



# The Way

June 2015

## NEWSLETTER OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF HOMESTEAD, FL

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My seven year old daughter came bouncing home the other day proudly wearing a medal she won at school. This particular medal was for coming in first place in the tug-of-war competition. I jokingly asked her if she won it all by herself. "No Daddy," she replied. "We all pulled together!"

In that one statement, my little Rachel also expressed exactly why I love this thing called the Cooperative Program. "What is the Cooperative Program?" you ask. Every Southern Baptist should know. It is churches "pulling together" to do those things we could not do on our own. It is churches "pulling together" to support missionaries and theological education. It is churches "pulling together" to meet needs, like disaster relief. It is churches "pulling together" to plant churches in areas where evangelical churches are either nonexistent or few and far between.

Simply put, when you give your tithes through First Baptist Church of Homestead, we also tithe those dollars from a budgetary standpoint, sending well over ten percent to missions. Almost all of that goes through the Cooperative Program. We send it to the Florida Baptist Convention in Jacksonville. Some of those dollars remain here, doing missions in our own state. Some (scheduled to be 51% in November) goes to the Southern Baptist Convention headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee. Those dollars support ten thousand missionaries across the globe, as well as six Southern Baptist seminaries. Forty-five thousand Southern Baptist churches share their missions dollars in this way. This is what we refer to as the Cooperative Program.

Ted Traylor rightly calls this program "Baptist Stewardship." And don't let the word "program" fool you. Some people are caught off guard by that word. The very word *program* usually implies layers of red tape and bureaucracy. "Why

would we even want to support a program?" The truth is, the Cooperative Program is really more of a *partnership*. In other words, it is autonomous churches freely and voluntarily working with other churches to do what God has called us to do.

I am glad our church supports the Cooperative Program. Let me tell you why you should be too.

**I support the Cooperative Program because it is biblical.** The first missionaries were sent when the church at Jerusalem was scattered following Stephen's martyrdom. Acts 8:4 says, "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went." One church founded as a result, the church at Antioch, commissioned the first missionaries in a formal sense, when they laid hands on Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13 and sent them on their first missionary journey. There was no convention or missions board in the first century sending missionaries. There were, however, churches cooperating together to accomplish the missions task.

When Paul wrote the second letter to the Corinthians (at least the second which God preserved for us in Scripture), he commented on the willingness of churches to cooperate in funding the work God had called them to do. Notice how Paul words this note of thanksgiving in 2 Corinthians 8:1-4. "We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God granted to the churches of Macedonia: <sup>2</sup>During a severe testing by affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the wealth of their generosity. <sup>3</sup>I testify that, on their own, according to their ability and beyond their ability, <sup>4</sup> they begged us insistently for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints." Notice in verse one that the "churches" of Macedonia came together to give. It was not just one church supporting Paul at this point. Notice they did so, not because they had to, but because they wanted to. It was voluntary cooperation. Notice that churches were able to support the same missions task whether they had little or much to give. Ladies and gentlemen, this is exactly how the Cooperative Program operates. Southern Baptist Churches don't give to the Cooperative Program because they have to. They give to the Cooperative Program because they want to.

Someone might say, "We don't need a convention to tell us where to send our missions dollars." The convention does not tell us where to send our missions dollars. We tell the convention how to use the dollars we entrust to them. In two weeks, I

will get on an airplane and fly to Columbus, Ohio for the Pastor's Conference and the Southern Baptist Convention. While there, we the churches will meet and instruct the agencies we support. We will set their budget. We will nominate their trustees. We control them, they do not control us. The Cooperative Program is simply like-minded churches sending missionaries and training ministers. And it is biblical!

**I support the Cooperative Program because it is efficient.** The Cooperative is efficient in that it enables us to support missionaries who have been trained, vetted and called. It ensures they get the training they need to be as effective as possible. It enables our missionaries to spend their time preaching the gospel and planting churches, instead of constantly raising support. When I was the pastor of a much smaller church in North Carolina, I loved the fact that our church – through the Cooperative Program – was able to play just as important a role in supporting missionaries as the mega-church in the big city. Our church had fewer than a hundred members, but we could legitimately say we supported ten thousand missionaries!

I have known numerous young men who have been called of God to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Being independent missionaries, they usually spend a couple of years traveling the country and raising support for this task. Once they have received commitments from enough churches, they move to their field and pursue language

training. I believe God's anointing is upon them and God is going to use them in a great way... when they eventually get there! The truth is, if they were *Southern* Baptist, they would already be there. And when they got there, they could devote all of their time to preaching the gospel and planting churches, not whatever time was left over after contacting churches and increasing financial support. Instead of having ten, twenty, or thirty churches supporting them, they would have 45,000 churches who have already pledged their support. They do not have to be recruited! These missionaries wouldn't have to worry about what happens if a single prominent sponsoring church suddenly pulls their support.

The Cooperative Program is also efficient in that it enables us to care for missionaries expediently when a crisis arrives. A friend of mine was a missionary in France a few years ago when his wife had a sudden heart attack. The kind of surgery needed required she be returned to the United States. She was flown from Paris, France to Tampa, Florida without delay. Had they been independent missionaries without the support structure of the International Mission Board, she likely would have died. Instead, she was able to fly across the globe to get the medical care she needed. She made a full recovery. She and her husband are once again faithfully serving the Lord. That's a side of the Cooperative Program you rarely see.

The cooperative is efficient in that it enables us to step

up quickly when disaster strikes. When Hurricane Andrew decimated our church's facilities in 1992, many of you who were here at the time commented on how quickly the Southern Baptist Convention arrived and how helpful they were in the rebuilding process. They were here because the Cooperative Program was already in place, bringing Southern Baptist churches and their resources together. There was already a mechanism whereby Southern Baptists all over the country could pool their resources and know they were doing the greatest good.

**I support the Cooperative Program because I believe in the importance of theological education.** The Great Commission is more than sending missionaries to make disciples to the ends of the earth. The Great Commission includes the task of preparing those missionaries who will go. Without theological education, the missionaries we send are woefully unprepared for the task. It is imperative that our missionaries are prepared to give a defense of the gospel. It is imperative that pastors have studied to show themselves approved. There are no words to express how grateful I am for the education I was able to receive. I could list a thousand ways this church has benefitted from lessons I learned along the way. (I only wish I had learned more!)

Furthermore, because half of my tuition was paid by Cooperative Program funds, I was able to attend and graduate from seminary without crushing student loan debt. I'll let you in on a

little secret. In other denominations (including independent churches), ministerial students routinely graduate from Bible college or seminary with so many student loans, no church looking for a first time pastor is able to afford the salary they need to repay their loans! So these would-be pastors must serve bivocationally, not because they want to, but because their educational debt requires them to. I'm so glad I never had that problem. I never had that problem, in part, because of the Cooperative Program.

**I support the Cooperative Program because it promotes theological accountability.** I had the opportunity to attend two Baptist institutions. I went to Samford University for my undergraduate degree and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary for my Masters and Doctorate. The first institution does not receive Cooperative Program funds. They did many years ago, but they decided to be independent. The result? No longer tied to the convention by Cooperative Program dollars, they theologically strayed. The doctrines taught in the classroom Monday through Friday cannot be preached in a Southern Baptist pulpit on Sunday morning. On the other hand, SEBTS is funded, in part, by Cooperative Program dollars. Professors sign their agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message, which is our confession of faith at First Baptist Church of Homestead. As a result, there is not a single professor there I would be afraid to present to you on any given Sunday.

The Cooperative Program not only ensures theological accountability for our professors, but for our missionaries as well. If a missionary in Zambia begins to preach something contrary to the gospel, it might take me awhile to notice it. It's not like I pass that way often! The International Mission Board, however, will notice it quickly. The International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board promote the highest of standards among those who are sent. In fact, out of all of the missionaries I have met who are associated with our two missions boards, I have yet to meet a single missionary who did not leave me extremely proud to be a Southern Baptist. Not...even...one.

The Cooperative Program is not the Great Commission, but it is a mechanism that brings churches together to fulfill the Great Commission more efficiently. In fact, in the history of the church, I don't believe there has been a *greater* mechanism for Great Commission fulfillment than the Cooperative Program. I'm glad First Baptist Church supports it, and I trust we will for many years to come.

As always, thank you for the privilege of being your pastor.

Pastor Howard

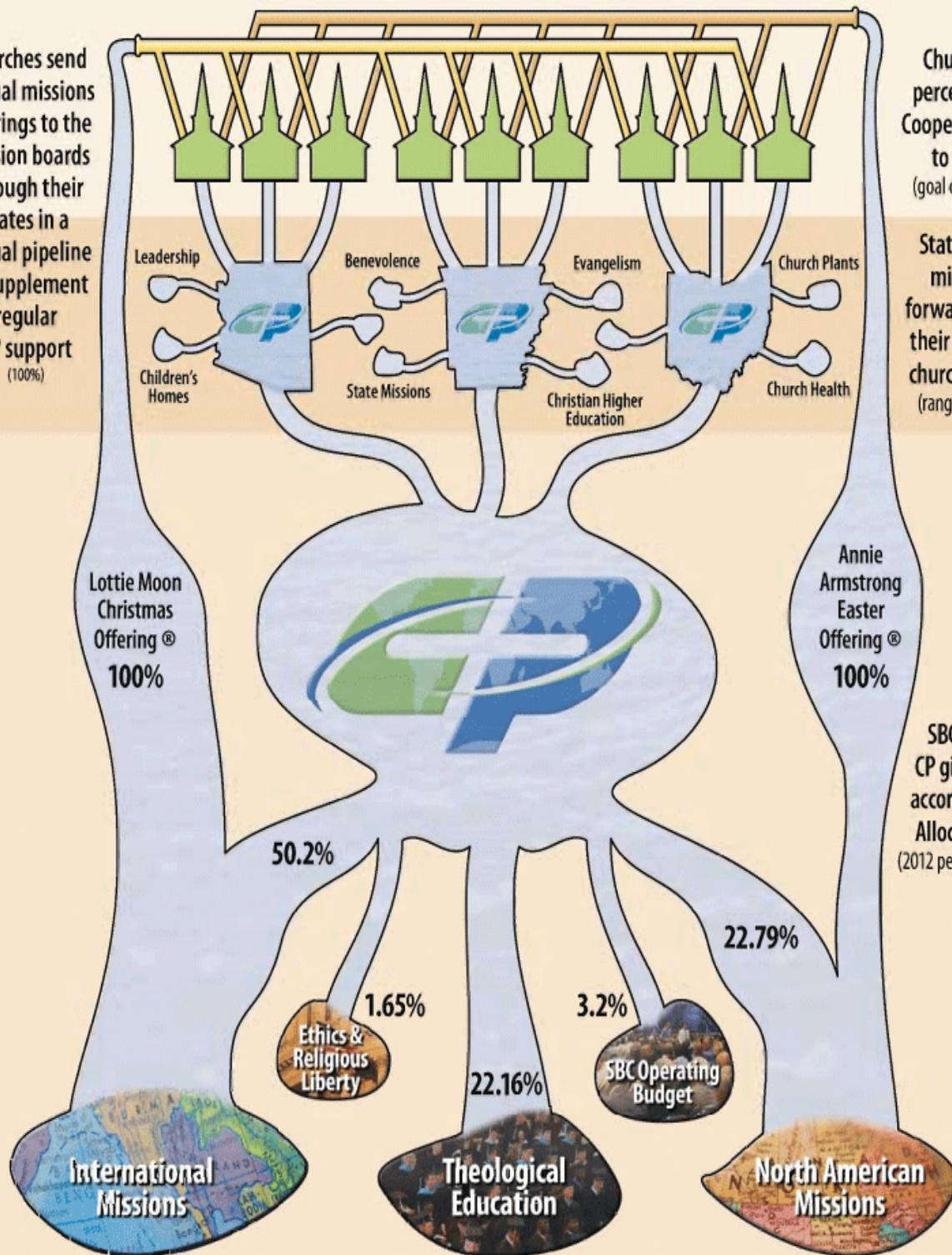


# The Cooperative Program: Like a Mighty River

Churches send annual missions offerings to the mission boards through their states in a virtual pipeline to supplement regular CP support (100%)

Churches send a percentage for the Cooperative Program to their states (goal of 7-15% or more)

States fund state ministries and forward a portion of their gifts from the churches to the SBC (ranges from 35-55%)



Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® 100%

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® 100%

SBC distributes CP gifts it receives according to the CP Allocation Budget (2012 percentages as noted)

International Missions

Ethics & Religious Liberty

Theological Education

SBC Operating Budget

North American Missions

50.2%

1.65%

22.16%

3.2%

22.79%

Leadership

Benevolence

Evangelism

Church Plants

Children's Homes

State Missions

Christian Higher Education

Church Health

## Happy Birthday!

6/01 - David Silverman	6/07 - Edward Zdancewicz	6/15 - Monica Goedhart	6/24 - Tatiana Rodriguez
6/02 - Nevaeh Miles	6/08 - Esmeralda Nieves	6/15 - Rebekah Goodwin	6/24 - Kyle Sweeney
6/02 - Hector Morales	6/09 - Yolanda Irma Biichle	6/15 - Evan Jones	6/25 - Andrea Morris
6/03 - Lauren Garner	6/09 - Clevon McCalla	6/15 - Deborah Veras	6/26 - Luisa Colorado
6/04 - Crystal Ferreira	6/10 - Arturo Borrero	6/17 - Alexandra Kaercher	6/26 - Lori Diehl
6/04 - Jamie Garner	6/10 - Jaime Gomez	6/17 - Alex Koury	6/26 - Nicole Melley
6/05 - Luis Lohuis	6/10 - Jesse Morgan	6/17 - Kadie Lopez	6/26 - Sylvan Pile
6/05 - Joshua McMillan	6/10 - Isabella Oeriba	6/18 - Elise Stutz	6/27 - Ruth Campbell
6/05 - Selenia Perry	6/11 - Lucille Allen	6/19 - Jacob True	6/28 - Nichole Sincore
6/05 - Daniel Santana	6/11 - Benjamin Baxley	6/20 - Howard Harden	6/20 - Ariel Castro
6/06 - Era James	6/11 - Jesse Dickson	6/20 - Summer Munoz	6/30 - Nathalie Norestin
6/07 - Olga Cedano	6/12 - Michael Madera	6/22 - JD Glass	
6/07 - Maleaha Hill	6/12 - Tarra Young	6/22 - Pascale Louise	
6/07 - Ali Jones	6/13 - Leonardo Garcia	6/22 - Fred Oliveira	
6/07 - Megan Jones	6/14 - Dean Sourber	6/23 - Gustavo Alvarado	
6/07 - Giovanni Martinez	6/14 - Jelani Wells	6/24 - Rosie Morales	
6/07 - Greg Wells	6/15 - Nila Castro-Headley	6/24 - Carlos Perez	



## Music Ministry



I would like to give a big thank you for our Media Shout workers. These workers are those who place words, songs, and sermon points, on the screen during each worship service. Thank you Kevin Orosa, Sam McMillan, Benny Helms, Steve Bergeson, Charlie Crumpler and Tony Hall. Thank you to these men who make praise and worship more enjoyable, so enjoyable, you have both hands free for worship! This may sound like a lot of people, but honestly,

we can use many more. If anyone is interested in joining this ministry, please contact Pastor Joe, or myself, and we'll get you trained and started.

Vacation Bible School will soon be here. "Off the Map" is this years theme. Mark your calendar June 22nd through the 26th for Bible study, crafts, music, fun, and fellowship! The youth choir has already begun practicing the music. This group is super stoked about the music! You are guaranteed a fantastic time!

See Lynda Melton or myself if you would like to help in any way. Keep aware of the supply list that will be posted soon, if you would like to donate items.

Our first workers meeting is Tuesday, June 2 in the youth room. Join us with your thinking caps on at 7:00 PM. See you there!

Singing for HIM,  
*Pam*



## Stewardship

May 2015

<b>Contributions for May 2015:</b>	<b>\$ 54,979.00</b>
<b>Monthly budget requirements:</b>	<b>\$ 58,113.95</b>
<b>YTD Contributions:</b>	<b>\$ 417,650.63</b>
<b>YTD Budget:</b>	<b>\$ 406,797.65</b>

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### Deacon Nominations

If you would like to nominate someone as a prospective deacon you can do so by contacting the church office or e-mail your request to fbchoffice@bellsouth.net. A prospective deacon must have been a member of FBCH for one year and meet the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

### Class of 2015



Join us Sunday  
June 7th at 11:00 a.m.  
as we honor our graduates.

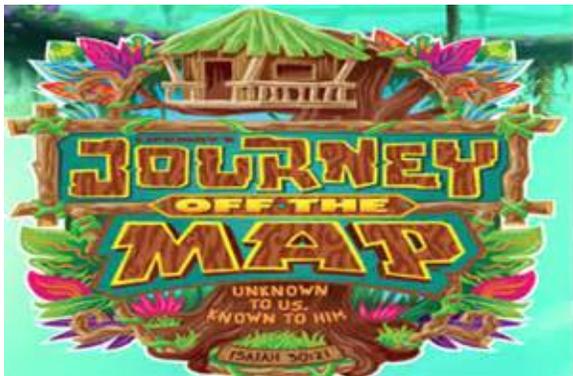


### HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!



28205 SW 125th Ave, Homestead, FL 33030

Join us June 11, 11:30 a.m., as we serve meals and distribute Bibles to the homeless.



Vacation Bible School 2015

Take The Journey!

June 22 - 26

8:30 - 12:30 p.m.

Pre-K through 6th grade

Register online at:

<http://www.fbchomestead.org>

or by calling (305) 247-1662

### Now Hiring Custodian/Maintenance

Immediate position available for full time experienced janitor. "Some landscaping and maintenance is included." Please bring resume to the church office.

### First Things First

**MEN'S  
PRAYER  
BREAKFAST**

June 6, 8:00 a.m.



ONLINE:  
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
FIRST BAPTIST  
CHURCH OF  
HOMESTEAD, FL

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



Summer is here! What an exciting time of the year for our Student Ministry! Here's what's going on this month.

First, on Wednesday nights beginning on June 17, we're bringing back **E3 (Epic Encounter Excursions)**. This was something we began last summer where our Wednesday night **ENCOUNTER** service is held at a different location each week. The weekly schedule of locations is being finalized and will be mailed to each home. Be looking for it in your mailbox in the next week.

Second, we're going to kick off the summer in style at our **Summer Kick-off** on Saturday, June 6 from 2 - 8 pm. We'll meet at the church and then travel to the Mendheim's. There will be group games, swimming, 9 Square in the Air, and a host of other activities! The Student Ministry will be providing ham-

burgers and hot dogs and each student is to bring a 2 liter drink and a bag of chips.

Third, **Graduate Recognition** will take place during the 11am worship service on June 7. This will be a time for us to honor and recognize our graduates for their accomplishment. I hope you'll be there to celebrate with us as we congratulate them.

Fourth, **Vacation Bible School** is this month and that means that we will be hard at work decorating and making preparations to share the love of Jesus with children! Any student that would like to be involved in serving in VBS needs to register online as a volunteer. Visit [www.fbchomestead.org](http://www.fbchomestead.org) and click on the VBS banner. You will be redirected to a page where you can complete a volunteer registration. If you have any questions about the process, please don't hesitate to contact me. We'll also be holding a mandatory training for students that are volunteering at VBS. There are two options for

training: Saturday, June 13 at 2:00 pm or Tuesday, June 16 at 7:00 pm. If you are unable to attend either one of those options, please contact me as soon as possible.

Finally, let me just remind you that one of the core values of our Student Ministry is that we aim to be **Family Focused**. What that means is that we understand that God designed the family to be the primary teachers of spiritual instruction and it is the responsibility of the church to assist families in that endeavor. If there is anything that I, or our ministry, can do to help you as you seek to lead your teenagers spiritually, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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

For His Glory,

*Joe*

