

FROM THE FIELD

HOUSTON'S FIRST MISSION TRIP MEMBERS SHARE INSIGHTS FROM RECENT VISITS TO MADRID AND XÁTIVA:

I stood in this exact spot at the Monastery of El Escorial near Madrid ten years ago when I studied abroad in Spain. I didn't know it then, but the Lord had planted a seed in my heart that has grown into a love for Spain and a heart for its people. There is a great need for Christ in this dark country where many are suffering financially and very few have the hope of a Savior. I have an immense respect for the missionaries here in Madrid and Xátiva who have dedicated their lives to building friendships and sharing the gift of salvation in this spiritually void country. When I left Xátiva last summer I had a feeling that I would be returning again. After spending two weeks there, I truly felt like a part of the church family. They are so loving and hospitable, undoubtedly a genuine example of what it looks like to shine brightly like a city on a hill. Their light cannot be hidden!

Heidi Schoen



While in Xátiva we had an opportunity to help with an evangelism night the singles at the church had planned. They were so intentional during this time with their neighborhood. They invited people to come, then the singles presented the Gospel and how Christ broke the chains and rescued us from sin. Instead of packing up and going home, they stayed and loved and served their neighbors. They were not afraid to get out of their comfort zone and look weird to their neighbor. They recognized their neighbors are lost and in desperate need of the Savior and were doing what it took to reach them with the Gospel. Seeing them changed my mindset to be more intentional with those I am around. No matter how long I may be with them, it's an opportunity.

Rebecca Rodgers



I was hesitant about what our mission would be in Spain because we were only teaching Vacation Bible School at two different churches and that just didn't seem right. One night, the US soccer team was playing in their second game of the World Cup and many kids stayed home to watch the game. A young boy came up to me, looked me in the eye and said, "I don't know why they aren't coming, Jesus is way more important!" I melted in that moment. From that point forward, I began receiving more than I was giving because it no longer was about what I wanted but what God wanted. I surrendered my inhibitions and my doubts and let the Lord work through me. I left Spain more alive, more overjoyed, and more on fire for God than I ever thought was possible. My life changed in Spain. My devotion and my dedication changed. And it wasn't because I was serving them, it was because they were serving me.

KaLynne Bennett



NEWS + UPDATES

Houston's First Baptist Church is a relevant, biblical community where we gather our hearts, grow our souls and give our lives as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission.

TWEET OF THE WEEK: "After many weeks away @eholmes45 & I are so happy to be worshipping at @HoustonFirst with our friends & family! #noplacelikehome" — @ThatAlanaHolmes

ALL CAMPUSES

CELEBRATING PASTOR GREGG & KELLY MATTE'S 10 YEARS OF MINISTRY AT HOUSTON'S FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

FRI, SEP 12 @ 7P
THE LOOP

\$10 TICKETS ON SALE NOW

100% OF PROCEEDS BENEFIT STAR OF HOPE

SPECIAL MUSICAL GUEST SARA GROVES

FOR TICKETS OR MORE INFORMATION
HOUSTONSFIRST.ORG/GM10

HighPoint Bible Study

Every Wed @ 11:30a — 1010 Lamar (tunnel level)

HighPoint meets at our Downtown Campus with lunch beginning at 11:30a for \$8, and Bible study taking place from 12:10-12:40p. On Aug 13, Executive Pastor David Self will speak on the topic "Four Keys to Worship."

CONTACT Diane.Bagby@HoustonFirst.org

3 Day Marriage Clinic

Aug 13-15 @ 1-7p — The Loop (Rm 501/502)

Led by Dr. Karl Elkins LPC, this unique marriage intensive provides the equivalent of 18 weeks of counseling in just three days. Cost is \$75 per couple. Register at HoustonFirst.org/Events.

CONTACT Greg.Curnutte@HoustonFirst.org

Share Your Faith Workshop

Sat, Aug 16 @ 9:30a-2p — The Loop (Fellowship Center)

Facilitated by Jonathan Huegel, Evangelism Associate, learn how your hand can be a memory tool to share a Gospel presentation. Register at HoustonFirst.org/Events.

CONTACT Jonathan.Huegel@HoustonFirst.org

Houston's First Baptist Church Night at Minute Maid Park

Fri, Aug 29 @ 7:10p — Minute Maid Park

Houston's First family members from all four campuses are headed to the ballpark for a night of baseball, hot dogs, fireworks, and more! Visit HoustonFirst.org/Events for discounted tickets and more information about our night at Minute Maid Park!

WOMEN

Women's Retreat

Oct 3-4 — Omni Westside Hotel

Women will gather for this in-town weekend getaway to discover that There's More To The Story! Retreat personalities include Donna Stuart, Kelly Matte, and others. Register by Sep 14 at HoustonFirst.org/Events!

CONTACT Haylee.Nelson@HoustonFirst.org

SUNDAYS AT HOUSTON'S FIRST

The Loop Campus

7401 Katy Fwy • Houston, TX 77024

Worship 9:15a-11a-5:30p

Life Bible Studies 8a-9:15a-10:45a-4:15p-6:45p

Cypress Campus

10300 Warner Smith Blvd • Cypress, TX 77433

Worship 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a

Downtown Campus

1010 Lamar St • Houston, TX 77002

Worship 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a

Sienna Campus

4309 Sienna Pkwy • Missouri City, TX 77459

Worship 11a

Life Bible Studies 9:30a

THE LOOP

Biblical Principles of Estate Planning

Today @ 12:15-2:30p — The Loop (Fellowship Ctr)

Why do I need a Will? What are Incapacity Documents? This free seminar answers these questions and more about estate planning. Walk-ins are welcome, but childcare is not available for those registering today.

CONTACT Sara.Johnson@HoustonFirst.org

Back To School Sunday

Sun, Aug 24

As the Houston's First family returns from summer, we're collecting backpacks (no wheels) and \$30 Academy gift cards for the Faith Center and Galveston Urban Ministries. Visit HoustonFirst.org/Events for details and bring your donations on Aug 24!

CONTACT Cynthia.Carranza@HoustonFirst.org

Evening Schedule Change

Beginning Sun, Aug 24, the Sunday evening schedule at The Loop Campus is changing! The worship service will still feature Pastor Gregg with worship led by our Band & Singers.

- 5p — Worship Service
- 6:30p — Life Bible Studies

Milestones & MidLink Preview Night

Wed, Aug 27 @ 6:30-8p

Gather for worship and a word from Pastor Gregg in the Worship Center as we look ahead to the fall at The Loop Campus! Then, discover opportunities Milestones has to offer during our Open House. Come early for a BBQ dinner from 4:45-6:30p. Preschool, Children, and Student programming starts that night, too!

CONTACT Courtney.Schisler@HoustonFirst.org

CHILDREN

Back 2 School Bash

Fri, Aug 22 @ 6-10p — Warrior Field

Kids in Grades 1-5 will celebrate the end of summer with inflatables, water games, prizes, and more! Wear your swimsuit and come ready for fun. Dinner is provided — and it's all FREE! Warrior Field is located at Silber and Long Point Drive, about 2.5 miles from The Loop Campus.

CONTACT Hannah.Stovall@HoustonFirst.org

STUDENTS

The HUB Fall Kick-Off

Fri, Aug 22 @ 6-10p — The Loop (Level 3)

We're pumped about the fall so we're having a kickoff party! Middle School and High School students will meet at The Loop then go to the Faith Center fields for games you won't want to miss! Cost is \$10 and includes dinner. No registration required!

CONTACT Susan.Newman@HoustonFirst.org

CYPRESS

Marriage Ministry Dinner Series - Help Wanted: Fun

Fri, Aug 15 @ 6:30-9:30p

Northwest Forest Conference Center

Help Wanted: Seeking couples who want the marriage that God intended for them! All experience levels welcome! We will identify tools and explore keys to a godly, fulfilling marriage. Cost: \$50 per couple. Complimentary childcare available at the Ministry Center. Register at HoustonFirst.org/Cypress.

CONTACT Rebecca.Dinkins@HoustonFirst.org

CHILDREN

Shark Night

Fri, Aug 15 @ 6-9:30p — Cypress Ministry Center

Wrap up summer with a First Kids jaw-dropping evening — Shark Night! Shark-themed games, crafts, and a kid-friendly movie will ensure everyone has a great time. All birth-5th graders are welcome to take a bite out of the fun!

CONTACT Natalie.Stotts@HoustonFirst.org

DOWNTOWN

IMAGO Arts Gathering

Mon, Aug 11 @ 7-9p — Vine Street Studios

Amateur and professional artists from all media are invited to our Vine Street Studios for the next gathering of the IMAGO artist ministry. Connect with and learn from other artists about using the arts to glorify God — no matter what the media!

CONTACT Lee.Hsia@HoustonFirst.org

All Church Lunch

Sun, Aug 17 @ 12:30p — 1010 Lamar

Join our church family after the worship service for food and fellowship! Take advantage of this time and meet someone new, as well as reconnect with someone you haven't seen in a while. This would be a great day to invite a friend to church!

CONTACT Tiffany.Butterfrans@HoustonFirst.org

SIENNA

Make It Your Church Orientation

Sun, Aug 17 @ 9:30a — Sienna Campus (NextGen Suite)

Come discover what it means to be a member of Houston's First Baptist Church as Campus Pastor Jeff Rees and other staff members share the vision and mission of the church. Breakfast is provided, so RSVP at HoustonFirst.org/Sienna.

CONTACT Kelli.Boylan@HoustonFirst.org

WOMEN

Women's Summer Nights

Tue, Aug 12 @ 7-8:30p — Sienna Worship Center

All women are invited to the Sienna Campus for a night of fellowship, worship, and teaching with Laura Seifert!

CONTACT Kelli.Boylan@HoustonFirst.org

GIVING LIFE AWAY

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FRIENDSHIP MINISTRY

Do you have a passion for ministering to international students? If so, contact Charlotte Nease in the Missions Office to learn more details about ways you can get involved with the International Student Friendship Ministry!

CONTACT Charlotte.Nease@HoustonFirst.org

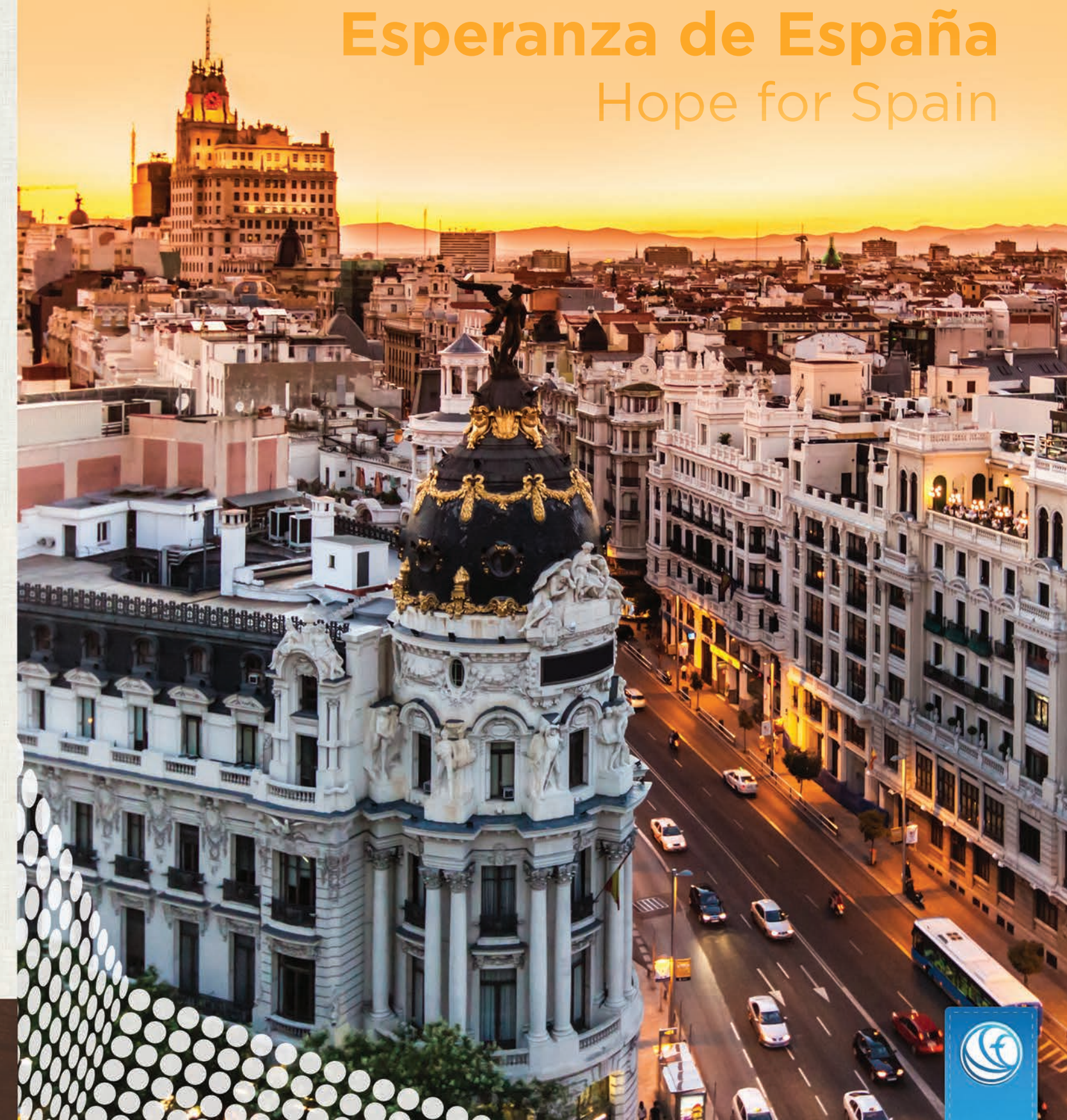
SHUTTLE PARKING

Attend The Loop on Sunday mornings? Use shuttle parking to make room for others! It's a simple way to expand the ministry of our church. Get details on the 5 garages at HoustonFirst.org/ShuttleParking.

MISSION 10

Aug 10, 2014

Esperanza de España Hope for Spain



SHARING THE GOSPEL IN SPAIN

Despite having a history greatly influenced by religion, the role of faith in Spain today has taken a backseat. A majority of Spaniards claim to be Roman Catholic, but only a small percentage are active in a church. A growing number claim no religion at all, and the number of evangelicals in Spain can be measured in single-digit percentages — at most.

Your contributions to MISSION 1:8 enable Houston's First to support church plants in Madrid and Xátiva as they bring the Light to a dark country. We asked their pastors to share their stories and to give us an update on how our church is helping them in their respective ministries.



MISSION 1:8

MISSION 1:8 is a two-year initiative from Mar 2013-Feb 2015 that will expand our financial generosity to support our current ministry and multiply our missional endeavors to the poor, widows, orphans, and prisoners, and to our city, our nation, and our world. Learn more at HoustonFirst.org/MISSION18.

GOD PROVIDED FOR OUR CHALLENGES

My wife Elena and I are serving at a new church plant in Madrid. For the last 20 years I have been pastor of churches in Spain and England, and, simultaneously, for the last 13 years I have been teaching at the Baptist Seminary of the Baptist Union of Spain. Elena is a psychologist in a private association for people with bipolar disorder and depression and also within churches of different denominations as a Christian counselor and therapist.

In 2012 I finished my previous pastoral ministry in Madrid after ten years of blessed service. The church had grown in number and in Christian commitment and it was time for them to have a full-time pastor to lead the church into a new season. Elena and I moved to Immanuel Baptist Church in Madrid. In the spring of 2013, after a long time of prayer and thinking, I felt the Lord was calling me back to active pastoral ministry. I spoke with IBC's Pastor David about the possibility of starting a Spanish Baptist church within Immanuel Baptist and he was very supportive of the idea.

Just a few months after this, in September 2013, I was called to a meeting at the Baptist seminary to welcome and receive two pastors from the USA wanting to present a project from their church — your Missions Pastor William Taylor and Minister of Mobilization Jerrell Altic. They shared the vision of MISSION 1:8 and your vision to support church planting projects in strategic cities of the world. To put it simply, they said they were looking to give support to an individual with a church planning project in Madrid — and there I was! Our mutual understanding was instant! Certainly the Lord had been preparing all of us for that moment and I see the whole process as an answer from God.

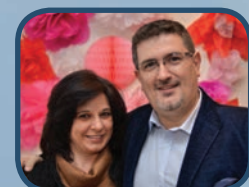
So, God has provided for two common challenges faced by most church plants. Through Immanuel Baptist Church, He provides a place for us to meet, and through Houston's First He provides financial support. We want to reach everyone for the Kingdom, but we have a special interest in young people. Having the resources for sharing the Gospel and to make our presence known with quality up-to-date means — especially new technologies — is great.

In March, we had a week of evangelistic emphasis with a group from Houston's First — the first one in Madrid — and it was a great experience for all. From a more solidarity and social angle, last June we held a flea market and music concert in favor of the victims of last year's hurricane in the Philippines.

Recently, we had an English Camp with an excellent team from Houston's First working with us. We distributed invitations by the hundreds at schools, in the neighborhood, and on the streets. We had a limited response, but it certainly made a strong impact in the lives of the kids. We also had good conversations with parents. In the middle of all this, many personal contacts were made and people started coming because someone else invited them.

The importance of the missionary teams we have had from Houston's First and all your prayers on our behalf make all of a difference! We feel part of a larger family that supports us and is working with us for the extension of the Kingdom in Madrid. The challenge before us is enormous. Spain is a country with a strong Roman Catholic tradition, with people moving away from it to a more secularized approach to life, rejecting all forms of organized/institutionalized religion — and they are very materialistic.

Not counting Roman Catholics, all churches in Spain only make up 0.6% of the nation's nearly 48 million people. Among Madrid's 6.2 million people, there are only about 2,000 Baptists. Millions of people still need the Lord as the One to really transform their lives and give them meaning and everlasting hope. You and I are part of an exciting calling to be witnesses to the end of the world!



In Christ,
Fernando Mendez
Iglesia Bautista Emanuel
IBEMadrid.com

HOUSTON'S FIRST HAS BEEN FOUNDATIONAL

I came to know Christ from a traditional Catholic family when I was 16 years old. Esther, my wife, also came to know Christ in her teenage years although she comes from three generations of evangelicals in Spain. God called each of us separately to ministry and we met in Bible College. As soon as we graduated, we got married and began our ministry together.

We spent years working with youth and going from town to town in the summer, preaching the Gospel in places where there was not a Christian presence. After travelling thousands of miles in vans that would break down and after being thrown out of towns, many times with stones being hurled at us because of our preaching of the Word of God, the fruit that we have seen has been the springing up of churches in those towns.

We pastored two churches in Madrid, one of them in the place with the highest population density throughout Europe. We would go out week after week with the youth who had come to Christ and share the Gospel in the parks. During this time, we ministered bi-vocationally until our departure for Granada in 2002.

In January of that year, we received a call to serve at a small church in Granada to work with local and international university students. There, we met Sarah Taylor, daughter of William Taylor, the Missions Pastor at Houston's First. When we received the first email from William, we thought it was a joke and we were left open-mouthed when we found out that Houston's First and William really existed!

The Lord blessed us with a harvest of young believers who came to know Christ and some who rededicated their lives to Christ. We spent 10 years working for the Kingdom of God, seeing disciples go throughout the world sharing what God had done for them during their time as students in Granada.

In July of 2011 we arrived at the Baptist church in Xátiva, one of the oldest Baptist churches in all of Spain. We are still here and our ministry has grown to include ministry to Kindergarteners and a home for the elderly.

A church as large as Houston's First that has been so close to us has been a great blessing for our work both

in Granada and Xátiva. Your affection, concern, and support in prayer has been very special to us. Also, the humility of your pastors in their interactions with us has been a great example that we strive to follow in our own lives.

Your church has been foundational for the development of our ministry over the years both in Granada and now in Xátiva. To overcome challenges, like making Bethany Elementary School an accredited school for primary education in Europe in 2014, would be impossible without your backing in sustaining and praying for us.

Spain continues to be a mission field and we need your continued support. The percentage of Christians within Spain continues to be one of the lowest in the world. In addition, Spain is the crossroads of people from Northern Africa and other parts of Europe so that the possibility for the Gospel to spread is high.

Now, our most urgent project is for the completion of our elementary school. We have to finish the renovation of the building, complete the paperwork, receive accreditation from the government, and hire teachers who are believers from Spain. There is much we can do together.

There are only 4 evangelical primary schools in all of Spain with Bethany being one of those. Help us raise up new generations in the west of Spain to follow Christ, who is the only one who can change lives!



Thank you, thank you, thank you!
Miguel Fernández
Evangelical Baptist Church of Xátiva
IEBXativa.com

