

# CHRISTIAN WORKER

“We are workers together with Him...” (2 Corinthians 6:1)

VOLUME 112, NUMBER 2

## “CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD” (Ps. 51:10)

John Baker

God offers hope and forgiveness to sinners. Psalm 51 is David’s psalm of brokenness, contrition, and sorrow because of his sins concerning Bathsheba and her husband. David could not undo what had been done, but he could find a way forward because of the grace and forgiveness of God. In Psalm 51:10 David pleads, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” Psalm 51 shows us how to seek forgiveness from God.

**We Must Face Something.** For a while, David attempted to cover up his sin (2 Sam. 11:26-27), but God sent Nathan to confront him (2 Sam. 12:1-7). In Psalm 51, David faces the gravity of what he has done. He refers to his actions as, “transgressions” (Ps. 51:1), “iniquities,” (Ps. 51:2), and “sin” (Ps. 51:2). What David had done violated God’s commandments, destroyed lives, and stirred the wrath of the God who had blessed David with so much. Seeking forgiveness requires us to honestly and painfully face what we have done (Prov. 30:12, 20; Lam. 3:40; Ps. 51:17).

**We Must Want Something.** Psalm 51 is filled with the desperate pleas of a man who wants what only God can provide. David asks for “mercy,” for he had broken God’s Law (v.1). He asks for “washing” and “cleansing” because he had become stained with sin (v.2, 7, 10). He asks for the “blotting out” of the sins on his record, for he knows that God sees and remembers all (v.1, 9; Heb. 4:13; Rev. 20:12). He pleads with God to hide His face from his sin (v.9), to renew a right spirit (v.10), to restore the joy of salvation (v.12), and to deliver him from guilt (v.14). Additionally, David begs God not to cast him away from

his presence or to remove the blessing of His Spirit (v.11; cf. 1 Sam. 16:13-14). Nobody ever received forgiveness from God without wanting it!

**We Must Confess Something.** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). The word “confess” literally means, “to say the same thing.” When we confess sin to God, we are saying the same thing that God already

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## FEBRUARY 2026

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# FROM THE EDITOR:

## “WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH YOU, YOU SONS OF ZERUIAH?” (2 SAM. 16:10)

Ross Haffner

Christians would agree that we should show mercy when we have been wronged (Eph. 4:32, Matt. 5:7). But could we stop ourselves even at our lowest point? In an age of instant online backlash and cancel culture, restraining a sharp reply feels nearly impossible. Yet the Scriptures provide great relevant examples to help. Part of David's punishment for his sins with Bathsheba and against Uriah the Hittite comes to the forefront through the king's son Absalom (2 Sam. 12:10-12). When Absalom successfully turned the heart of the people of Israel against David and towards himself, David was forced to flee Jerusalem (2 Sam. 15:6, 16-37). On the way, Shimei, of the house of Saul, took the opportunity to kick David while he was down (2 Sam. 16:5-14).

Shimei cursed David and threw stones at the king and his servants. Some of David's mighty men, great warriors, were with him but he chose to move on instead of responding to Shimei with an attack (2 Sam. 16:6, 11-12; 23:8-39; 1 Chron. 11:10-47). Abishai, David's nephew and a commander in the army, is the one who spoke up, wishing to end Shimei's curses (2 Sam. 18:2). David exclaimed, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah," dismissing Abishai's (and potentially Joab's) vengeful impulse to kill Shimei. Notice immediately after, that David hoped for the blessings of God for himself instead of punishment for Shimei as recompense for his evil. He embodied Proverbs 19:11 which says, "The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, And his glory is to overlook a transgression."

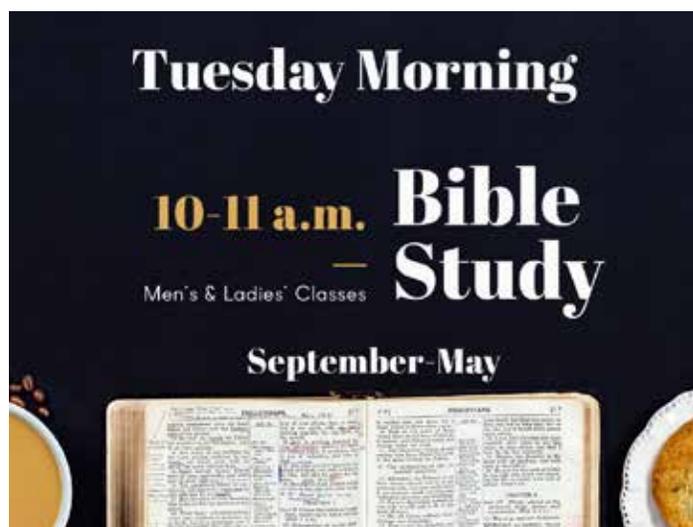
Patently waiting for God's blessings amidst trouble is a consistent theme during the darkest days of David's rule and this applies to daily Christian living (Jas. 1:2-4; Rom. 5:3-5). David's self-control and patience remind us to control our emotions and move forward with godly behavior no matter the trial. He provides a good reminder to us that we do not have to lash out at our

enemies. We can choose to allow God to have the final say in the judgment.

Ultimately, David's example finds its perfect fulfillment in Christ, the greater Son of David. When reviled, Jesus did not retaliate; when cursed, He blessed; when struck, He turned the other cheek (1 Pet. 2:23; Matt. 5:39). Shimei's stones and words pale in comparison to the mockery, beating, and crucifixion Jesus endured, yet He committed Himself to Him who judges justly. As followers of this merciful King, we are called not merely to imitate David's restraint but to draw strength from Christ's example to respond with grace in our lowest moments. By doing so, we reflect the transformative power of the gospel, turning potential bitterness into opportunities for growth.

David inspires us to trust God more deeply, leave revenge in His court, and look beyond our self-interest. He was far from perfect, but he was the best king Israel ever had until his Descendant took the throne eternally (Matt. 1:6; 28:18). David's consistent love for God through all he faced is worthy of emulation.

CW



## “THE LORD LOOKS AT THE HEART” (1 SAM. 16:7)

Joey Davis

When God rejected Saul as king, Samuel was sent to the house of Jesse to identify and anoint his replacement. God worked through Samuel to identify David, but God's method of choosing differed from Samuel's expectations. When Eliab, Jesse's eldest, appeared, Samuel anticipated a quick decision: "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him!" (1 Sam. 16:6). Samuel quickly learned that more was involved: "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

Jesse had eight sons (1 Sam. 17:12), yet he brought only seven before Samuel. One by one, the verdict was "the Lord had not chosen this one" (1 Sam. 16:8-10). Samuel rightly suspected that someone was missing. He asked, "Are all the young men here?" (1 Sam. 16:11). David was then brought in from his shepherd duties. His outward appearance was no disappointment (1 Sam. 16:12), but Samuel had learned that he was incapable of making the assessment that God alone could make. Finally, God told Samuel, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!" (1 Sam. 16:12). David possessed the kind of heart for which God was looking.

What does it mean to have such a heart? After Saul's disobedience, Samuel announced, "The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14). In Acts 13:22, Paul explains that David was chosen because he would "do all of" God's Will. Thus, a fundamental quality of a God-pleasing heart is a desire to obey God. This principle is not limited to kings. In 1 Samuel 12:24, during Saul's confirmation, Samuel admonished all of Israel, "Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart." Even for Christians, the heart is central to our obedience: we have "obeyed from the heart" (Rom. 6:17), we worship in song from the heart (Eph. 5:19), and we give as we purpose in our heart (2 Cor. 9:7).

Can we discern what God expects to find when He looks at our hearts? Near the end of his reign, David counseled Solomon, "Know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you

forsake Him, He will cast you off forever" (1 Chron. 28:9). Three qualities stand out. First, a loyal heart—undivided allegiance to God. Second, a willing mind—service that is not reluctantly offered. Third, honest intent—a sincere desire to please God rather than to act for show.

Before mere men, loyalty, willingness, and intent can be disguised. Before God, they cannot. His Word "is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). As we stand before Him, God does not only assess what we have done—He examines the heart behind the action. It is important to point out that what God approved of in David was a heart faithful in direction, though not always to perfection (Ps. 51). May we live so that His examination of our hearts renders the same verdict stated concerning David: This is the one.

CW

## “THE LORD FORBID” (1 SAM. 26:11)

Daniel McMillin

The young shepherd boy who slayed a giant and fought the Philistines now has a target on his head. The king who once loved the boy from Bethlehem became jealous of the rising star and ordered his execution. Throughout Saul's pursuits, David not only evaded Saul but also had the opportunity to kill the king and take the target off his back. Yet David takes a route that is quite unexpected. In 1 Samuel 24, David and his mighty men come upon Saul and saw this as God's way of handing over David's enemy. David cuts the corner of Saul's robe while he is distracted but feels bad about this and withholds his men from slaying Saul. Rather than confronting Saul in battle, David engages with Saul in conversation where he demonstrates his mercy and allows the vengeance of the Lord to reign. In 1 Samuel 26, Saul hunts down David with three thousand men in the wilderness of Ziph. David and Abishai scout the camp where Saul and his troops resided. Abishai eagerly volunteers to thrust a spear through Saul but David holds him back and responds, "As the Lord lives, the Lord will certainly strike him down: either his day will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish" (1 Sam. 26:10).

Even though David had the opportunity to kill Saul, David surprisingly spares the king. Why? David's reasoning on both occasions for why he refused

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## Third Quarter Class Schedule/Jan 2026-April 2026

# Southwest School of Bible Studies



Chapel @ 8:30 AM / Lunch @ 11:50-1:00

Time	First Year	Time	Second Year
<b>Monday</b>			
9:00-10:20	Expository Preaching-Steven Lloyd	9:00-10:20	Greek 4 - Trent Kennedy
10:00-11:50	Christian Doctrine-Trent Kennedy	10:30-11:50	Minor Prophets 1-Clay Bond
1:00-2:20	Joshua-Matt Gibson	1:00-2:20	Daniel-Trent Kennedy
2:30-3:50	1, 2 Samuel - Clay Bond	2:30-3:50	2 Corinthians - Matt Gibson
<b>Tuesday</b>			
9:00-11:50	Acts 1-Carl McCann	9:00-11:50	Preaching Practicum-Clay Bond
1:00-3:50	John - Steven Lloyd	1:00-3:50	Phil, Col, Phile-Carl McCann
<b>Wednesday</b>			
9:00-10:20	Expository Preaching-Steven Lloyd	9:00-10:20	Greek 4 - Trent Kennedy
10:30-11:50	Christian Doctrine-Trent Kennedy	10:30-11:50	Minor Prophets 1-Clay Bond
1:00-2:20	Joshua - Matt Gibson	1:00-2:20	Daniel-Trent Kennedy
2:30-3:50	1, 2 Samuel - Clay Bond	2:30-3:50	2 Corinthians - Matt Gibson
<b>Thursday</b>			
9:00-11:50	Geo/Arch-Matt Gibson	9:00-11:50	Teaching Methods - Trent Kennedy
1:00-3:50	Judges/Ruth-Jim Word	1:00-3:50	Ezekiel - Steven Lloyd
<b>Friday</b>			
9:00-11:50	Adv. New Testament - Trent Kennedy	9:00-11:50	Biblical Counseling-Steven Lloyd
1:00-3:50	GSP	1:00-3:50	GSP

See Academic Calendar for Special Events

to kill Saul was because he is “the Lord’s anointed” (1 Sam. 24:6, 10; 26:9, 11, 16, 23). With the Lord as his witness, he says, “I will never lift my hand against the Lord’s anointed” (1 Sam. 26:11). The royal status appointed by God prohibits David from taking Saul’s life. In David’s view, the Lord chose Saul to be His anointed one (1 Sam. 10) and He would decide when Saul is no longer worthy of this honor (1 Sam. 31). David respected God’s anointed since God had designated Saul as the king and would later respect God’s decision to anoint him as the second king of Israel (1 Sam. 16:12-13; 2 Sam. 2:4; 5:3). David was preserving the dignity of the throne, regardless of Saul’s actions that reflected the contrary (1 Sam. 13-15). If David were to take Saul’s life it would set a bad precedent for Israel’s kingship that may promote violence for those who seek the crown. This shows that David did not pursue the throne through political assassination but awaited his kingship by patiently submitting to the Lord and waiting on God’s timing. If David were going to become the king of Israel one day, he would do it the right way.

Even though it was in David’s best interests to kill Saul he resisted the easiest path to kingship through patience. In these moments, David sets the tone for his leadership by displaying an example of mercy. Rather than slaying his enemy when he had the opportunity, he spared his life. Finally, David spared Saul’s life because he recognized that vengeance belongs to the Lord (Deut. 32:35). David could have easily killed Saul for revenge, but he showed mercy because he valued Saul’s life and understood it is God’s place to give and take life since the Lord chooses to deliver us from or to our enemies (1 Sam. 24:12-15; 26:23-24). In sum, killing Saul would foil David’s claim to kingship, promote assassination, and ruin the will of God and His power. But David’s example illustrates that vengeance belongs to the Lord, and we dare not act against God’s anointed.

CW

## THE BATTLE IS THE LORD’S (1 SAMUEL 17:47)

Alex Simmons

**I**t was a young shepherd boy who proclaimed the words, “the battle is the Lord’s” as he stood face to face with a giant (1 Sam. 17:47). In a valley full of fear, crowded

with concern, and packed with panic, those five words were just what the nation of Israel needed. Certainly, David’s statement was one of courage and conviction, but it was also one of great faith. While the king, the nation, and David’s own brothers were greatly afraid (1 Sam. 17:11, 24), David reminded himself, and anyone within earshot, Who it is that slays our giants. With that in mind, let us consider some “giants” we may have in our lives, and why we need to remember the battle is the Lord’s.

First, we need to remember the battle is the Lord’s when it comes to our disease. When you think about it, sin is the most serious, most problematic, and most commonly carried disease this world has ever known. It is a disease that will spread within you (2 Tim. 2:16), a disease that will stain you (Rev. 3:4), and ultimately a disease that will sentence you (Rom. 6:23). To say that sin is scary would be an understatement. How we need to remember the battle is the Lord’s when it comes to our disease! It was Paul who said, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph. 1:7). When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He made it possible for us to have victory over sin. Therefore, if you have been washed in His blood, and you are striving always to walk in the light, do not allow sin to paralyze you with fear (Acts 22:16; 1 John 1:7). Our disease has been defeated by Christ!

Second, we remember the battle is the Lord’s when it comes to the devil. When we examine Scripture, there is a lot we learn about the devil. We know he is on the hunt for us (1 Pet. 5:8), we know he can trick us (Eph. 6:11), and we know he will do anything to tempt us (Matt. 4:1-11). Knowing these truths about Satan can certainly create a sense of fear in our minds, but once again we need to remember God is going to be victorious. In Romans 16:20 the Bible says, “The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.” Does Satan have certain capabilities in the world we live in? Absolutely, but in the end, he will be defeated. We need to take confidence in that truth and remember the only one who can take away our salvation is ourselves (John 10:29).

Finally, we need to remember the battle is the Lord’s when it comes to death. For most people, death is perhaps the greatest fear they face. The unknown nature of when death will come and how death will come sits uneasy in the minds of many. However, for a Christian, what is there to fear? On one occasion Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live” (John 11:25). Friends, what Jesus told Martha 2,000 years ago is still true today. We can have victory over death through Christ, because He has won the battle. Was

that not Paul's very point, when he said, "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 Cor. 15:55). Though it is a foe we will all have to face, barring the Lord's return, death has no hold on the Christian.

Facing a "giant" can be a fearful thing. Whether it be a Philistine named Goliath, or a disease named sin. Either way, overcoming our fears can be accomplished if we simply remember Who's side we are on (Rom. 8:31). What a blessing it is to know, "the battle is the Lord's."

CW



## I WILL NOT OFFER..THAT WHICH COSTS ME NOTHING

Caleb Griffith

**K**ing David was not a perfect man, and the Bible makes no attempt to hide his flaws. He failed to properly transport the ark of the covenant (2 Sam. 6). He committed adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11). And he foolishly conducted a census of Israel's armies (2 Sam. 24). Each sin resulted in death: the death of Uzzah; the deaths of Uriah, those with him, and Bathsheba's child; the deaths of seventy thousand Israelites. Sin has a severe cost, and David knew it.

In 2 Samuel 24, David quickly realized he had sinned. God gave David three options: seven years of famine, three months of defeat in war, or three days of plague. David said, "Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man" (2 Sam. 24:14). So Israel suffered a severe plague.

After David witnessed the devastation, God sent him to build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah. David came to Araunah, who promptly offered his threshing floor, oxen, and equipment—free of charge. But David said, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." David paid Araunah, built an altar, and offered sacrifices to God. Only then did God withdraw the plague from Israel. Repentance is never cheap; it always requires something from us, and David knew it.

**Repentance requires that we admit our sins.** "David's heart condemned him," and he verbally acknowledged his error and his foolishness (2 Sam. 24:10). We must break down our own walls of pride with a truthful conscience and brutal self-honesty. Behind those walls, hidden sin festers and stinks in the soul. The light of humility reveals it in us. Only the fire of repentance will purify it.

**Repentance requires that we face the consequences of our choices.** In 2 Samuel 24, God allowed David to choose his punishment. But there was no future without consequences. In repentance, we wrestle with the reality of what we have done and how our actions have affected both ourselves and others. David, by some means, "saw the angel who was striking the people" (2 Sam. 24:17). God allowed David to witness the fallout of his sin. The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous include listing "all persons we had harmed" and being "willing to make amends to them all." This step is essential for biblical repentance, too.

**Repentance requires that we take action to make things right.** God gave David something to do: build an altar. David obeyed (2 Sam. 24:19). When Araunah offered the threshing floor, oxen, and equipment for free, David insisted on paying the fair price. In a similar way, we must take personal responsibility for our own souls. No one else can repent for us. We must embrace the effort of repentance ourselves.

**Repentance requires that we respond to God in faith.** Twice in 2 Samuel 24, David confessed his sin; each time, God sent a prophet to David—the next morning (v. 11) and the same day (v. 18). When David was ready to repent, God quickly provided an opportunity. God is "ready to forgive" (Ps. 86:5). He longs for our repentance and waits patiently for it (2 Pet. 3:9). Ultimately, through Jesus, God has provided the world an opportunity for reconciliation. Repentance, then, is a response to the forgiveness God has already offered. Are you ready to restore your relationship with God?

CW

# ARISE

and walk

February 26 - March 1, 2026

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Register online at [swcofc.org](http://swcofc.org)

RV Hookups (Limited Space)  
Some Meals Provided  
Limited Childcare Friday (Please RSVP)  
Arise! Youth Saturday  
SWSBS Alumni & Supporter Appreciation Dinner  
SWSBS Annual Alumni Meeting

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knows about us. David confesses in verses 3 and 4: “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...” Confession is saying to God, “I was wrong, I see how I was wrong, I have hurt You, and this was evil in Your sight.” Those who want forgiveness from God must confess their sins to Him (Luke 15:18-19, 21).

**We Must Accept Something.** Only God can remove the guilt and stain of sin. Those who seek His forgiveness must be ready to accept His love and mercy (Ps. 51:1). We must trust His ability to renew, cleanse, and restore (Ps. 51:2, 7-10). We must remember His response to broken and contrite hearts (Ps. 51:17). It is both wonderful and humbling to consider that God forgives sinners. As difficult as facing and confessing sin are, accepting God’s forgiveness may be the hardest thing for many people to do. God wants us to believe Him when He tells us we are forgiven. A heart like this will respond with praise and sacrifice (Ps. 51:14-19).

Thank God for the amazing forgiveness He provides through Jesus Christ.

CW

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

6:30 - Congregational Singing - Isaac Harris  
7:00 - Rise Up and Walk! (Acts 3:6) - Ross Haffner

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27**

8:30 - Chapel - SWSBS Students (All-Annex)  
9:00 - Walking in Holiness - Justin Hopkins  
10:00 - Walking with Courage! (Josh. 1:9) - Justin Gonzalez (Men)  
- Walking Through Disagreement - Emily Cammock (Women)  
11:00 - Walking the Talk - Cody Westbrook (All-Auditorium)  
12:00 - Lunch (SWSBS Alumni Lunch)  
2:00 - Walking in Humility (Phil. 2:3-5) - Ross Haffner (Men)  
- Walking with Contentment (Phil. 4:11) - Shelby Mayfield (Women)  
3:00 - Walking in Love (1 Jhn. 3:2) - Clay Bond (Men)  
- Walking with Influence (Esth. 4:14) - Lisa Kennedy (Women)  
4:00 - Do Not Walk as the World (Eph. 4:17-24) - John Haffner (All)  
5:00 - SWSBS Alumni and Supporter Thank You Dinner (All Invited)  
6:30 - Congregational Singing - Alan Putnam  
7:00 - I Will Walk Among You! (Lev. 26:11-13) - Cody Westbrook

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28**

8:30 - Chapel - SWSBS Students (All-Annex)  
9:00 - Helping Others to Walk (Col. 4:5) - Cody McCoy  
10:00 - Preparing Them to Run (Prov. 4:10-13) - Tom Moore (Adults)  
- Following in the Right Footsteps - Caleb Nash (Teens)  
11:00 - Helping Those Who Stop Walking - Carl McCann  
12:00 - Lunch (On Your Own)  
2:00 - Walking in the Light (1 John 1:1-10) - John Baker (Adults)  
- Protecting Our Feet (Prov. 6:27-28) - KJ Moore (Teens)  
3:00 - Walking with Balance (Eccles. 3:1) - Dave Rogers (Adults)  
- Walking in a World of Idolatry - Alex Simmons (Teens)  
4:00 - Walking in Unity (Amos 3:3) - Trent Kennedy (All)  
5:00 - Dinner Provided  
6:30 - Congregational Singing - Austin Cauley  
7:00 - Walk by Faith (2 Cor. 5:7) - Mike Vestal

**SUNDAY, MARCH 1**

9:30 - Walking with Purpose (Eph. 2:10) - Wade Webster  
10:30 - Walking in Newness of Life (Rom. 6:4) - Wade Webster  
12:00 - Homestyle Lunch Provided  
1:30 - Walking Toward Eternity - Wade Webster

**ARISE**  
and walk

*your*  
**PASSPORT**  
*to prepare for the ministry*

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# SOUTHWEST

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“To Know Jesus and...make Him known”

## From the Director's Desk



Steven Lloyd  
Assoc. Director  
SWSBS

At the writing of this note, we are in our second week of the third quarter of the school year. Our Arise Workshop is rapidly approaching—February 26th to March 1st. In conjunction with the Workshop, Rob Whitacre will conduct a “blitz week” on the subject of Evangelism.

We have the largest first-year class in our history of forty-eight years. Sixteen students fill the class from young to not so young—which makes for an interesting dynamic. Some students are a year or two out of high school, while others have managed high-end businesses; another is a retired project manager. We have three sisters who attend full-time and two sons of preachers.

Our second year, while reduced in number to four students, is no less an experience. The mix includes a relatively new convert, with another son of a preacher. We have a brother from Switzerland and one from China. One must admire anyone who attends from another country to brave two challenging years at Southwest immersed in a language not native to them. It is said that the best way to learn a foreign language is to live in and among the people of that language. The English spoken in both families has greatly improved. Some of their children are beginning to forget the language of their homeland as their ability to speak English increases. I admire them.

Two more quarters and our second year students will leave us. Many in the congregation will grieve their departure as is the case every year. The bonds created with students are not superficial. Lasting friendships are developed, which is another reason we look forward to Arise. While it serves as a workshop for everyone, it also serves as SWSBS's annual reunion.

Let this serve as your invitation to join us.

[www.swcofc.org](http://www.swcofc.org)