet as a financial reporter on businesses, but nothing seemed to satisfy my longing to work in school administration.

It was rather unusual that I became a principal for grades 7-12 without having teaching experience. This was obviously God-directed, and, after serving in two public schools for five years, I was asked to become the associate academic dean at San Marcos Baptist Academy.

Although I was very happy and satisfied in the public school arena, I knew, without a doubt, that God called me to a Christian ministry at the Academy, and I have never regretted it.

My experience at the Academy began in 1964, and, after 32 years, I retired as executive vice president but was later asked to serve on the board of trustees. That lasted about eight years, and I was then asked to serve as interim president. After about four months, I was asked to serve as president. That was two years ago.

Please tell us about your BGCT institution—the breadth and nature of its work, including its mission, measures of scope, etc.

Our mission statement is: “To educate young men and women within a nurturing community based on Christian values.” I prefer to say, “To impact the lives of our students for Christ” because, if we fail to do this, we have failed in the most important thing in the lives of our students.

As a Christian educational institution, academics should come second to spiritual development. In a boarding and day school program, there are obviously many essential factors to be considered, such as community, health and safety, hygiene, recreational activities and others, but our Christian influence is woven throughout all of the above.

Although our school is primarily college preparatory, we do offer the opportunity for students with a documented learning difference to enroll in our Learning Skills program because of our belief that all students do not learn in the same manner. With a variety of teaching methods and individual attention, we have discovered almost all students show improvement and begin to develop strong self-esteem and confidence.

What do you like best about leading your institution? Why?

The opportunity to ensure our primary purpose is Christ-centered.

What aspect(s) of your institution and/or its mission do you wish more people understood?

The fact that we are fully committed to the Christian mission, but we are also an educational institution preparing students for college and for life.

How has your institution and its mission changed since you began your career?

The mission has not changed. However, for general public relations, recruitment and development in our changing society, we have identified San Marcos Academy in our marketing efforts to avoid any confusion the word *Baptist* might create.

Our legal name remains San Marcos Baptist Academy, and we are proud of our Baptist heritage, but, in our changing world, we were experiencing some negative responses which affected our enrollment. Therefore, to continue to enroll young people and impact their lives for Christ, we felt it would not compromise our mission to do business as San Marcos Academy (SMA).

This is not a formal change; we are proud of our association with Texas Baptists and appreciate the support of our BGCT and the over 5,000 partner churches in Texas.

How do you expect your institution and/or its mission to change in the next 10 to 20 years?

I would guess there will be continuous attempts by those with more liberal beliefs to invade our mission and purpose, but I would never allow us to compromise our position as an institution which holds the Bible as our authority and Jesus Christ as our Savior.

There will, obviously, be some minor adjustments if the trend continues, but apostasy will not infringe on our convictions, and I believe we will always be sought after as a place dedicated to the education of young people in a Christian environment.

Name the three most significant challenges and/or influences facing your institution.

1. Recruitment of qualified students
2. Funding, especially the increase of endowment
3. Remaining current in technology and educational pedagogy

What one aspect of your job gives you the greatest joy or fulfillment?

A student receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

About Baptists

What are the key issues facing Baptists?

- Become more racially inclusive
- Strive to become less judgmental of the viewpoints of others
- Moderate the negative perception of who Baptists are and what we believe

What would you change about the Baptist denomination—state, nation or local?

Missions has always been the heart and soul of our denomination, but we are almost overwhelmed with sheer numbers of unbelievers, especially foreign. My sense is we should minister to those around us and rethink how we can minister abroad in an ever-changing and volatile world.

About Jimmie

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

My mother, brother and grandmother. No one person has had a more profound influence in my life than my mother. Her love for me and my love for her knew no bounds.

My older brother was my hero. I wanted to be exactly like him but never reached that height.

My grandmother on my mother's side taught me about the love of Jesus Christ and how to keep the Sabbath holy.

Paul Powel, one of my dearest friends and former pastor, was one of my beloved and respected mentors — a true friend who blessed me for over 50 years.

My high school principal, Mr. Yancy Yarbrough. I did my student teaching under his supervision and considered his career as a high school principal to be my goal. I have striven to emulate him throughout my administrative career but have failed to measure up to his.

Jack Byrom, my former pastor, boss and dearest friend. Jack Byrom and I worked together for 31 years at San Marcos Baptist Academy. He was the president and I was the vice president. He was a great man of faith and was a powerful influence in every aspect of my life.

Dr. Pat Norwood, one of my professors at Texas State University. He was primarily responsible for my employment as a principal in Navarro Public Schools and Burnet High School.

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

Oswald Chambers and C. S. Lewis are very challenging and inspiring. I

have read many Christ-centered books recently. It is difficult to pick out one or two that I consider my favorite. However, I have found the book titled "I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist" to be a favorite.

What is your favorite Bible verse or passage? Why?

John 14:1-6: I was reading those verses in my mother's Bible when my mother breathed her last breath and went to be with Jesus.

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

It's a tie between Paul and David — Paul because he brought the gospel to the Gentiles and David because his story shows God's forgiveness and love to a man who did not, by all indications, deserve it. Therefore, if God's forgiveness reached David, it can also reach me.

Name something about you that would surprise people who know you well.

My pride. Although I am working on it, I still struggle constantly with self. C. S. Lewis wrote, "Pride is perhaps the greatest of sins."

If you could get one "do over" in your career, what would it be, and why?

To have been abandoned to Christ at a much earlier age. I was more into works rather than grace, and my prayer life was less than it should have been.

Write and answer a question you wish we had asked.

How are our seminaries responding to the cultural influences in our society?

I have no answer, but I assume they are struggling with this matter as are most other denominational schools.