

Houston's First Baptist: Giving Life Away

by Reagan O'Hare

Houston's First Baptist Church (HFB) urged it's community to spring into action at the March 2 "Giving Life Away Expo '08" Missions Fair.

Missionaries, church members and community volunteers united to get the word out that missions are essential to the Christian walk and can also be fun and exciting.

Rochelle Ferrada, one of the event coordinators, said, "Pastor Gregg Matte taught a sermon the same Sunday called Giving Life Away which is what the missions and ministry life is all about."

"Missions are the life line of the church. It is through these ministry opportunities where we can serve and learn to be a true servant of the Lord," Ferrada said.

"The Expo was a way of sharing with the church what we should be passionate about and where we should serve. Go and make disciples of all nations," Ferrada said.



Lincoln Goodwin

Missionary to the Phillipines, India and the Inner City

One of the missionaries present, Lincoln Goodwin, who was a missionary in the Phillipines, India and the inner city missions, said missions are important because "Christ tells us to.

"Primarily we don't want to look in, we want to reach out and share Christ with the world. We want to reach out to other parts of the community, whether it is across the street or around the world," Goodwin explained.

Goodwin mentioned that some people think that you have to go door to door to be an evangelistic type of missionary, but he said mission work can be more diverse. Wright, who traveled to Africa, Turkey and Mexico missions, agreed. "You go with a team of people; everybody is involved in different levels."

Rodger Reynolds

HFBC Deacon

Rodger Reynolds, a Deacon of HFBC, said one of the mission fair goals was also to remind people of the power of prayer.

"Prayers are what under girth the whole church. Without prayer nothing is going to happen," Reynolds said. "Prayer is about praying with faith, and it's like the Bible says, 'How will they know unless they hear?' "

Reynolds, whose daughter and son-in-law left in January to serve as IMB missionaries to Indonesia, said, "It's about trying to get people involved in something they can be comfortable in.

"The more involved people are (in prayer), the more God leads you in the direction you have gifts in," Reynolds said.

"It's like the story I heard of a missionary who was sick in Chicago and this little old lady felt a burden to pray for him and he got well and she asked him what time he got well and it was the exact time of her prayers," Reynolds added.

Reynolds' daughter is slated to be in Indonesia for at least three years. He says the Internet keeps them close in daily chats and although it is tough to have her so far from home, he is blessed by a community of other missionary's parents that help him with support and prayer.

Karla Turner

Missionary to Guatemala and Venezuela

Karla Turner, who has been a missionary in Guatemala and Venezuela, will leave in October to work in Venezuela with a university professional ministry. She comes from a family of missionaries. She said when it's God's plan, "You just know." Turner said leaving is not scary. "If you feel called you don't have to be brave to do it because God's going to take care of you. . . There's just a peace."

Turner's journey to the mission field full time began twenty years ago when she surrendered her life to Christ in the seventh grade. She became involved in local ministries, short term and now long-term ministries. Last year, as she was serving in Guatemala, she felt like "It was time to go."

Justin Fountain

Mechanical Engineer and Part-time Missionary

Justin Fountain, a full time mechanical engineer, uses his flex time to work with a mission group that helps students in the Caribbean. Fountain says his ministry is all about visiting with Christian high school students within the region and helping them to find support and encouragement. This mission ministry may include missionaries, financial support and even people who can even donate musical instruments.

Fountain said any talent can be used to promote Christ's love, for example, music. "Music is huge (in this region and it reaches people powerfully), one year we had more than 20 donated instruments in a band there, everything from saxes to harmonicas."



Conclusion

Involving nearly 100 volunteers, the mission expo welcomed hundreds of participants. Many felt blessed to be apart of the event which also celebrated prayer ministry, prison ministry, internship programs and Aid Sudan Foundation.

Ferrada said, "The act of missions is humility- -something we struggle with everyday as we are bombarded with selfish pleasures and temptations. The life of missions negates and contradicts what the world offers or portrays as true."

"I think that is what we are constantly reminded of when we come to work everyday. It's all about Jesus and not about us. "We must decrease as He increases," Ferrada said.