



By: Pastor Darrell Johns

# 15 WONDERFUL YEARS

Fifteen years and a few months ago, our family was praying for the will of God in our lives after we completed our term of service in the General Youth Division (UPCI). We had several potential open doors, but in seeking the Lord, none of them seemed to be the right fit for our family. Then, there was a call and an opportunity to minister at Atlanta West Pentecostal Church as a pastoral candidate. At the conclusion of the search and election process, the congregation elected us and confirmed what we felt was the will of God. On August 31, 1995, I officially became pastor and three days later ministered for the first time as pastor.

Honestly, in the first year our family faced some of the greatest challenges we had ever encountered in our lives. I am grateful that, at forty years of age at that time, the Lord had allowed me to go through the crucible enough to be somewhat prepared to respond to those challenges. Without hesitation, I can say that only God kept our church and guided our board and me. Those times belong to our history. Thankfully, they are safely archived in the annals of yesterday. The testimony of Atlanta West in those days is encapsulated in the unspoken theme song for those times, “Your Grace and Mercy”.

Today, as I reflect on the last fifteen years, all I can see is the grace and mercy of our great God. He guided our church and sent us the right people at the right time to help us grow to the next level.

I want to express my deepest appreciation to the amazing people of Atlanta West. Our family considers it an honor to be a part of this great church. The kindness and respect that you have shown me is a sacred trust to be guarded and reciprocated.

There is not enough space allotted here to adequately thank everyone who has been part of the growth and revival of Atlanta West, but my heart is filled with gratitude. Six groups deserve recognition.

I want to thank my wife and three sons who love this church as much as I do. This is home. To us, there is no place on earth like Atlanta West. They share me with you and understand the commitment necessary to lead a growing church.

Our Board of Trustees is a group of godly men who are devoted to Jesus Christ and this church. They give of themselves to serve and safeguard the business and integrity of our church.

Our Pastoral Staff live to give to this church. They have chosen to share my vision and give their gifts of ministry to God’s work

in Atlanta. I love my team and have great respect for them. I could not and would not lead our church without them.

Our 301 Leadership Team is vital to the ministries of Atlanta West. These dedicated people give sacrificially to ensure the execution of the vision of our church. They oversee our ministries with excellence and integrity.

Our volunteers, numbering over 300, love the Lord and have chosen to serve Him through the myriad of ministries God has birthed at Atlanta West. They collectively give thousands of hours a year to evangelize the lost and disciple those who are converted by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The members of Atlanta West support our church, attend our services, worship our God, and witness in our community. They are the real connectors who make the vision a reality by being a light to metro Atlanta.

I believe that the Lord’s will was done on August 31, 1995, and the evidence is obvious in what has been accomplished in the past fifteen years. The following statistics have been the result of the goodness of God and the generosity of our people.

- Our average attendance has grown from 307 to 759. We now have more volunteers than we had in attendance in 1995.
- We completed a 20,000 square foot Family Life Center in 2002.
- We have a thriving Spanish Church, Iglesia Pentecostal Church Unida, averaging 140 and having revival.
- We have a two-year-old daughter church, The Rock Church of Paulding County, averaging 39 and growing.
- Our tithing has almost tripled in fifteen years, an increase of 182%.
- Our World Missions giving has gone from less than \$50,000 a year to over \$200,000 a year, and since 1996 a total of \$2,040,037.02 has been given to missions causes.
- Since 2000, we have seen 973 people filled with the Holy Ghost, including 73 from the first half of 2010.
- Since 2000, we have baptized 1,215 people in the name of Jesus Christ, including 110 during the first half of 2010.

There is still much to be done, and until the Lord returns, we will be striving to reach our city and affect revival around the world. On September 11-12, we will celebrate these fifteen glorious years together and give all the glory to God for His grace and mercy.