

An Honest Self-Evaluation

This summer as we've looked at Scripture - particularly what Jesus said about His followers - we've seen what He said about the radical life He gave us and the radical call to follow. And we've asked the question, **"how do we measure up - are we following like He wants?"**

Last February the people of Forcey took a Spiritual Life Survey. We had 318 responses to the survey. This gave us a good benchmark of where we are in our relationship to Christ. It measured our spiritual attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and our participation in and satisfaction with church activities.



This is what we learned: our personal spiritual practices (prayer, Bible reading, etc.) were above average; the effectiveness of the church in helping spiritual growth was just average; and putting faith into action was only average. We are a maturing congregation (more older people than most churches who took survey), more culturally diverse, highly educated, wealthy and generous givers, and long-tenured (many at FBC for over 10 years).

Spiritually, we are equally divided between convinced, committed and consumed. However, not enough curious (unsaved) people took the survey for us to make any conclusions concerning them. Do curious people even take such a survey? Yes, according to 1400 other churches. But we admitted that we don't invite many unsaved to church.

Things we do well: teaching—we do it well and are satisfied; we rank very high in our agreement with key Bible doctrines; we are well above average in key spiritual practices; we are faithful in attending worship services (92%); 50% of us are involved in small groups; and our service in the church is well above average. We have a lot of good things going for us.

But we need improvement: only 52% are satisfied with the way FBC helps them in spiritual growth; and we prefer the security found inside these walls rather than the risk of exporting our faith. We want to improve our prayer life, we want the church to provide more help in our spiritual growth, we want leaders to model how to grow, we want to be empowered to go out on our own in ministry, and we want to improve a culture of serving outside these walls.

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From the survey we see two key conclusions:

- There is a gap between what we believe and what we do. A large majority of us say Christ is first and our identity is in Christ. Yet most of us don't want to give our life for Christ. We value sound doctrine from the pastor, but don't want to be pushed to evangelize.
- We are not engaging/empowering younger generations.

This left us with three obvious steps of action:

- (1) **strengthen our outward focus;**
- (2) **develop relational discipleship alongside others; and**
- (3) **engage and empower our younger generations.**

Next month I will share with you what I believe is the key weak link creating our gap between what we believe and putting faith into action. But right now I am asking you to pray. We need all of us to pray—to ask God to make our next steps clear and simple, and to change each of our hearts so that we own the mission. We must decide, *this is what I want*: to be a disciple whatever the cost, and to live it out alongside someone else, to see them become a disciple of Jesus too. Because nothing will really change or last through programs—it has to be our hearts.

~ *Pastor Phil Powers, Senior Pastor*

discipleship

n. the process of transforming all people into fully devoted, mature followers of Christ.

Egypt Needs Our Prayers



Not too long ago you could easily see children of Christians, Jews, moderate Muslims, Greek and Italians all living and playing together in their backyards, with watchful adults courteously sharing their lives. Unfortunately that beautiful image has been clouded by dark smoke and fumes, with destruction and sadness taking its place.

Recently high level politicians have fallen from power and radical Muslims have taken much stronger and more prominent roles, despite the efforts of the military and police to promote stability. One result has been that innocent Egyptians, including many Christians, have become the targets of persecution and attack.

Please pray for peace, justice and stability in Egypt. Pray for the Christian community to continue to embody the love, patience and meekness of Christ and for God's protection for them. Pray for Egypt's future, that the anger and violence we see there now would not develop into longer term terrorism or oppression.

~ *From a concerned U.S. Citizen*

Soul Winning at Forcecy



As His encounter with the Samaritan woman illustrates, "Jesus wanted [His disciples] to realize that as long as we are willing to go to all types of people, we will always find souls ready for the gospel. He also wanted them to know that the harvesting process is a team sport. Some sow and some reap, but both can rejoice together" (Earley & Wheeler, *Evangelism Is . . .* 88).

On Sunday, June 16 I shared in the second service about a young lady I met through Bridges International, who was experiencing great difficulties. I asked for prayer that God would use these difficulties to bring her into a personal relationship with Himself, and I am delighted to tell you that He did just that. On Tuesday August 6, just 17 days before returning to Asia, Linda trusted Christ as her Savior from sin. Over the next two days and without any prompting from me, she began to share her new-found faith with family and friends.

On Sunday, August 18, Linda visited Forcecy (first time in a church) and met many of you who were praying for her, starting last November when her baby came prematurely. You gave her a good picture of what it means to be in God's family. She said "the church is really like a family." Pray for her husband who desperately needs a relationship with Jesus Christ. Pray for her spiritual growth, the connections that are being made in her home country, protection for her and her baby (Jane), completion of her studies, and salvation for her family who are impressed with the Christian love shown to their daughter in a foreign land.

I am glad that you could be a part of this harvest.

~ Norma Silvera, member of the Evangelism Team

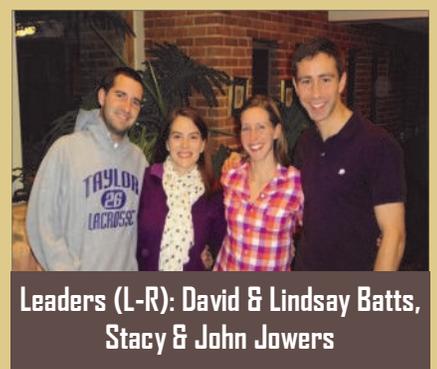
If you are interested in being part of the Evangelism Team, or would like more information about this ministry, send an email to [Ralph Zimmerman](mailto:Ralph.Zimmerman).



Can you believe it? It has now already been one year since The Bridge started here at Forcecy. For those of you who aren't familiar with us, The Bridge is Forcecy's college-age ministry. We are a branch of the three Young Adult Ministries. The leaders are John & Stacy Jowers and David & Lindsay Batts. Also, Tiffany Mallett and Greg Varner have recently joined our leadership

team. We have had a lot of fun this past year, growing in our community, encouraging each other, and seeking God's will and purpose for the lives of college students on campuses in the Washington DC area and beyond. We have a strong, tight-knit fellowship in The Bridge.

We've had a few fun events that are now becoming traditional: Bridge vs. Teens flag football as well as end-of-the-school year barbeques. We've studied Francis Chan's [Basic](#) and [Crazy Love](#) series, Stephen Baldwin's [I Am Second](#) series, and Kyle Idleman's, [Not A Fan](#) series. And now, since being challenged to be committed followers of Christ, we are seeking ways to go out as a college community to our campuses and seek disciples. We're actively being a part of Forcecy's current directive to go outside the walls of our church to spread the Gospel.



Leaders (L-R): David & Lindsay Batts, Stacy & John Jowers

Please pray for our ministry in the following ways: primarily that God will use us as students on our college campuses and young adults in the workforce to be His ambassadors and spread the Gospel, that God will direct the paths of the students as they seek His Will for their future professions, and that more college students in the area will attend a local church for spiritual growth, including Forcecy.

**An EPIC BATTLE.
A DARING RESCUE.
Your HEART is ON THE LINE.
Step into the Story.**



There's a seminar for teens and adults of all ages and a simultaneous seminar for elementary age kids, called **KIDS IN THE BOOK**. Snacks, lunch, workbooks provided.

**\$25/per adult; \$15/per FIRST elementary age child
(additional elementary age siblings are FREE)**

Date: Saturday, October 5th

Time: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Location: Forcey

**OT
LIVE**



It's the story of you.

The story of the Old Testament is the best kind of story – **it's a true story**. It's a true story that tells of people who actually lived in history and **events that actually happened in history**. It's a true story that tells of the amazing reality that the mighty and perfect **God wants to be close to His people who are neither mighty nor perfect**.

While it's the story of human history, this story is also your story. Learn your story with **OT Live**. Walk Thru the Bible's Old Testament adventure for students, **OT Live**, is a journey through the Old Testament and has helped students tie together the pieces of the Bible in a way that's understandable and relevant to their lives.

- Experience the story of the Bible in a way that makes **God's Word come alive**.
- Learn **77 handsigns** designed to help you understand the big picture of the Old Testament.
- Discover **three foundational truths about God** and the way His Kingdom works.
- See **beyond the facts** of the Bible and **encounter God**, its author.

Step into the story and change your world.

[Click here for a registration form](#)



**Blood Drive scheduled
Saturday, September 28th
8:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. @ Forcey. Look
for the INOVA truck in the parking lot.**

**Donating blood is safe and a healthy thing to do.
It won't cost you a thing, but an hour of your time.**

Not only do you get a **free** mini physical, including blood pressure check, heart rate, temperature and iron levels, but it's the fastest way to lose a pound!

Qualifications to Donate - Most healthy people 17 years of age and older can donate blood. You must weigh at least 110 pounds. (16 years of age must present a consent form signed by a parent or guardian).

For more information on how you can be part of a Lifesaving Team, contact Carmella (Joy) Wright at 301-741-7099 by phone or text. Teenagers welcome!!!

~ Joy Wright for the Health Ministry

"I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: by no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward-to Jesus. I'm off and running and I'm not turning back."

Philippians 3: 12-14 (The Message)



The fall session of Body & Soul inspires us to: Reach Inward. Reach Outward. Reach Upward. Reach for God's promises. Reach into your own heart and check your attitudes and motivations. Reach for God in prayer. Reach out to change your world and make a difference. Reach into God's Holy Word for hope and for comfort. Reach up to God in worship and praise.

Know that as you reach, you are "in His hands." In fact, as it says in Isaiah 49:16-God has engraved us on the palms of His hands. What a powerful image-all of our names are engraved on the palm of His hands. What a comfort and joy to know that God is reaching for us with a love that is beyond our understanding.

Ladies are invited to this fall session of Body & Soul, **Reach**. The 75-minute workout includes cardio conditioning, strength training, flexibility, and Pilates which are choreographed to Christian contemporary music that motivates us to move and encourages us spiritually.

Classes meet in the gym Saturday mornings at 8:30 beginning September 7. Bring your mat, water bottle, weights and elastic resistance.

For more information call Jennifer White 301-483-4986 or email rjslwhite@msn.com.

Meeting with a Congresswoman



Thank, Great to meet you!
Thank for introducing me to your family.
And Bless You!
Cathy McMorris Rodgers 2013

My family and I recently had the wonderful opportunity to meet with Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers. She is from Washington State and is currently the fourth highest ranking Republican in Congress. She and her husband have a son who has Down syndrome. Earlier this year, I had sent her a copy of a book that I wrote about my brother, Stephen, who has Down syndrome. She wrote back and said that she read the book and invited me and my family to visit her office.

We met with the Congresswoman and Dr. Karen Summar, her legislative counsel, for about half an hour. Dr. Summar is a physician, and her daughter has Down syndrome. Both Congresswoman Rodgers and Dr. Summar are Christians. Our discussion covered a wide range of topics, from bioethics to disability history to the latest medical research to jobs programs. I was very encouraged to find that there are people in high places who are concerned about people with intellectual disabilities.

One of the topics we spoke about was quality of life. It is typically assumed that people with Down syndrome and their families have a low quality of life. But this is not true. Dr. Brian Skotko, a clinical fellow in genetics at Children's Hospital Boston, was the lead author of a study titled "Self-Perceptions from People with Down Syndrome," which was published in the October 2011 issue of the *American Journal of Medical Genetics*. The study found that "among 2,044 parents or guardians surveyed, 79 percent reported their outlook on life was more positive because of their child with Down syndrome." Further, "among siblings ages 12 and older, 97 percent expressed feelings of pride about their brother or sister with Down syndrome and 88 percent were convinced they were better people because of their sibling with Down syndrome. A third study evaluating how adults with Down syndrome felt about themselves reports 99 percent responded they were happy with their lives, 97 percent liked who they are, and 96 percent liked how they looked."

My brother, Stephen, made a fascinating affirmation of his own quality of life as we were driving down to Capitol Hill to the meeting. We were all sitting quietly as we drove. Then, completely impromptu, Stephen said, "I rich." My parents and I were not quite sure what he meant. Then he explained: "I smart. I happy." Neither I nor my parents said anything, but in my mind I thought, "Wow!" I shared this anecdote with Congresswoman Rodgers and Dr. Summar to make the point that, in his own opinion, Stephen really does have a very high quality of life. And what right does anyone have to deny that?

Joni Eareckson Tada often speaks about the "Luke 14 mandate." In Luke 14:12-14, Jesus says, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." I felt like this mandate of Jesus was fulfilled by Congresswoman Rodgers and Dr. Summar. They took thirty minutes out of their terribly busy schedule to visit with my brother, someone who could not repay them. It was really inspiring.

~ **Mark Zimmerman**