

## MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY

A recent Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life study found that individuals with no religious affiliation, or “nones,” are on the rise. Because of this, many pastors, in an effort to attract those of all beliefs and lifestyles, choose to avoid hot-button biblical issues, which might offend.

First Baptist Church of Dallas, a church built on the Bible, is going against this tide.

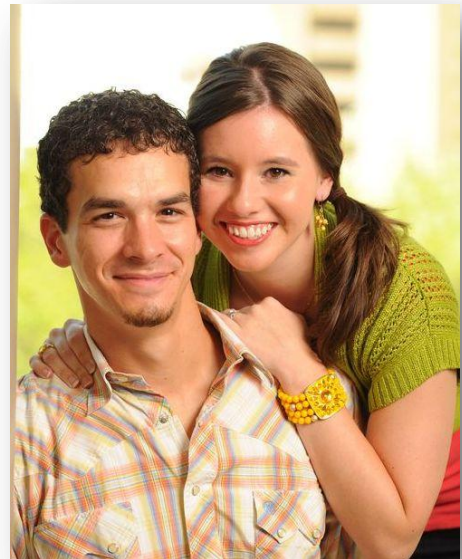
First Baptist, a growing congregation in the heart of downtown Dallas, is led by pastor Dr. Robert Jeffress, who is known for his bold, biblical and unequivocal commitment to preaching the Word of God.

With a mission of transforming the world with God’s Word one life at a time, First Baptist is built on the core values of truth, excellence, connection and influence. First Baptist remains committed to equipping individuals to worship, serve and influence the community, the city and the world for Christ.

Founded in 1868, through the years, First Baptist had built a hodge-podge of buildings on its Dallas campus. Because many were becoming inadequate, the church felt a need to expand and improve its campus in order to fulfill its ministry calling.

According to a December 2012 New York Times article titled, “Building Congregations Around Art Galleries and Cafes as Spirituality Wanes,” younger pastors are less willing to try to finance multimillion-dollar church building programs at the risk of accruing debt. Instead, many are opting for creating smaller satellite campuses in the suburbs, which are easier to maintain. This is especially true of urban churches, where high building costs and little land often play a factor.

Yet in November 2009, in the midst of the worst economic recession since the Great Depression, Dr. Jeffress announced a vision for building a new \$130 million campus in the heart of downtown Dallas – the largest church building project in modern history, according to church fundraising experts. At the time of the announcement, First Baptist had already received more than \$62 million in commitments toward the campaign.



Now, a little more than four years later, the First Baptist project nears completion with the opening of a new 500,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art campus Easter Sunday, March 31, 2013, marking a year of new beginnings.

Despite population loss in Dallas and economic hardship in recent decades, First Baptist has remained committed to downtown Dallas, having been located in the heart of the city for more than 140 years.



“God has put First Baptist Church of Dallas at the center of the nation’s fastest-growing city in the heart of America,” said Dr. Jeffress in 2009. “Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones recently unveiled a new \$1.2 billion ‘temple to sport’ in our area. In these tough economic times, why can’t we use our gifts to build a church that provides a spiritual oasis and seeks to match the splendor and majesty of God?”

Rather than follow the national trend to move the First Baptist campus to a suburban area, the church chose to keep its urban focus, setting its sights on building a concert hall of worship that truly represents the greatness of God and serves the city of Dallas.

First Baptist is one of the largest property owners in downtown Dallas. Prior to the demolition of several buildings, First Baptist consisted of a hodge-podge of structures constructed over more than a century. When its new campus is complete, it will cover six city blocks and transform the Dallas skyline, galvanizing a clear presence of the church.

The new facility is a re-creation, not a renovation, of the original campus, that highlights the historic sanctuary among a new 3,000-seat Worship Center. Connected via a glass sky bridge is a five-story Horner Family Center and seven-story Parking Garage. In addition, a high-impact cross-tower and fountain are surrounded by three-quarters of an acre of open and accessible community space available to the whole city.

The completion of the new campus and opening on Easter weekend 2013 symbolizes a rebirth of a church that was once considered dying. First Baptist has come back to life remaining firmly committed to biblically based teachings and remaining a testimony to God’s love and truth in the heart of Dallas.