

BREAKING AWAY

Founder and speaker of Breakaway closes chapter of life in College Station, begins new one in Houston

By Lauren Smith
THE BATTALION

There was no one sitting in their chairs at the end of the April 12 Breakaway, as thousands of people in Reed Arena stood clapping and whooping. Some stood with tears in their eyes and others with proud smiles on their faces, as they looked down at Greg Matte, Class of 1992 and director of the local Bible study, Breakaway.

Matte, who has been the director of Breakaway since it first began 15 years ago, officially announced that he and his family are moving to Houston, where he will be the senior pastor at First Baptist Church.

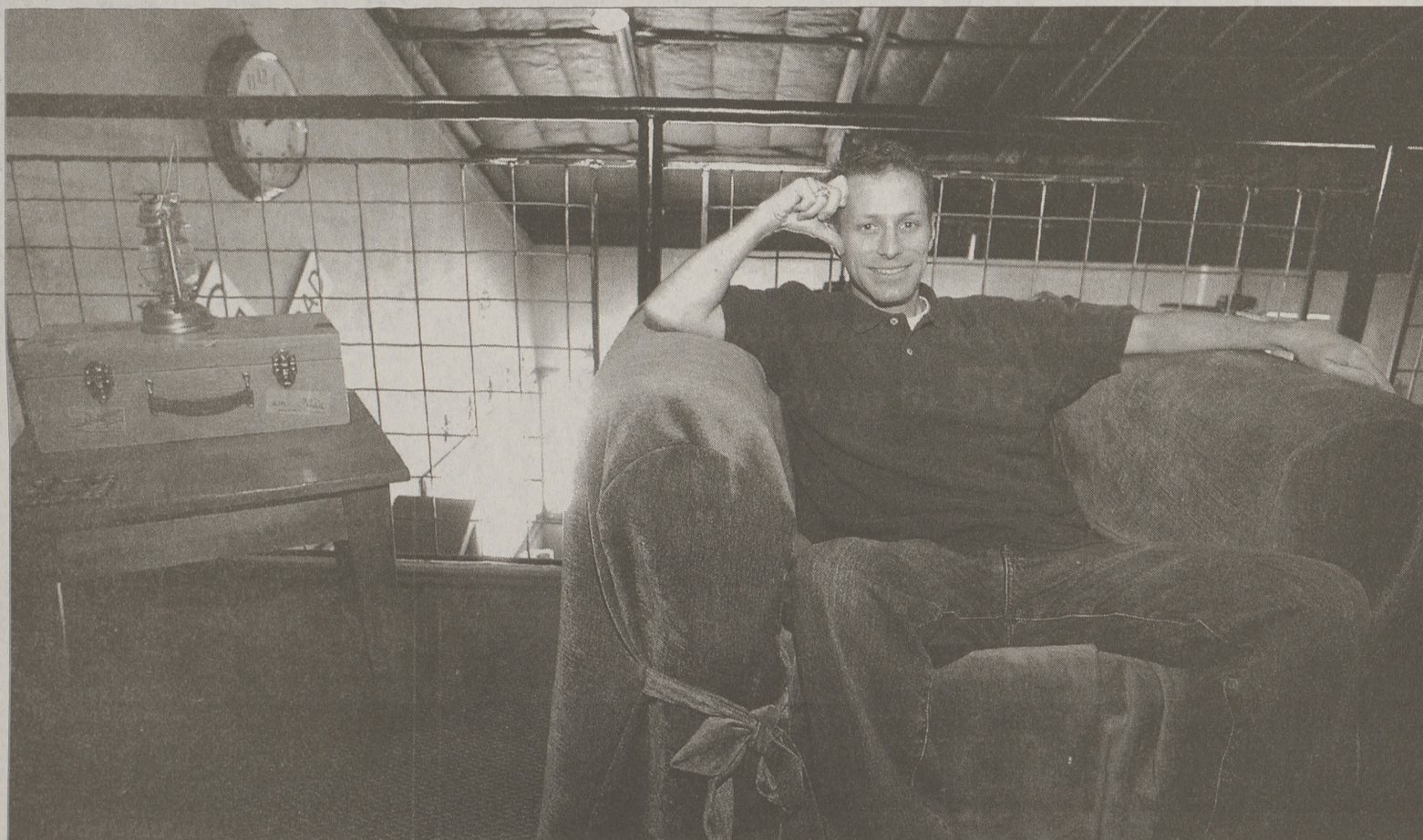
Matte calls himself, "just a kid from Houston who said, 'God, do whatever you want with me.'" "Everyone already knew (about the move), so it wasn't like a big bomb dropping," Matte said. "It wasn't dramatic, but it was upbeat and so positive. It was really encouraging, and I will still be on the (Breakaway) Board of Directors and only 90 miles away."

David Saxe, who Matte mentored over the past year, said he felt a nervous excitement upon hearing that Matte would be leaving.

"I am excited for him about the impact opportunities he will have," Saxe said. "He is the example for me of what a godly man is because it is amazing to see a man completely live the way that he speaks."

Matte has not only impacted people who know him personally, but people who attend Breakaway and simply listen to him from afar.

"I am from Colorado, and the transition to A&M has been great ... I have been able to be spiritually fed at Breakaway," said James Gardner, a junior sports management major. "God has done amazing things in my life through Gregg and Breakaway."



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After 15 years, Gregg Matte, Class of 1992, who started Breakaway as a Bible study with a few friends in his living room, is leaving his position as the speaker at Breakaway Ministries to join First Baptist Church in Houston to become head pastor.

Matte said Breakaway has grown more than the founders ever expected. After outgrowing several apartments, Breakaway occupied the College Station Conference Center, a College Station School District band hall, Oakwood library, First Baptist College Station and Second Baptist Bryan. When those locations became too small, Breakaway moved to Reed Arena.

"We just had a few people come over to our house for an apartment Bible study when we were sophomores," Matte said. "It just kept growing, and I was more surprised than anybody."

Matte has led Breakaway for 15 years, and he has a process he uses to write sermons.

"In the beginning, I would come up with an idea, then ask God to bless it, and now I ask God, 'What is your idea?' then He blesses it," Matte said. "I go through three different stages: preparation, which is reading books and commentaries; preparing from a theological standpoint, illustration, which is thinking of how I can use a story or visual aid; and presentation."

Matte begins this process on the Thursday of the Tuesday before Breakaway, and each talk usually takes eight to 10 hours to prepare.

"I try to prepare in the mornings with a cup of coffee, my journal and my Bible in my quiet time," Matte said.

When Matte and his wife, Kelly, were first contacted by the pastor search committee, they went through a process together of making the decision.

"I was very humbled to even be considered. Kelly and I started to pray two questions: Had God completed what he wanted to do through us in College Station, and had we done what we were supposed to do?" Matte said. "From that if it was yes, 'Lord, are you opening a door in Houston for us to do a ministry?' We felt the answer to both of those was yes."

Although the decision was a process, Matte is looking forward to the increased impact opportunities he will have in going to Houston.

"I did a math problem in my head: if there are 4,000 people that show up on Sunday morning

and each one of those people affects 100 people in a month ... that is 10 percent of one of the biggest cities in the U.S.," Matte said.

Transitioning from a college ministry to a large church will be a different experience that Matte said he looks forward to.

"The biggest adjustment will be working with the entire family, rather than one aspect of the family," Matte said. "And, now I work in a setting I was part of creating and am moving to a setting that has already established ways of doing things."

Among speakers lined up for the fall are Dr. Rick Rigsby and Jason Marshall, a former A&M baseball player and Matte's former roommate.

"We definitely believe that Breakaway should continue, and it is much bigger than me," Matte said. "I have been blessed to be a part of it, but there are going to be 10,000 freshmen who will enter A&M next year that won't have a clue who I am. Breakaway needs to continue for those that are still here as well."

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