



The President's Perspective



2006 Kick-off in Miami

It is always a delightful thing to minister in a church that is effectively reaching its community with the gospel. It is an even more blessed thing to return to such a church. That was our privilege this past week, as we returned, for the fifth time, to First Baptist Church of Westwood Lake in Miami, Florida.

Since our last visit, two years ago, this growing church has experienced some dramatic and exciting changes. Pastor Marc Mortensen, beginning his 38th year with this ministry (his third as Senior Pastor), has led the church to begin a beautiful renovation of the church auditorium, as well as other upgrades to the church's two properties. While facilities that reflect the majesty of our Savior are important, without doubt, the most exciting thing about First Baptist is its love for people. I have never sensed a greater love on the part of the church for one another or a greater love for the lost. That flame of love was significantly fanned over the course of the week, as we saw 41 souls saved in the church and school. Each evening, the auditorium was filled, on both main floor and balcony, with people who were eager for what the Lord had to say to them.

Twice each day, I was privileged to speak to approximately 500 in the Jr. High and High School. These are some of the most respectful and responsive young people to whom I get the opportunity to preach. Their attentiveness is, no doubt, the result of an outstanding faculty that genuinely loves and seriously challenges the students to greater degrees of commitment to Christ.

I certainly realize that every ministry has its weaknesses. However, First Baptist has one of the strongest church staffs that I have ever seen. Their love for the Savior and each other is contagious. Each of the pastoral staff (Pastor Mortensen, Asst. Pastor Rico Garcia, Brother Bill Thomson, Brother Scott Birt) are not only wonderful examples of Christ-likeness, but have become great friends in the ministry. It is refreshing to fellowship and labor together with men of high integrity who do things worthy of the Savior we serve.

Over the years, we have met many wonderful pastors and people to whom our hearts have been knit. This church has become one of the Kistlers' favorites for many reasons, not the least of which is its philosophy expressed in the church motto: "Our only aim-to save souls; Our only means-the gospel of Christ."

Dave Kistler

President,

H.O.P.E Ministries International

www.hopeministriesonline.com

Email comments to:

davekistler@hopeministriesonline.com

We appreciate your input, but please understand that due to the volume of email that we receive, we are unable to personally respond to each email.