

Mike Wilson: Hooked on camp ministry

December 11, 2018

Mike Wilson has been the executive director of [Latham Springs Camp and Retreat Center](#) since 2013. From deep in the heart of one Texan, he shares his background and thoughts on camp 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?

- Alto Frio Baptist Encampment, administrator
- Circle 6 Baptist Camp, assistant manager
- Cranes Mill Baptist Church, youth minister

Where did you grow up?

I was a military kid. I've been all over, but for the most part in Austin.

How did you come to faith in Christ?

I was saved during Vacation Bible School in 1963, when my dad was stationed at Andrews Air Force Base.

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

I received my undergraduate degree at Southwest Texas State University. I

left my master's degree studies to go into full-time camping ministry.

Ministry life

Why do you feel called into camp ministry?

I've always been an outdoors kind of person. Match that with my love for kids along with the path the Lord has led me down over the years, and the call is/was quite clear.

What is your favorite aspect of camp ministry? Why?

The relationships you build with lots of different folks, especially with those leaders we see year after year.

What one aspect of camp ministry gives you the greatest joy?

When I see how many lives are touched by this ministry: 743 saved just at Latham Springs this summer—those are just the ones that we know of.

What one aspect of camp ministry would you like to change?

Would really love to see churches more involved in their associational camps.

How has your ministry or your perspective on ministry changed?

I don't know that it really has. I still think it is the most effective tool that we have for reaching kids for Christ.

How do you expect camp ministry to change in the next 10 years?

Hard to say. There is a lot of competition for our kids' time, it seems like. Our summer season seems to get shorter and shorter as school calendars change. We will need to be able to adapt accordingly.

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

As mentioned above, school calendars cutting summer short, competition with all kinds of secular activities for our kids' time, and meeting the ministry needs of the whole church, not just the children and youth.

What do you wish more people knew about camp ministry?

The real impact that this ministry can have on kingdom growth.

About Mike

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

Probably the biggest was Kenneth King, former director of missions and pastor who is now deceased. He got me "hooked" on camp ministry and was a true Christlike example.

What is the impact of camp ministry on your family?

My wife, Janet, serves alongside me. All three of my kids have worked at camp. Three of my grandkids have worked at camp—so far. Three of my grandkids have been saved at camp. During Hurricane Harvey, we housed more than 380 evacuees for more than a month. My kids and grandkids

pitched in to help. So, camping ministry has been a major component in our family for a long time.

What is your favorite Bible verse or passage? Why?

Romans 8:28—Even when things don't go the way I think they should, God always makes something good come out of it. He has proven this time after time.