

Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your name, and may it be exalted above all. You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, spoke the innumerable stars into place and named each one. You made the good earth and everything and everyone on it. You are the giver of life. We join with the multitudes of heaven to worship You.

You chose faithful Abram, You made a covenant with him, and You kept it. And through Abraham's line, all the families of the earth have been blessed. The son of Abraham, the son of David, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, was born. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And though sinless, He bore the sins of all the saints throughout time, faced your terrible wrath, and died. He paid the debt of my sin in full, once and for ever. Blessed be the name of the Lord. And You made your satisfaction eternally public by raising the Son on that third day and showing Him to his disciples and many others. And before returning to You, the Lord Jesus commissioned his followers to go into the world, even the uttermost parts, and make disciples. And they did. They made disciples who made disciples who made disciples.

You are the Lord who chose, in 1955, your faithful disciple Willard Heck to continue that obedience by gathering a group of your followers in his living room here in the "uttermost parts of the earth" – Tulsa, Oklahoma. And he upheld the instruction of our Lord, "...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." And, as those disciples learned from your holy word, their hearts burned to join saints of old in fulfilling that great commission by both going and sending. The number of the Tulsa church outgrew the Heck's living room and you provided Lynwood Elementary School, and soon enough, a building of their own on 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The disciples continued to grow in number and in knowledge of You, and in zeal for reaching the lost. You sent out Bill and Maxine Eddy to make disciples in Ecuador. And You continued to send – the DeVoucalla's, the Shelley's, the Seeman's, the Truman's, and others. You were impacting the world, and You were using this little group of disciples.

When You knew the time was right, You sent your servant Willard to Colcord to begin the generation-impacting ministry of New Life Ranch, and You brought Bob Kelso to your church in Tulsa. The strong emphasis on Scripture continued as did the growth. You called Bud Pederson to follow you while in business school at TU. He did, and You brought him to your church to lead the youth. By your grace, he showed several teens how to become serious disciples, committed to following You and to making disciples on their own. You provided CEF Training, Good News Clubs, and Five-Day Clubs through which many children were reached. Christian Service Brigade appealed to young men. Outreach events for the Youth made the Gospel known to many young people.

Then You called Bud and Nancy to be your witnesses first in France, and eventually to India and Myanmar. You also placed your hand on several of those teens from that early youth group: Kessler, Korver, Martin, Dickens, Zachary, and others. Each continues to serve You in disciple-making to this day.

You called Hardin Boyer to your church in Tulsa in 1973, and the strong emphasis on Bible teaching continued. Accordingly, your people grew in knowledge of You, in passion for evangelism, and in number. No longer able to fit in the 7<sup>th</sup> street building, You provided a brand new facility on 61<sup>st</sup> Street without debt. Still, You sent out missionaries, and more countries were reached with the Gospel. Here in Tulsa, You gave the “Bible Map” booth at the State Fair, both as a means to make the Gospel known, and as a training ground for disciples learning how to share their faith. Home Bible studies sprang up where disciples experienced deeper body-life, increased knowledge of You, and firmer faith.

You are the Lord who called Paul Brownback to your church to continue the strong Bible teaching. During the years of his tenure, You gave your servants the tool of Evangelism Explosion, and more were trained in yet another method of sharing our precious faith. The gospel was taken to many surrounding neighborhoods. Again, You continued to send out even more to make disciples in other countries. You were faithful to build your church at home and abroad.

You are the Lord who brought John Barnett to your church in Tulsa. Your faithful sovereignty continued to provide exactly what your people needed, which always began with solid Bible teaching. That teaching continued to bear fruit, and the numbers continued to grow. In your great mercy, You gave us a part in building a church in Volgadonsk, Russia, and then in training Russian church planters in a 2-year Bible Institute. In 2004, again without debt, You provided the beautiful building on Sheridan, and soon it was filled to overflowing. You granted your servants the privilege of helping build the miraculous Jordanian Evangelical Theological Seminary and allowed us to be instrumental in teaching and preparing church planters in Muslim countries. In your lavish grace, You also prepared and sent out two separate groups of disciple-makers in the Tulsa area. One to a unique ministry in North Tulsa, and another to the quickly growing suburb of Owasso. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

We sought you on our knees; You answered by bringing Jim Johnston to your church in Tulsa to lead us through smooth times and challenging times. In your faithful care, You continued the solid Bible teaching and vital growth that results, particularly in resolving conflicts according to your word. And even in our difficulty, You heaped blessing on us by allowing us to help launch the church-planting ministry into the unreached tribal forests of Central India. To this day, you are granting the gift of repentance to many who turn from idols to the true and living God. Furthermore, in your infinite and never-ending mercy, You brought good from hard circumstances, and another Bible-centered gospel preaching church in Broken Arrow was established by your omniscient and sovereign hand. You are the Lord who builds your church, and even the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Praise the Lord who is merciful to us, his servants.

You are the Lord who called Jared Verwiell to your church here. Once again, You have provided the strong Bible teaching we always need, as well as the specific talents needed to take the next steps You have prepared. At present, You have moved in the hearts of these elders to get us ready for those steps. Seeking You first, they have written down a careful consideration of present circumstance, current culture, our gifting and limitations, and a rubric for making plans in accordance with your will – a statement of vision – being careful to in no wise weaken the

foundational pillars of this church for which You gave your only Son.

Now therefore, in resolute obedience to your very clear instructions to make disciples at home and abroad, and as an expression of our deep and abiding trust in your good plan for us as evidenced by all these years of your faithfulness, and with thankful hearts for those many years of your omniscient, powerful, and loving care and guidance, we do this day commit to follow You, and these elders, your servants, in this Biblical vision for your church, which they have prayerfully and soberly considered for this hour in the fleeting timeline of your church on earth, especially your church here in this building.

May your name be honored and revered in this place, and may your will be done in this place as it is in heaven, and may the world around us know that we are your disciples by how we love one another, and may we remain your faithful ambassadors until You come, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen.