



The Way

July 2014

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF
HOMESTEAD, FL

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Not long after I became pastor at FBCH, I went fishing with Captain Bill Bender. Captain Bill took me to a secret location in the Keys. It was so beautiful, I would have been happy had we not caught a thing. We used different baits of various sizes on multiple rods and placed all of them into the water. Captain Bill then said, "Pay attention to that rod right there. If it takes a hit, it's a shark." At this point, I should probably confess that Captain Bill has forgotten more about fishing than I will ever know. And yet, surprisingly, I did not believe him. "How can you be sure it will be a shark?" I asked. "Because I put shark bait on it," was his reply! Some time passed and that very rod bent towards the water. I quickly grabbed it, and with much huffing and puffing, I reeled in a nice tiger shark. Thus, on that day I learned a valuable lesson: The bait you use will determine the fish that you catch.

There are numerous ways in which that lesson can be applied.

(I have told young ladies that when it comes to how they dress, "The bait you use will determine the fish that you catch.") This is especially true in evangelism. Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." The implication is that one leads to the other. If you are a follower of Jesus, you will "fish for men." If you are not "fishing for men," you have reason to question whether you are a follower of Jesus. Evangelism

"There are multiple ways of bringing the good news of the gospel to someone who needs to hear. But the power is not in the method. The power is in the gospel."

and the Christian life go hand in hand.

And yet, there are multiple ways to fish. One of the greatest lessons anyone ever taught me about evangelism came from Al Fernandez, a church planting strategist for the North American Mission Board. He said, "The key

to evangelism in South Florida is getting as many different hooks in the water as you can." In other words, not everyone is going to be reached by the same method. Not only have I found that to be true here, I have also found that this is becoming increasingly true in other parts of the nation as well.

There was a day in which the key to evangelism was to find the one "silver bullet" that worked for your community and then fire away. And the real kicker is, for awhile, they were right. There are churches that put everything they had into Evangelism Explosion in the 1970's onward. Many people were saved by those using this method. I remember when F.A.I.T.H. evangelism made its debut. At the time, I served as pastor in a community that was very receptive to it. It clicked. I remember when every church that was "cutting edge" did a "Hell House" on Halloween. It was a Christian version of the haunted house. I acted in several. God used it. We saw people saved. For many years, the primary method was the annual crusade. Bring in your

friends to hear a guest speaker who would preach simple evangelistic messages. Many of you reading this were saved at such an event. Praise the Lord. For some, the silver bullet was event evangelism. Hold this or that event, and the people will flock to hear the gospel. We have held such events at FBCH. I recently baptized a new believer who confessed Christ as Lord at a block party we hosted. Some of you grew up being told that evangelism was handing out tracts. My wife was saved after reading a Four Spiritual Laws tract. There is a new tract I use regularly called "The Story." I love it. All of these are different means of getting the one message across to those who need to hear it.

Done appropriately, each of these methods was effective in reaching people in their day and time. I would argue that some are still effective. I would argue that we could use *more* methods. In fact, I devised one myself! We have just completed a "prayer evangelism" campaign. My goal is to create a manual to help churches implement this particular strategy. I believe it will reach people who might not be reached by any of the above. And yet, I do this knowing that even the method I wrote will not be a "silver bullet" but another hook to throw in the water with the others.

There are multiple ways of bringing the good news of the gospel to someone who needs to hear. I haven't even mentioned servanthood evangelism, friendship evangelism, lifestyle evangelism or evangelism using media, the internet, etc. But the

power is not in the method. The power is in the gospel. Somehow, we have forgotten this. Thus, pastors have been known to trek across the country learning how to imitate in their church what worked for someone else in another place. Everyone is looking for that one hook that will result in evangelistic success and church growth. It's never really about the hook.

Jesus has called us to be fishers of men. Yes, let's be wise fishermen. Let's use every hook we can to bring the gospel to as many people as we can. Let's do this remembering that every believer is equipped differently and not one method will fit everyone. Let's do this remembering that not every lost person will respond to the same method. Let's do this remembering that prayer is essential. Let's do this while remembering that salvation is the work of God. He chooses to use different people in different ways to reach different groups, but ultimately, He is the One who must do it. Only God can draw the lost unto Himself. Only God can awaken someone from their spiritual deadness so that they can make a decision with eternal ramifications. Only God can open spiritual eyes and ears and minds so that a person is able to understand the gospel. And at the end of the day, it really doesn't matter which method we use quite as much as we think it does. What matters is that we are obedient and that the gospel is being shared. God can use you in any number of ways. God will not, however, use your silence.

Speaking of evangelism, one

way to be a witness is this Friday, July fourth. Our church will have a booth at both of the main Miami-Dade fireworks locations, at Bayside Park in Downtown Miami and the Homestead-Miami Speedway. Each booth will have a sign stating, "How can we pray for you?" There will be New Testaments to distribute and copies of "The Story" I referenced above. And of course, we will take prayer requests from those who come by and pay us a visit. If you can help at Bayside, we will begin setup at noon. If you can help at the speedway, we will begin setup at 5:00 pm. I look forward to what God is going to do!

Let me thank all of our Vacation Bible School workers for a job well done. We finally broke the 300 mark in a single day's attendance. There were twenty-five children who made professions of faith and we'll start baptizing them this Sunday!

Special thanks to most of you for taking it easy on me the weekend of my fortieth birthday. Average thanks to Gene Mendheim who presented me with a cane. :-)

Thank you for the privilege of being your pastor.

Pastor Howard





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Tom Elliff
Tom Elliff, President, IMB

Gary L. Johnson
Director of Missions

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."
 MATTHEW 22:37 (HCSB)



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Happy Birthday!

7/01 - Ameen Khan	7/13 - Grace De Marco	7/23 - Dedrick Bailey	7/29 - Edwin Hadden
7/01 - Rachel Kinkade	7/15 - Jay Clason	7/23 - Suzy Davis	7/30 - Sherri Claderwood
7/03 - Rachel Hernandez	7/15 - Melinda De La Cruz	7/23 - Iveen Rodriguez	7/30 - Sabrina Delgado
7/04 - Theresa Diaz	7/15 - Mingjian Geng	7/25 - Stan Cason	7/30 - Marlene Jackson
7/04 - Mae Tanner	7/16 - Damaris Avila	7/25 - Megan Wells	7/30 - Mary Lowder
7/06 - Desiree Guzman	7/16 - Ryai Giddins	7/26 - Michael Biichle	7/31 - Sunrise Dorval
7/06 - Robert Jones	7/16 - Debra Morris	7/26 - Elijah Lucas	7/31 - Sharlene Kossuth
7/06 - Marilyn Maldonado	7/17 - William Bender	7/27 - Martin Ortiz	7/31 - Theodore Quammie
7/07 - Brandon Ross	7/18 - Cindy Castro	7/27 - Diego Torres	
7/08 - Brittany Davidson	7/19 - Jorge Perez	7/28 - Alex Harman	
7/08 - Deison Demosthene	7/19 - Brooke Story	7/28 - Heather Hedges	
7/09 - David Catlin	7/20 - Melissa Breen	7/28 - Sean Ramos	
7/09 - Jacob DeVary	7/20 - Robbie Dolan	7/29 - Dallas Davis	
7/10 - Sherri Jackson	7/20 - Victoria Duenas	7/29 - Indy Drury	
7/10 - Patti Sourber	7/20 - Jenna Friman	7/29 - Zachael Eldridge	
7/12 - Tracy Keith	7/22 - Lourdes Alonso	7/29 - Kaylee Fordyce	
7/12 - John Tompkins	7/22 - Sarah Ecklof	7/29 - Alberto Guzman	



Music Ministry



The music from Vacation Bible School this year was extremely memorable, all the while it's hard to get it out of your head. *Agency D3* was bigger and better than anyone had ever planned!

This was the first year we broke our 300 mark in attendance, which is so exciting! Our students brought in over \$700.00 to support our missionaries in Cuba! We will never truly know how many seeds were planted and decisions made, but God knows and that is what matters, yet we know 25 students stepped forward to

dedicate their life to our Lord and Savior! Please continue to pray for those students as they maintain a new relationship with Christ.

We have a wonderful group of church members that go ALL OUT each and every year for VBS! It is always wonderful to see new faces involved as well. If I began to name names, I know I would leave someone very important out, so A+, 110% to each and everyone!

Plans are on the go for next years theme, "Journey off the Map." Unknown to us, known to Him, scripture from Isaiah 30:21.

Each day our students will discover: Day one—Know your guide, Day two—Follow your guide, Day three—Trust your guide, Day four—Stay on track, and Day five—Keep watching!" It is going to be so thrilling to use our new building as well! Let's break the mark at 350, as we set the bar high! Someone may need to pick up Lynda Melton our VBS director off the floor after she reads this.

*Singing for HIM,
Pam*



Stewardship

June 2014

Contributions for June 2014:	\$ 46,770.88
Monthly budget requirements:	\$ 57,784.60
YTD Contributions:	\$ 451,153.82
YTD Budget:	\$ 450,719.88

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES



105th
Anniversary



*Mark your calendars
August 31, 2014*



**Men's Prayer
Breakfast
July 5, 8:00 a.m.**



**CHAPMAN PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE HOMELESS**

28205 SW 124th Ave



**Tuesday, July 8,
11:30-1:00 p.m.**

**Vacation
Bible
School**

*A great big **THANK YOU**
to all the volunteers
who made
Vacation Bible School
a Huge success this Year!
We really couldn't have
done it without you.*



Pray for our Youth's New Orleans Mission trip starting this Saturday, July 5 - July 12. They will be ministering in New Orleans.



First Baptist Church will be hosting booths at the Homestead Miami Speedway and Bayside Park on July 4th. If you would like to volunteer to help with the Homestead booth, between 5:00 pm to dark, please contact the Church office (305) 247-1662.

ONLINE:
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE
FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH OF
HOMESTEAD, FL

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**Building bridges...empowering
people...changing lives!**



It's hard to believe that we are half-way through 2014 already! We're well into our summer slate of activities and it has been exciting to see what God is doing in and among our students! Here's a look at what's taking place this month.

I'm excited to report **E3 (Epic ENCOUNTER Excursions)** has been a tremendous success! Each week we have traveled to a different location and held our ENCOUNTER service and that has been an incredible blessing to our students and volunteers. If you are a parent and have not received a copy of the schedule of where we will be each week, please contact me so I can make sure to get that information to you. We will continue **E3** throughout the rest of this month and will be back at FBCH beginning in August.

I'm also excited to report that our first of two mission teams will be leaving for their trip this month. We have a team of 16 students and 6 adult volunteers that are leaving on Saturday, July 5 and returning on Sunday, July 13. This team is traveling to New Orleans,

LA and will be participating in a WIDE range of ministry opportunities. They will be working with children in an urban neighborhood. They will be working to clean up vacant lots in the Lower 9th Ward. They will be serving in a home that ministers to families and individuals suffering from HIV and AIDS related illnesses. They will be serving senior adults in a day care facility. They will be painting the home of an elderly woman. They will be serving in two different food pantries in addition to prayer-walking some of the neighborhoods in New Orleans. As you can see, this group is going to be BUSY living and speaking out the gospel to many different people in the city of New Orleans. I hope you will join me in praying for this group and for the individuals whose lives they will touch. Please pray that we would see individuals saved; that the seeds of the gospel would be planted and watered; and that the faith of our students would be strengthened as a result of the work that takes place.

Our second mission team that will be heading to Queens, NY next month is continuing to work through their preparations for the trip. Please continue praying for them as they prepare

to engage a very difficult mission field with the truth of the gospel.

Finally, let me just remind you that one of the core values of our Student Ministry is **Cultural Relevance**. This core value emphasizes the importance of contextualizing the gospel for our teenagers. The world in which they live is constantly changing and I mean changing at a very rapid pace. While our ministry leaders and volunteers are firmly convicted of the unchanging truths of the gospel, we also realize that we need to communicate those truths in ways that our students can understand and relate to. For this reason, we are constantly asking questions about whether what we are doing and how we are doing it is relatable to the students to whom we are seeking to minister.

As always, thank you for the opportunity to serve you and to serve with you for the glory of God!

For His Glory,
Joe

