



# The Way

June 2011

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

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

What is it about predictions? There is nothing like a prediction that gets people riled up. Some of you remember Nikita Krushchev's prediction, "We will bury you" in which he promised that Soviet communism would win over U.S. democracy and capitalism. We know how that turned out! Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, predicted in 1938 before the start of World War 2 that there would be "peace in our time." Not exactly! Gen. John Sedgwick said "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance" immediately before being fatally shot in the head at the battle of Spotsylvania in 1864. How's that for last words? Recently, Americans got in an uproar over a false prediction by a false prophet who said that Jesus would return on May 21, 2011. Apparently, Harold Camping never read Matthew 24:36.

Predictions seem to get out of hand around the beginning of the year. I chuckle when passing through the check-out line at the grocery store and the shelves are always stocked with tabloids highlighting outlandish predictions for the upcoming year, none of which ever come to fruition. Yet people keep buying the magazines! And you can't help but wonder if these psychics are so good at what they do, why do they never win the

lottery or warn us before the next earthquake or storm?

I said all of that as somewhat of a disclaimer. I am not a futurist or prophet (in the foretelling sense). But I do have a few predictions to make regarding the future. These are randomly put together with no unifying theme. If most or all fail, please don't attempt to stone me to death in the spirit of Deuteronomy 18:20-22.

First of all, I predict that ministry is going to be increasingly difficult. The largest generation in American history, the Millennials, is also the most lost, unchurched and least likely to have a biblical worldview. This generation is larger than the baby boomers. They feel no compulsion to be in church and think it arrogant to suggest that Jesus is the only way. They cling to sexual values that are in conflict with the Word of God. They see marriage as obsolete, which is why, in case you haven't noticed, our church even today seems to host very few weddings. Contemporary couples are unwilling to agree to pre-marital counseling or abstinence before marriage, thus they either cohabit or marry at the justice of the peace. This generation, by and large, does not do "church weddings." That includes those who are members of evangelical churches.

As this generation replaces the baby boomers in the next few decades, a large

base of the support for local churches will be gone. Unless there is a major spiritual awakening in America in the next couple of decades, churches that currently are the "poster boys" of growth will experience significant decline and many will close their doors altogether. Churches will not be able to sit back and adopt a "come and hear" mentality, where we wait for lost people to come to our building to hear a sermon and get saved during the invitation. (I'm not so sure that was ever biblical to begin with.) Churches that are not willing to abandon this ministry mentality will die. Evangelism will have to become an intentional effort to speak the truth in love and it must become a priority. Churches that allow programs to crowd out evangelism will die.

I predict that evangelism will become electronic and "glocal." No, that's not a typo. Let me explain. Much sharing of the gospel will be done electronically. We now have the ability to meet new friends in other countries and carry out face to face conversations with them on skype or the iphone. My children will never know a time when they were not able to sit in front of the computer, push a button and see Grandma's face engaging them in a live conversation. My wife's phone has an application where she can hold her phone in front of her face and look the person she's talking to in the eyes. Thus, your neighbor isn't likely to be the person who lives next door. Your neighbor is more likely to be

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the person who lives in another country but met you at a point of interest on some web site or through social media. I have a fellow pastor friend in England I met through a message on itunes. We became friends on facebook and can fellowship live on skype. This is what I mean when I say that ministry will be "glocal." Glocal is the merge of "global" and "local." The whole world has become your neighborhood and anyone in it is someone you are likely to befriend and someone with whom you can share Christ. I predict that in the future a very large number of believers will have been led to the Lord by someone in a country they have never seen in person.

As this applies to our church, I believe that the time will soon come when the web site will become the primary means of visiting churches. A person looking for a church will not need to wait until Sunday to find out what a church is about or what the preaching is like. Furthermore, e-invites will become an effective means of reaching a friend. Hear a message that would benefit someone you know going through a trial? Just push one button and your friend has that message waiting for them on their phone, along with a personal plea from you to listen to it.

I predict that Christianity will become a primarily eastern "religion" (as much as I hate using that word). In other words, the United States will be replaced as the primary missionary sender. We are seeing this already. A friend of mine is a missionary in Turkey. He tells me that the majority of missionaries in his country are from South Korea, not the United States. We also know that there are now more born again Christians in China than in the United States. The church in China is one that is currently unspoiled by American consumerism and self-centeredness, making Chinese believers more likely to accept the call to go to the ends of the earth. Personally, I think the shift from Western Christianity to Eastern Christianity may make for a more healthy Christianity.

I predict that many churches will be all too eager to compromise biblical teachings in order to avoid their own demise. We see this already in some of the largest

churches in America. In one Texas church (the largest church in America), the pastor freely admits that he rarely mentions sin in his sermons. Another pastor of a 15,000 member church recently published a book denying the existence of hell. People are flocking to these churches because this is what they want to hear. Churches will have to decide between larger numbers or faithfulness to God even more than they do now.

I predict that churches are going to lose a precious musical heritage if they do not think of a way to repackage the hymns. I love the hymns. I believe that these songs have stood the test of time for a reason. I believe that the hymns did a far better job of teaching theology than most music being written for churches today. I believe that if we sing a steady diet of weak theology, we'll have a lot of weak theologians in the pews. If the hymns are packaged in a 1950's style, however, I just don't see where they will be heard once the baby boomers have passed. (I do believe that the hymns can be reclaimed and passed on to future generations if we are willing to sing them in a way that has cross generational appeal. This would be my preference.)

Most of these predictions seem like negative stuff, so let me share some positive predictions. Our society will resemble more and more the world of the early church, in which the gospel exploded in growth. There is nothing happening in the world around us that must hinder God's church. Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against us. Thus, a spirit filled church in which the Word of God is honored, prayer is practiced, holiness is lived out and evangelism is carried out has nothing to worry about! I predict that the gospel will continue to be the power of God unto salvation. I predict that persecution will take place for North American believers and that this persecution will strengthen the church, not hurt it. As Tertullian said about 1,900 years ago, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

I predict that more and more,

churches will care more about worshipping in spirit and in truth than they do about man-made traditions. I predict that prayer will once again catch on, once American churches finally get it in their thick skulls that we cannot succeed without it. I believe that the average church member will be forced by our culture to know what they believe and why, and this is a very good thing. I believe that God is calling up a powerful generation of younger pastors. (And by younger, I mean younger than me!) I predict that churches will become more diverse, resembling the church Paul described in which there is no "Greek or Jew... Barbarian or Scythian, slave or free." (Col. 3:11) I predict that the next few decades will be some of the most exciting, albeit challenging, decades in the history of the church. I, for one, can't wait to see what God has in store. Never has there been a time when a generation could make more of an impact for the gospel as the present day. And we are blessed to live in one of the few places in the world where God is bringing the world to our footsteps. Please, I beg you, see your community through the lenses of the Great Commission and be in awe at what God is doing. Give thanks to God for placing you in South Florida because for whatever reason, God put you in the one place where you can have the greatest impact for Jesus Christ. You can complain about the problems we have or you can get on your knees and thank God for the incredible privilege of serving Him at such a time as this. I hope you choose the latter.

One more prediction. Jesus will come again. No, you aren't going to hear any dates from me, but the fact of his return cannot be denied. Don't allow the false predictions of others to keep you from watching and waiting.

Pastor  
Howard



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- |                            |                            |                         |                         |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 06/01 - Gabriela Rodriguez | 06/10 - Jesse Morgan       | 06/17 - Alex Koury      | 06/27 - Ruth Campbell   |
| 06/01 - David Silverman    | 06/10 - Isabella Oeriba    | 06/17 - Kadie Lopez     | 06/27 - Maddy Sowards   |
| 06/02 - Hector Morales     | 06/10 - Guillana Perona    | 06/20 - Ryan Loudy      | 06/28 - Nichole Sincore |
| 06/04 - Mike Gonzalez      | 06/10 - Isabella Perona    | 06/20 - Howard Harden   | 06/29 - Crystal Bennett |
| 06/05 - Luis Lohuis        | 06/11 - Lucille Allen      | 06/20 - Summer Munoz    | 06/29 - Benjamin Joyner |
| 06/05 - Joshua McMillan    | 06/11 - Jess Dickson       | 06/20 - Kostina Rives   | 06/29 - Jeremy Tonge    |
| 06/05 - Daniel Santana     | 06/11 - Thomas Ebersole    | 06/22 - Kevin Jardines  |                         |
| 06/07 - Alexander Jones    | 06/11 - Jack Morris        | 06/22 - Pascale Louise  |                         |
| 06/07 - Greg Wells         | 06/12 - Cortney Asbell     | 06/22 - Fred Oliveira   |                         |
| 06/08 - Esmeralda Nieves   | 06/14 - Dean Sourber       | 06/24 - Rosie Morales   |                         |
| 06/08 - Omar Nieves        | 06/15 - Nila Castro        | 06/24 - Carlos Perez    |                         |
| 06/09 - Yolanda Biichle    | 06/15 - Rebekah Goodwin    | 06/24 - Kyle Sweeney    |                         |
| 06/10 - Marie Allen        | 06/15 - Evan Jones         | 06/25 - Ashley Campbell |                         |
| 06/10 - Arturo Borrero     | 06/15 - Ray Santiago       | 06/26 - Luisa Colorado  |                         |
| 06/10 - Jaime Gomez        | 06/16 - James Leyva        | 06/26 - Lori Diehl      |                         |
| 06/10 - William Hills      | 06/17 - Alexandra Kaercher | 06/26 - Nicole Melley   |                         |



## Music Ministry



School is out and summer is upon us while some families will soon begin their summer vacations. Webster puts it; “Vacation — leisure time away from work devoted to rest or pleasure.” A time of rest and relaxation; a time to pick up that book you have been longing to read. A vacation could perhaps be a time to pick up a summer class or two that you were not able to do before; or a time to catch up with family and friends. Vacations sound like a lot of fun, don’t they? Yet while you are on vacation it does not mean a

vacation from God. When you are out of town, find a Bible believing church in the area or attend with your family. Don’t take a vacation from God! One should also remember to tithe, don’t take your tithe with you. Be the cheerful, spirit led tither God intends you to be.

Summer will be busy around FBC! **Strength Team**—June 12 & 13—both services begin at 7:00 pm. **Vacation Bible School**, “Big Apple Adventure” June 20—24, 8:30 am —12:30 pm. Bible

stories, songs, crafts, recreation—doesn’t that sound like fun? Stop by and see the excitement the kids and adults are having. If you are willing to work, we have a spot just for you! I guarantee you won’t want to miss out. The sanctuary choir will wrap up summer with a musical **“Into All the World”**. Stay tuned for details!

Singing for HIM,  
*Pam*



### Stewardship


May 2011

<b>Contributions for May 2011:</b>	<b>\$ 53,741.74</b>
<b>Monthly budget requirements:</b>	<b>\$ 57,116.56</b>
<b>Contributions Year to date:</b>	<b>\$ 406,446.01</b>
<b>Year to date budget requirement: ( Through 35 Sundays)</b>	<b>\$ 399,815.85</b>

# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES




*Beach Baptism*  
July 16, 9:00 a.m.  
Homestead Bayfront Park  
9698 SW 328th St



**Men's prayer breakfast**  
**Saturday, June 4th**  
**8:30 a.m.**  
**In the fellowship hall**



**PRAYER CANVASSING**  
**June 4th**  
**Training 9:00am**  
**Canvassing 10:00am**




**Caring for Miami**  
Plan advocate needed to consult young ladies with crises pregnancy. Training June 11, 9am-4pm. Contact the church office 305-247-162.



**MIKE HAGEN STRENGTH TEAM**  
**Sunday, June 12th 6:30 p.m.**  
**Monday, June 13th 7:00 p.m.**




*Happy Father's Day*  
*June 19th*



**Big Apple Adventure**  
**June 20 - 24**  
**8:30am - 12:30pm**

**Vacation Bible School**

We are now accepting registration forms for children in grades k4-6th. Forms are available on the table in the front vestibule or call the church office at 305-247-1662, you may also down load the registration form at [www.fbchomestead.org](http://www.fbchomestead.org)



ONLINE:  
WWW.FBCHOMESTEAD.ORG

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
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CHURCH OF  
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**Building bridges...empowering  
people...changing lives!**

## Six<sup>ty</sup>3 Students Ministry

Summer is always an exciting time for our Student Ministry! With more free time to participate in activities, we like to take advantage of the unique opportunities God places before us. Here are a few things to keep in mind for the month of June.

Graduate Recognition is Sunday, June 5. We will be honoring all of our high school and college graduates at the 11 am service and then treating them and their family to a luncheon. Please join us as we honor our graduates for their accomplishment.

We will be hosting the Strength Team on June 12-13. These are guys who will perform amazing feats of strengths for the purpose of creating a platform from which to communicate the gospel. I am

so excited about this opportunity that we have been given to reach

out to members of our community who might not otherwise agree to step foot in church. I hope you are taking every opportunity to invite family and friends to come in order that they might hear the gospel. Invite cards are available for you to pick up to pass out. Please take advantage of this unique opportunity.

VBS is June 20-24. I know that *many* of our students love helping with VBS every year! It is a lot of work but always a *tremendous* blessing to see how God uses us in the lives of children. If your student is interested in helping with VBS this year, please have them see either myself, Lynda Melton, or Pam Helms to sign up.

Finally, I know this isn't technically in June, but our Summer

Mission Trip is July 9-15. We're headed to Jacksonville, FL this year to work with Words to Works Ministries to conduct Backyard Bible Clubs, block parties, and working with local community organizations to take the gospel into Jacksonville. Our students have already attended the first of 3 training meetings for the trip and I am encouraged and excited as I anticipate all that God is going to do in and through us during this trip. Also, if you are able to help support our students financially with any amount, please see me. Your donation *of any amount* will go a long way toward helping a student share the gospel in Jacksonville this summer.

Thanks for the privilege of serving you and serving with you for the glory of God! It truly is a joy!

For His Glory,

*Joe*

