



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

June 21, 2006

Pastors' Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

I am one of eleven church members currently meeting twice a week to discuss our church's response to homeless people who make their way to our door. Our discussions are not easy. Different perspectives have been articulated. Competing ideas have been put on the table. But here is some good news: these eleven are committed to hearing each other respectfully and to seeking the leadership of the Spirit in discerning the most faithful course for our church in the matters before us.

In terms of further process, here's what's likely to happen. A document will be created by the task force, stating the convictions of its members and offering what, in our view, is the best course (or courses) of action. In September the congregation would meet and offer responses to these ideas. The task force would then reconvene to take this input under advisement, to review our own work in light of it, and to devise final proposals for church action. After ample opportunity for members to see these proposals, a special business session of the church would occur, and a "vote" would take place. I put the word *vote* in quotation marks because of my fervent hope that what we do that day will not feel like a contest of competing wills but mostly like a rediscovery of unity.

It would be wrong of me to say much about what has been discussed in our meetings; but I think it's fair, based on what I've been hearing, to offer two larger reflections.

The first is this: on this issue, most of us have been thinking in terms that are far too small. We see men sleeping on our porch at night; we have varying feelings about what it means to step among them after night meetings or to see their belongings on church property; we have congregational discussions where our differing views are expressed. But the homeless poor and the homeless mentally-ill among us pose far greater issues than this; they raise much larger questions about what we might do to minister to them. In yesterday's meeting of the task force, reference was made to discerning our church's *mission*. Does that mission include service to the homeless poor and mentally ill in Ann Arbor? By virtue of our Vespers ministry, the church has already said yes. Now how much bigger is our local mission to be? How creative is the Spirit calling us to be in serving "the least of these" in Ann Arbor? Here's a heads up. What you'll receive from the task force will likely range well beyond the handful of men who sleep at our door; it will point to the larger need and the larger opportunities.

Secondly, I'm struck by how people like us might stumble into a new sense of mission. So far as I can tell, there are at least two ways that a sense of mission is found. One I will call "visionary." A sensitive individual or small group is inspired by a felt need and takes quick initiative to do whatever is needed. I would say that's how our Vespers ministry was begun so many years ago; Linda and John Tate's response in creating that ministry to the poor and homeless can rightly be called visionary. But there's another way it happens. It's the "show-up-at-your-door" way. In this case, a problem *comes to you* that, in one way or another, you really must deal with. In the end, new discoveries occur because you were forced to face what was facing you so closely.

Perhaps it's that way with the sleepers at our door. Perhaps we as a church would never have been visionary enough concerning those whose needs are most desperate in this town; and the bodies on our porch have come to say, "But you must decide. You must decide about us, and also about others for whom we stand, and about our place and their place in the mission of your church."

These are the issues before us. Before too long, they will be the issues before you.

FBC News & Happenings

Visit From Nandasmu

We have invited pastor Manuel Ruiz and Eddler Ruiz, who helped implement the recent egg production business at the Xically farm in Nandasmu, to visit us in September. That visit is possible only if we cover the travel expenses. It would be very helpful to us if one or more people would be able to contribute frequent flyer miles for either American Airline or Northwest. Please contact Toni Stearns or Ron Gregg.

New Sexton: Becky Miller

Becky Miller is a senior studying linguistics at the University of Michigan. Originally from Howell, Michigan, she has been living in Ann Arbor and attending First Baptist since 2003. Becky is a member of the choir and rings handbells. She also enjoys knitting, and she has recently learned to knit socks by hand. After finishing her studies, Becky hopes to use her linguistic training to work with minority language groups to preserve endangered and dying languages.



We have two sextons this summer; Becky Miller and Freda Yawson. Freda has been with us since September 2004, and plans to stay through December of this year. We plan to have a total of five sextons in the Fall.

Baby Announcement

Word has been received that former sextons, Avery and Karen Scoville, have welcomed a third addition to their family. Baby Jasmine was born in early June and joins sister Janine (age 4) and brother Silas (age 2) in the happy family.

2006 Church Picnic

Traditionally, the Board of Christian Education sponsors an all-church picnic the second Sunday in June. This year, we have decided to move the picnic to Sunday, July 30, from 12 - 3:00 p.m. - to avoid all the June recitals, open houses, etc. and to give us something fun to do in the middle of the summer. A sign-up sheet will be at the information counter starting July 2.



Congregational Meeting

Sunday, July 9, 5:30-8:00 p.m.

Fellowship Hall

Rev. Dr. Michael Williams, Executive Minister of ABC-MI, will be meeting with interested members of our congregation to discuss some difficult and controversial issues facing our denomination at the regional level; ample time for questions from those present will be allowed. For those not able to attend, questions may be written and submitted ahead of time (please send to stacey@fbca2.org).

Sandwich fixings will be provided; attendees are invited to bring a salad or dessert. A sign-up sheet will be at the Information Counter starting July 2nd.

FACT: 1 of every 6 people in the world lacks access to safe drinking water-- that's about 1 billion people!

FACT: Eighty countries, home to 40% of the world's population, are encountering serious water shortages.

FACT: One toilet flush in the U.S. uses as much water as the average person in a developing country uses for a whole day's drinking, cooking, washing, and cleaning.

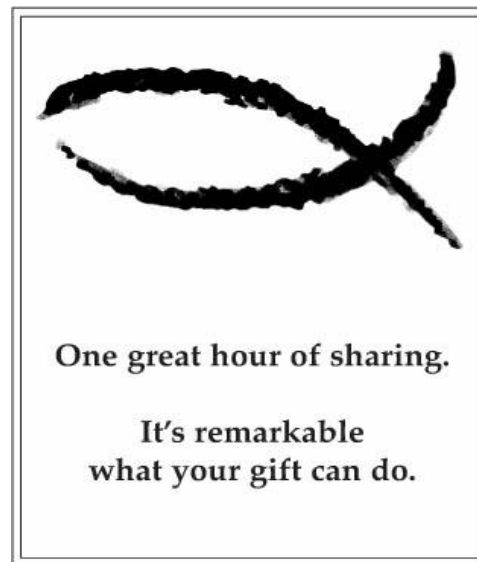
FACT: Two million people -- most of them children -- die each year from waterborne disease.

FACT: Of our most basic human needs, air is first; water is second.

FACT: 70% of the world is covered with water. Of this total water supply, 97.5% is salt water.

One Great Hour of Sharing serves people in over 80 countries around the world. Sponsored by nine Christian U.S. denominations and Church World Service, One Great Hour of Sharing makes sure that we can respond to needs as soon as they happen and that tens of thousands of people receive support for ongoing relief, rehabilitation, and development.

~The One Great Hour of Sharing offering will be received throughout the month of June ~



For Families

(adapted by Sue Ellen from the *Taking Faith Home* newsletter by Pastor Greg Priebbenow)

Mark 4:35-41 Christ Calming the Sea



Faith Talk:

Discuss in your household or small group:

- Share about or draw a picture to represent a time when you felt scared? What did you do?
- How does faith in Jesus help us when we are afraid?
- In 2 Corinthians 6:4-10, the apostle Paul writes of his hardships as a follower of Jesus. How might God use our experiences of hardship to bring about good ?

Service:

Think of someone you know who is going through a tough time. Plan a special gift for them (ie: a bunch of flowers, a plate of cookies or a prepared meal). Arrange to visit them during this next week.



Parent Toolbox:

Helping Children Cope with Fear

1. **Take children's fears seriously.** Do not force a child to be brave. Respect their feelings and try to understand them. A child who is scared is really scared. Do not show anger or ridicule. Avoid saying something like: "It's silly to be scared". Telling children that it's OK to be scared is comforting to them.
2. **Listen to children** and ask them what they have to say about their fears, their feelings, their thoughts on what has happened. Check in with them regularly. This will help them to better understand the situation and deal with their emotions.
3. **Try to explain** the events as well as you can. Children, like adults, are more frightened when they do not understand what is happening around them. Adults must do their best to keep the children informed about what has happened and what may happen. Acknowledge what's frightening about it. It helps them feel less alone if they know that their feelings are similar to yours.
4. **Give reassurance.** Children usually need reassurance about their personal safety. They need to know that people are doing all they can to keep them safe.

Operation Home Delivery



Habitat for Humanity's hurricane recovery program, Operation Home Delivery, needs your help. Operation Home Delivery has been making great progress over the last several months. Thanks to the efforts of our volunteers and donor partners, 220 homes are under construction and nearly 80 have been completed all along the Gulf Coast. But there is much more to build and the number of available volunteers is beginning to run short.

We'd like to ask that you please consider offering a week of your time to Operation Home Delivery as a volunteer. While much has been accomplished to this point, the need for volunteers continues on the coast.

If you are willing to volunteer or perhaps organize a group of volunteers, please contact our Operation Home Delivery at ohdresponse2@habitat.org or by phone at 1-800-HABITAT ext. 2183. You can also sign up on our website at https://www.habitat.org/cd/ohd/gik_involvement.aspx. Select the volunteer option and complete the information.

If you are not interested in volunteering or cannot do so at this time, please consider sending this email to a friend. Encourage them to sign up as a Habitat volunteer and pass the email along to their friends as well.

There is much more work to do for many, many months to come all along the Gulf Coast. We ask that you please do everything you can to encourage others you know to volunteer for Operation Home Delivery. You might also consider sending this information to local churches, synagogues, or civic groups.

Thank you for your continued support of our efforts. With your help and the help of others, we can continue to help hurricane-affected families rebuild their homes and lives.

Please see the locations and volunteer needs below:

Thibodaux, Louisiana: 250 volunteers a week until September 2006

Slidell, Louisiana: 90 volunteers a week until January 2007

Beaumont, Texas: 50-75 volunteers a week until December 2006

Lauderdale County, Meridian, Mississippi: 22 volunteers a week until August 2006

Biloxi, Mississippi: 30 volunteers a week until December 2006

Bay St. Louis, Mississippi: 20 volunteers a week until December 2006

Mobile, Alabama: 20 volunteers a week until October 2006



July 2006



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Communion 4:00 Moyer-Serou Wedding	3	4 Independence Day (Office Closed) 5:30 Vespers	5	6	7	8
9 (Newsletter Deadline)	10	11	12 7:30 Executive Council	13	14	15
16	17	18 5:30 Vespers	19	20	21	22
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Art Fair → </div>						
23 (Newsletter Deadline)	24	25	26 7:30 Davis-Diels ChristCare	27	28	29
30 12:30 Picnic Allmendinger Park	31					



July Birthdays

Alexandria Williams	1	Jackie Snyder	10	Missy Snyder	21
Tim Hillebrand	1	Edgar Willis	12	Joel Hastings	22
Nicola Kiver	1	Cesar Alaniz	12	Megan Hudson	24
Wayne Lamerson	3	Ricky Rushton	13	Kathryn Gregg	25
John Floyd, Jr.	3	Marlene Francis	15	Berniece Fister	27
Julia Crowe	4	James Rushton	15	Isabelle Louis	28
Gail Curtis	5	Charise Hastings	16	Alice Moyer	29
Lynn Blunt	6	Paul Simpson Duke	18	Aleta Schwartzenberger	31
Linda Tate	8	Elli Barron	21		

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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors

Dated material:

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

Next Deadline:

Sunday, July 9, 2006

The Art Fair is almost here!

It will soon be July, and the Youth are looking for Volunteers to supervise the church parking lot during the Art Fairs. A sign-up sheet is available at the Information Counter. Please consider which 2-hour shift will work for you. Remember that as a "thank you," all Volunteers received a FREE half-day parking spot for their own time at the Art Fairs. Brandy and the Youth organize this event, but all funds are divided between the Youth and our Sister Church in Nandasmo, Nicaragua. Your commitment of time is greatly appreciated!