

1.01 Church Profile

Overview

Northwest is one of the leading Bible churches in Dallas. The church has a national reputation due to its teaching, ministry, and ties to Dallas Theological Seminary; it has an international reputation stemming from its large and active missions program.

During the 1990's, the church enjoyed solid growth, culminating in the construction of a new worship center, education and office complex in 1998. Northwest has a strong men's and women's ministry. Particularly strong are the church's singles ministry, children education, youth program and missions.

History of the Church

Founding to 1965: The church was founded in 1951 as Northwest Presbyterian Church (unaffiliated) with Dr. S. Louis Johnson as Pastor. Shortly thereafter, land was purchased where the church is currently located and the Chapel was constructed. The church had several pastors in this period and maximum attendance was 150-175.

1966-1975: Lou Schneider became Pastor and saw the first period of great growth. In this period, the church changed its name to Northwest Bible Church, adopted its current Constitution and Doctrinal Statement. Multiple worship services began in 1972. A gym (now Jr. High center) and Christian Education building were built in 1972. Attendance climbed to 750 per Sunday. The church was benefiting from growth in the Dallas area, an ideal location at the intersection of two major roads, and stability under a relationally oriented pastor.

1975-1987: Jim Rose became the Senior Pastor and the church continued to grow. He was noted as an outstanding preacher and Northwest became known as a leading church in this regard. Drama was added to the worship services. Average Sunday attendance was 1,500 adults; there were three morning services and a small evening service to meet the demand. Ministers were added to Christian Education, Jr. High, Sr. High, Singles, Men's Ministry, Missions and Women's Ministry.

1988-1992: These were transitional years. Following the departure of Pastor Rose there was a year and a half search period. Dr. Bill Lawrence served as interim pastor through this period. Dr. Rick Yohn was named Senior Pastor and served in that role for 18 months. Throughout this time, attendance at Northwest remained stable at about 1,500. The church was blessed with outstanding regular preachers and well-known visiting preachers. In addition there was great stability in staff and Elders, new ministries were begun, and a 50,000 sq. ft. Christian Life Center was completed.

1992-1998: Dr. Howard Clark became the Senior Pastor and growth continued. 3,000 households were regularly attending Northwest and 2,400 adults were worshipping on Sunday. The singles ministry took on a greater focus, with a Sunday morning Singles Class that quickly drew over 700. A Sunday evening contemporary service was also started which attracted over 800. In 1998, a new worship center was completed which seats 1,300. Dr. Bill Lawrence served as interim pastor from 1998-2001.

2001-present: In March 2001, Neil Tomba was installed as the Senior Pastor. Over the last 25 years, Northwest has been greatly blessed by a number of factors. It is in an ideal location in the growing city of Dallas. Most importantly there has been a heritage of great teaching and an emphasis on equipping the congregation to minister. With the opportunity to minister to more people created by our new worship center, the leadership of Northwest believes the church is poised for another period of growth to minister more effectively to the congregation, the community and the world.

The Congregation

The congregation is well educated, with 75% having a college degree. There are many business professionals in the church. The congregation is 45% married couples, 38% singles and 17% youth. This reflects the high number of singles in Dallas. Northwest does not represent the ethnic diversity of Dallas.

The church membership has been exposed to outstanding teaching through Dallas Seminary, various para-church organizations and other pastors. The congregation is united doctrinally. The church has experienced none of the debates over doctrinal issues that have created tensions in other congregations.

About half of the congregation comes from the five contiguous zip codes surrounding the church. This figure is unchanged since the early 1980's.

Membership Covenant

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; we do now, in the presence of God, most solemnly and joyfully enter into a covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We purpose, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also purpose to maintain personal devotions; to spiritually educate our children; to seek the salvation of our families and acquaintances; to walk uprightly in the world; to be just in our dealings, to avoid all backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from every appearance of evil; to submit to the spiritual discipline of the Elders as outlined by Christ in Matthew 18:15-20; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further commit to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in grace and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the instruction of our Savior to seek it without delay.

When we move from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant, and the principles of God's Word in fellowship with others who follow our Lord Jesus Christ.

Current Worship Services

There are two Sunday morning worship services. The first is more traditional and the second service, called Impact, is contemporary. The emphasis in these services is sincere worship with strong Bible teaching—Northwest has been known for excellence in this area.

Sunday School and Ministry Programs

Children's and Youth Programs: Sunday Schools have been a major strength of Northwest over the years. Children's programs start with nursery and go through High School. The church is blessed with a large and gifted ministerial staff and dedicated lay people. The current sizes of the programs are:

- K-3rd Grade—100-125 children in Sunday School, then Children's Church.
- 4th-6th Grade—75-100 children in Club 456 then, Sunday School.
- Junior High—60-100 youth at the 9:25 hour in a room dedicated to Junior High ministry.
- High School—60-120 youth at the 10:55 hour in a newly redesigned and "state of the art" High School facility.
- There is also Mother's Day Out, Preschool Learning Center, FW Friends and other programs.

Adult Sunday Schools – There are currently over 15 different adult Sunday Schools targeting various members of the body. The church is blessed with very gifted teachers for these classes (Seminary faculty, para-church leaders and experienced lay people). They range in size from 10-200 people. Some examples:

- Berean Class – lecture series on topics and books of the Bible – 80-100 people.
- Foundations Class – young couples – 90-110 people.
- Salt and Light – emphasis on knowing and praying for church missionaries – 30 people.
- Other classes include Agape, Ambassador, Barnabas, Builders, Grace, Hesed, Sojourners, and other small group classes.

Men's and Women's Ministries

Northwest has had very active men's and women's ministries with staff positions focused on each of these areas. Women's ministry meets on Tuesday morning and evening and offers a small group discussion time, followed by a bible lecture. Typically there are 70-110 women in attendance.

Men's Ministry also offers small group Bible studies on Wednesday night, as well as several elective studies. Both women's and men's groups offer additional programs such as retreats, mission trips, service projects and outreach dinners.

Worship and Music Ministries

Northwest has a wide ranging worship ministry which encompasses groups of all ages, size and worship styles:

- Adult Choir—50 members.
- Children's Choirs—three different children's groups organized by age group ranging from preschool to 6th grade.

- Hand Bell Choir—20 members.
- High School contemporary band.
- JAM band—4th-6th grade worship band.
- Impact Worship Team—10 members.

Specialty Ministries

Northwest offers a variety of ministries targeted at specific needs and life stages. These include:

- Marriage Equipping.
- Marriage Enriching.
- MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers).
- Someone Cares (abortion recovery).
- Uplifters (Women with breast cancer).
- Three Score or More (support fellowship for senior citizens).
- Dallas Life Ministries (unwed mothers).
- Stephen Ministries.
- Hospital visitation training.
- Men's Fraternity (men seeking to grow into authentic biblical manhood).
- Encuentro (a ministry to Hispanics in east Dallas).
- Evangelism Training.
- West Dallas children's tutoring and mentoring program.
- Crown Ministries – biblical principles of financial stewardship.

There is also a home church program designed to foster a more intimate and accountable environment for the purpose of worshipping God, examining scripture, enjoying fellowship and evangelism.

Northwest's Library has over 14,000 items that can be borrowed for bible study and other Christian education and edifying entertainment. In addition to books, the library offers videos, audiocassettes, and CD's.

Missions

Without question one of the areas of focus and strength for Northwest Bible Church is missions. Two major areas:

- Foreign Missions—Northwest supports 50 families serving cross-culturally with a long-term commitment in countries across the world. In addition, each year over 100 people from the church go out as short-term missionaries in areas such as Central Asia, Russia and Spain.
- Local Missions—includes outreach programs with local churches in the area. There are also church-wide community outreach programs such as Fall Fun Festival, Project Bethlehem (Christmas) and Angel Tree.

Church Governance, Staffing and Budget

Northwest's governing document is its constitution, which outlines requirements for membership, serving as Elders and the role of the pastor. Northwest is an Elder-led church and the role of the pastor outlined in the constitution is primarily feeding the congregation through expounding the Word of God and prayer. The current active Elder Board is made up of six Elders. The Senior Pastor is also an Elder and serves alongside the other Elders. Elders are ordained for life, so there are more than 20 inactive Elders in the congregation.

The church has 22 ministers and directors, 34 support staff, 30 facility workers and 20 Mother's Day Out/Learning Center teachers and aides and other employees in full time support roles. The church's operating budget is \$3.5 million.

1.02 Forty Years of God's Faithfulness Celebration—A Historical Remembrance

The following is a chronology of events covering the first forty years of Northwest's history. It was written in August 1990 by the History Committee, in the hope to partially explain how our Lord created and maintained this, His church. The History Committee consisted of: Harold & Jeanette Prinz (Chairman), Ted & Nita Lincoln, Dick & Truby Metcalf, Aurie Milam, Odom & Mary Ann Sherman, Nina Bell White, and David Vandivort.

Just after World War II—maybe 1945—the Lord sent a new pastor (Tom Pufflin) to the Presbyterian Church where many of us were members. His faithful, conservative teaching and preaching of God's Word made us aware of the liberal, and in some cases unscriptural teaching that our children and we were receiving. When the church Elder board was unresponsive to our concerns (about 1949) we requested, through our pastor, a meeting with the Presbyterian hierarchy.

We had no intention of causing a church split, and a new church was not in our thinking. The resulting meeting, however was so negative and disagreeable that we (approximately 50 people) had no alternative but to band together to begin organizing a new church. To this end, Dr. Elwood Evans at Dallas Theological Seminary was invaluable in advising us.

In the period prior to January 1951, we met together in homes, and felt the Lord's leading to begin a new church with no denominational ties—a church with a Presbyterian "flavor" and form of government where we could worship, study God's Word, and work together for the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ here and around the world.

During the following forty-year period, God has remained faithful. Although we have experienced difficulty and made mistakes, the Lord continued to bless us. This faithfulness of God has produced a reaction in us that we have continued to love and respect God's Word, we have been willing to serve Him, and we have enjoyed fellowshiping with our Lord in prayer. These are the things that have characterized this church almost from the beginning.

It is also interesting that there are 32 forty-year members that are still serving the Lord actively in various capacities at Northwest.

The first official meeting of the Independent Presbyterian Church was on January 18, 1951, in the Greenhill School, located in the temporary building at the corner of Walnut Hill and

Hillcrest, Dallas. The first meeting of the Board of Deacons was on February 22, 1951. The Elders had been meeting regularly for some time.

In May, 1951, Dr. S. Lewis Johnson Jr. (a Dallas Theological Seminary graduate) was hired as part-time temporary pastor. In June 1951, the first Vacation Bible School was held for two weeks at Bachmans Lake Camp.

Dr. and Mrs. Marion B. McKinney became our first missionaries in September 1951. They served with Hospital Evangelico in Honduras, Central America.

In November, 1951 we applied for a corporate charter from the state of Texas attorney C. Douglas Forde.

In December, 1951, Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. was ordained as a minister at the Calvary Presbyterian Church, Independent in Charlotte, North Carolina and later the same month installed as our first pastor.

In February, 1952, Mrs. Marion Heiberg gave the residence at 4427 Caruth, Dallas, to be used as a manse. We assumed the monthly mortgage payments of \$65.11. In March, 1952, the church moved from the Greenhill School on Walnut Hill and Hillcrest to the University Park Grade School on Lovers Lane and Dickens Avenue. The average attendance at that time in the Sunday Morning Worship Service was 185; the attendance in the Sunday Night and Wednesday services was 100.

In September, 1953, we purchased a four acre tract of land fronting on Northwest Highway, beginning two hundred feet from Douglas and adjacent to the Cotton Belt Railroad (later the Toll way) for \$25,000.

In February, 1954, Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, three of the six elders and three of the eight deacons resigned their responsibilities and membership. This group of the first church split and started Grace Bible Church. Howard Hendricks filled the pulpit for the first time. In September 1954, Howard Hendricks began a Wednesday night series on "How to Study Your Bible."

Robert L. Ferguson, who was raised in Scofield Memorial Church and a recent Dallas Theological Seminary graduate, was installed as pastor in October, 1954. That month we also began receiving contributions for our first buildings.

In April, 1955 was the first church leadership training and fellowship weekend, held at Camp El Har.

The church changed its name from Independent Presbyterian Church to Northwest Presbyterian Church (unaffiliated) in May, 1955.

In November, 1955, the first building (Chapel and Sunday School rooms) was dedicated; the dedication address was spoken by Howard Hendricks. The total cost of the land and building was \$105,000, the mortgage being \$60,000. At the time of the dedication, the pastor was Robert L. Ferguson. The Elders were C. E. Cockerall, Jr., John W. Beatty, C. M. Hudgins, H. E. Prinz, and William H. Seay. The Deacons were Harvey Bush, George Boedecker, R. L. Bleakley, C. D. Forde, Homer Hall, J. Arch Houghston, R. D. White, J. Merwin Seay, and D. H. Vandivort. The missionaries were Dr. and Mrs. Marion McKinney—Hospital Evangelico, Honduras, Central America; George Winston—La Mission Evangelique Belge, Brussels; Bradford Lapsley—Sudan Interior Missions, Addis

Ababa, Ethiopia; Walden Howard—Young Life, Dallas; J. C. Potts, Jr.—Young Life, Tacoma, Washington; Jack McComb—InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Texas.

The first wedding in our church was the marriage of Max Josey and Beryl White (daughter of Nina Bell White) in January 1956. Robert Ferguson conducted the service.

In August, 1956, the choir started practicing in order to participate in the morning worship service in September. There were twenty-seven choir members. The director was C. Frank Seay, Jr., and the organist was Hazel Seay—the director's mother. Between that date and August 1973, we had four directors: Carl Hoke, Gary Marsh, Don Wyrzten, and Richard Focht. From August 1973 until now, Sue Farrar has directed the Music program.

In May, 1957 was the fourth annual weekend retreat at Camp El Har. Total cost, food and lodging was \$5.25 per adult. Also, the first church paper, called the Northwest Nugget, was mailed to members.

Robert L. Ferguson resigned as pastor to become a minister in the Presbyterian denomination in August, 1957. In November, 1957, the congregation rejected an effort by some of the members to make this church a part of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. Howard Hendricks was filling the pulpit each Sunday and Wednesday.

Dr. Donald K. Campbell filled the pulpit for the first time in January, 1958. He accepted the title of "Stated Pulpit Supply" in April, 1958. Dr. Campbell preached the Sunday morning and evening services and taught the Wednesday night prayer meetings. Wednesday night suppers, which began in early 1956, continued to be a strong fellowship.

In July, 1959, Dr. John Hess McComb (Honorary Doctorate from Dallas Theological Seminary) was called and accepted the pastorate. Dr. McComb had been a successful New York minister and an author. He preached his first sermon at Northwest in October, 1959.

In April, 1962, the special nightly Holy Week services were preached by Dr. Carl Armerding—he returned again in 1963 and 1964; the church was filled every night Monday through Sunday.

The church purchased the land and residence at the corner of Northwest Highway and Douglas in December, 1962, for \$95,000. The residence was used for Sunday School space until it was demolished in 1972 to make room for the new gymnasium and offices.

In August, 1963, High School students took the first church-sponsored mission trip—they went by bus to Mexico City.

Dr. John H. McComb resigned as pastor in January, 1965. A church split resulted as Dr. McComb and many church members started a new Independent Presbyterian Church. Dr. Donald K. Campbell began a second term as Interim Pastor.

In April, 1966, Louis K. Schneider (a Dallas Theological Seminary graduate who was at that time Youth Director at Phoenix Bible Church) became pastor. Dr. Carl Armerding was scheduled to preach Easter Sunday, but had a mild heart attack on Saturday night. So, Louis Schneider began his ministry unexpectedly.

The first missionary conference was held in February 1967 and the church adopted the Faith Promise plan as a method of missionary support.

In May 1967, we sold part of our property along the Northwest Highway and along the Cotton Belt Railroad to the Texas Turnpike Authority for enough money to liquidate all our outstanding financial obligations—so we were debt free.

The church adopted a new name, Northwest Bible Church, a new doctrinal statement, and a new book of Church Order. The committee responsible for that report to the congregation was Odom Sherman, Chairman, Dr. John Binion, Dr. Donald K. Campbell, Ted Lincoln, and Dick Wakefield.

In June 1972 we dedicated the remodeled Chapel and classroom building and the construction of the small gym and office and the Christian Education Building.

In May 1973, Dennis Eenigenburg became our third full time staff member (Youth Ministries). Pastor Louis Schneider and Christian Education Director, Frank R. Beaty were the other two. Part-time staff included: Jan Marshall (Children), Mark Hopper (College), and Richard Focht (Music).

In February, 1975, Louis K. Schneider resigned as pastor to pursue a doctrinal degree. Total average Sunday School attendance during his ministry is as follows:

1966—150	1971—325
1967—175	1972—425
1968—225	1973—500
1969—225	1974—650
1970—260	

In August, 1975, James O. Rose began his ministry as pastor—he was a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and when we called him he was pastor of the Community Church in Clearwater, Florida. During Jim Rose's tenure many new ministries began, including planting three churches, senior citizen ministry (Three Score or More), Single and Single Again, Tape Ministry and an increased Mission Ministry, among others.

In March, 1979, the Board of Deacons was eliminated. Men to fill Deacon functions are now appointed by the Board of Elders.

The Auditorium Building to seat one thousand people was completed and dedicated.

In July, 1985, the church changed the way Elders serve. Elders had been elected for three years with a required one-year between terms. Now Elders are elected for a one-year term with no limit on successive terms. Elders are also elected as Ministry Elders and Administrative Elders.

In August, 1985, the church purchased the property and residence to the north, from Douglas to the Toll road.

In August, 1987, James O. Rose resigned as pastor to accept another pastorate. Bill Lawrence (Dallas Theological Seminary staff member) became Interim Pastor. The Christian Life Building was completed.

Rick Yohn accepted the pastorate of our church in February, 1989. He was a Dallas Theological Seminary graduate and was a pastor of a California church when he was called.