

# **Nelda Williams: Dedicated to discipling children**

August 6, 2019

Nelda Williams is a retired preschool and children's minister and consultant to the Baptist General Convention of Texas for preschool, children's and special education ministry. From deep in the heart of one Texan, she shares some of her background and thoughts on ministering to children, keeping it short, sweet and to the point.

To suggest a Baptist General Convention of Texas-affiliated minister to be featured in this column, or to apply to be featured yourself, [click here](#).

## **Background**

### **Where did you serve and in what positions?**

- First Baptist Church in Midland as preschool and children's minister
- Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston as children's minister
- Baptist General Convention of Texas as a consultant in preschool and children's ministry and special education. I served twice in this position, first from 1961 to 1968, and then 1981 to 2001.

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

Dallas

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

I was 12 years old and had been thinking about accepting Christ. My cousin went to summer camp and made her profession of faith there. She asked me if I wanted to make my profession of faith when she presented herself

to the church, and I did.

## **Where were you educated?**

Hardin-Simmons University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Religious Education

## **About ministry**

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

Seeing older children make their profession of faith in Christ.

### **What aspect of ministry would you like to change?**

That more pastors would see the need for an excellent children's ministry.

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

How important it is to have teachers who understand children and their need for a good foundation in what the Bible teaches.

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

I'm not sure. Right now, curriculum is more entertainment than quality Bible study for children, but I hope in the future, we once again can offer quality Bible study for children.

### **Name three most significant challenges or influences facing children's ministry.**

Having excellent curriculum, enlisting teachers for long-term service, and

parents who see the need to have their children regularly attend Sunday school.

## **About Nelda**

### **Who were your mentors and how did they influence your life?**

- Bill Bumpas. He had faith in me and was a servant leader.
- Kenneth Chafin. I liked his approach to children and conversion, and he was an encourager.
- Elsie Rives. She understood children and how they learn.

### **What is your favorite Bible verse and why?**

James 1:5—“If any of you lacks wisdom let him ask God who gives to all men generously.”

### **Other than the Bible, who are some of your favorite authors?**

- William Barclay—Daily Study Bible New Testament Commentaries
- C.S. Lewis—*Mere Christianity*
- Philip Yancey—*What’s So Amazing About Grace*
- David Elkind—*The Hurried Child*

### **Other than Jesus, who is your favorite person in the Bible?**

Esther. She was willing to take a chance in order to save her people.

### **What is something about you that would surprise**

## **people who know you?**

I enjoy fishing and bird watching.

**Nelda Williams has been an inspiration and mentor to countless people. Julie Hammer, the children's minister at First Baptist Church of Lewisville, shared the significance of Williams' mentoring.**

Nelda has been a mentor from my earliest days in ministry. Initially, her encouragement came in the form of handwritten notes letting me know she'd prayed for me. Then, Nelda asked if I would serve on a think tank for a preschool and children's minister retreat in Salado.

Just being in the same room with Nelda and other colleagues who I admired was an amazing, encouraging experience. As I listened to Nelda and these wonderful leaders of children, I learned a lot about ministry to children and serving the local church.

I continued to be mentored by Nelda as we spent time leading conferences for the Baptist General Convention of Texas across the state, serving on special projects and writing children's Bible study curriculum for BaptistWay Press.

The pattern of Nelda's life, ministry and love for the Lord and children still encourage and inspire me to this day.

I thank the Lord for the gift of Nelda and her friendship.