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How To Tell the Good News

CBF/GA is composed of many different voices using many different words to proclaim the news of Jesus. In this issue, we have asked several individuals from around the state to give us their thoughts on preaching.

Preaching Voice

Amy Shomer, Associate Pastor for Youth and Adult Education, Milledge Avenue Baptist Church, Athens

My first preaching experience was in high school for youth Sunday. Strangely, for Southern Baptist life, I was one of a long, unbroken line of girls who had volunteered for the job; no male had yet been courageous enough. Mine was a standard, story telling, three-point sermon, one that I wish I could forget for its content. But, it was my first vote of confidence in myself. It started me on the path to finding my own unique preaching voice.

I came to seminary knowing that I wanted to go into ministry, but I looked for my calling outside of church work.

I was half way through my coursework before I was brave enough to take a preaching class. It did not come naturally at first, but as I grew in my experiences, I found I was scared by how much I enjoyed the process.

Writing and preparing gave me time to use my imagination. Proclaiming the text allowed my voice to open my own ears to dusty old texts, and I hoped it would do the same for other listeners. "This could be my calling," I thought to myself.

However, even as I graduated, entered into my first weeks as a pastoral resident, claimed finally that I *did* want to pastor a church someday, *Continues to page 4.*



Preaching Resources

These preaching resources have been selected from the files of Peter Rhea Jones. The comments accompanying the website addresses are his. For more resources, visit http://faculty.mercer.edu/jones_pr/preaching_resources.htm.

- <http://www.congregationalresources.org/AAR/Introduction.asp/> Resources for and from African American Congregations.
- <http://www.desperatepreacher.com/> Lectionary, Care Topics, Headline News, Sermons, Discussions, Links.
- <http://girardianlectionary.net/> A growing collection of lectionary comments, maintained by Paul Neuchterlein.
- <http://preacherstudy.com/> This site contains hundreds of full text sermons and other Bible-related items. If you are visiting for the first time, we suggest you check out the latest sermon or view sermon titles to get an idea of what is here. If you are a preacher looking for Bible-based material, you've come to the right place. Be sure to read our sermon-use policy.
- <http://www.preachingtoday.com/> This site offers preaching related resources such as articles, illustrations, and sermon outlines. Some items are offered free, and more are available to paid subscribers.
- <http://www.textweek.com/> This site features a wide variety of resources for study and liturgy based on the three-year Revised Common Lectionary cycle. A diverse variety of resources for scripture study, reflection and liturgy, and purposefully not restricting the resources to any particular theological/ideological position.

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The Power of Aphoristic Sayings for the Pulpit

Peter Rhea Jones, Professor, McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, Atlanta

*Aphoristic sayings represent an additional opportunity for preaching
and a chance to enlarge the influence of the sermon ...*

My graduate professor, and later colleague, Frank Stagg extended his influence through his classroom aphorisms. Stagg, who often warned of our being possessed by our possessions, coined guidelines for exegesis. “A biblical passage does not mean what it says, but it means what it means,” he would say, stimulating first wonderment and then thought. Another favorite nugget, “Words do not have meaning but usage.” Such language lives, takes on a life. Many of his former students recall his controversial, but significant, insistence about discipleship, “Christians should not let Jesus do all the dying.”



Fred Craddock, more associated with story, throws out memorable sentiments for a potential sermon such as, “Acting like a Christian may lead you to become one.” I recall a day in a class on the effective pastor that I team-taught with Truett Gannon. He wrote on the board concerning ministry, “Whatever it takes whenever it takes it.” In another context, Gannon made an observation about life, “Doing what you want to do will not always give you what you want.” Once when I preached on Isaac, Rebekah, and their offspring I threw out an alliterative line, “Favoritism in the family will foster friction in the future.”

During the recent New Baptist Covenant, I heard some striking aphorisms. One speaker said, “If you are a liberal and not a little conservative, you may be too loose. If you are a conservative and not a little liberal, you may be too rigid.” One speaker addressing young people urged them to exercise restraint or else have flings with everyone and miss the satisfaction of one lasting relationship of love.

“Acting like a Christian may lead you to become one.” Fred Craddock

confronting all of us prophetically. He declared, “We are losing the young generation not because we have made it too hard but too easy. There is a craving to be heroic.”

The Bible brims with wise and memorable sayings in such places as Proverbs, The Sermon on the Mount, James, and I John. Biblical scholars, such as Walter Brueggemann, once again are discovering afresh the theological validity of the wisdom literature. Aphoristic sayings represent an additional opportunity for preaching and a chance to enlarge the influence of the sermon since pithy sayings sometimes lodge in the memory. I am not suggesting that you clutter your sermons with too many aphoristic sayings. I am suggesting to my classes that they utilize some aphorisms, both from the Scripture and accumulated wisdom, and even coin a few of their own. CBF/GA

“A biblical passage does not mean what it says, but it means what it means” Frank Stagg

In a breakout, I heard the maxim, “Incarceration is not the cure for crime.” Another spokesperson said, “We are what is wrong with children.” And there is always Campolo

BLACK PREACHING: A Perspective

J. Louis Bumpus, Pastor, Tremont Temple Baptist Church, Macon

A pervasive question of our times is the relevance of the historical black preaching tradition. Given the rise of the African-American middle class, greater access of African-Americans to mainstream America, educational attainment and success that is expressed in the accumulation of creature comforts, what is the significance of the historical black preaching tradition in the African-American community and beyond?



I would suggest that its relevance is substantial. As long as there are weaker members of our society who are outcast by the dominant culture, the historical black preaching tradition has meaning. Born out of the experience of slavery, black preaching has sought to speak hope to and bring empowerment to persons who were dehumanized, disenfranchised, and marginalized, the ones whom Jesus identified as the “least of these.” There are persons among us who could be characterized as the least, the last, the lost, the left behind, and the left out.

Physical slavery has been abolished, and freedom from the bondage of chains has been realized in America. But, as I consider the state of being for many in our culture, there appears to be another kind of bondage. We are held captive from our best selves when our individual lives and our communities lack a moral and spiritual center. This moral and spiritual lackness is reflected in several ways. The easy susceptibility to chemical dependence, the use of sex for amusement and recreation, the falling apart of the traditional family unit, and the promulgation of violent hedonistic and narcissistic life-styles I mention as examples.

The historical black preaching tradition seeks to speak liberation and freedom from the aforementioned, as well

as any other, types of bondage and oppression by declaring that God has revealed in Jesus Christ a paradigm of personal, spiritual, moral, and social excellence. It is to tell the story of God’s love for humanity expressed in the offer of forgiving grace, restoration, and renewal through Christ.

The historical black preaching tradition has many sides. However, the tradition can be characterized by four elements: style, liberation theology, celebration, and historical perspective.

Style—The historical black preaching tradition style values the freedom of the preacher to develop his or her specific preaching gift and to be his or her self. African-American scholars like J. Alfred Smith and Henry Mitchell suggest that this dimension of black preaching is characterized by rhetorical embellishments, dramatical embodiment of the message, vocal dynamics, and musicality in the spoken presentation.

Liberation Theology—The historical black preaching tradition is informed by liberation theology. The tradition speaks of the liberation and transformation of individuals as well as corporate, political, and social structures. James Cone and Olin Moyd present this idea in their writings.

Historical Perspective—The third element is historical continuity. An understanding of the historical connection to those who have preceded one in preaching, as well as being informed by history, reminds the preacher that he or she is ultimately responsible to God.

Celebration—The fourth element in the tradition of black preaching is celebration. Henry Mitchell has identified a common sermonic structure in the presentation of black preaching: problem, the gospel resolution of the problem, celebration of the resolution.

The world in which we live needs to hear the gospel. The tradition of black preaching is a wonderful gift from God to the world. Let the good news ring in the way that Samuel D. Proctor said, like “the certain sound of the trumpet.” CBF/GA

Voice (Continues from page 1.)

my arms trembled as I went out to my first full-time congregation. The community of faith at Milledge Avenue Baptist was filled with well-educated and experienced people, many using their own strong voices. I found myself asking, “What can I offer this crowd?” I am delighted to say, almost three years after starting at Milledge Avenue, I am learning there is always enough. In fact, some

of the best learning is shared with all ages, and this learning does not happen unless I am courageous enough to remember my voice matters.

I continue to learn that my own youthful, less experienced voice is extremely valuable, especially when I am open to listening to the voices of wisdom. In preaching, my voice shares my own wonder and awe of familiar stories in the biblical text. My voice reflects the questions of my congregation so that all may share in

the struggle of the journey towards Christ. I can bring my God-given imagination or my questions and struggles in the faith. My voice can represent the voice of another and work to bring a well-known character into a relevant setting. And, the best reward I have found is that in using my voice, I am hearing other voices, who have found that their voices are as important as mine is. My ears love to hear the chatter. CBF/GA

The Task of Preaching

William L. Hardee, Pastor, Vineville Baptist Church, Macon

Our style of and approach to preaching is affected by a number of things: how we were taught, who were our models, our own personal theologies, the currents of culture, and our life-stage.

In my younger years, my preaching could be considered more exegetical and expository. Teaching the truths of scripture was the primary task. People needed to know what they believed. If they knew what was right, they would strive to achieve it. My own life experience then was limited. I tended to promulgate the ideals of our faith, with little consciousness of how crushing losses and failures change the soul. I was speaking to people, rather than engaging them in a conversation.



My change in style and approach was reshaped by life. I came to realize that certain theologies were inadequate for the experiences of life. God didn't rescue me from hard situations when I cried out—but he did give me the strength to pass through them. God did not answer most of my requests in prayer, but he did listen and enlarge my understanding of how life should be lived. We will always live in this world with a certain amount of anxiety, fear, failure, disappointments, and frustrations. The task of preaching is not teaching people how to eliminate such experiences, it is helping them to weave those experiences into their own journey of faith. While we strive to keep them from dominating us, it is just such experiences that should keep us honest and real rather than overly idealistic. It is a tragedy when the church becomes a place where we cannot honestly share our lives, our struggles, our joys, and our common humanity.

My approach to the task of preaching now is akin to enlarging people's vision of God, our own humanity, and our place in this world. I understand the Bible to be a reservoir of stories that we can identify with. I understand the Psalms to be an apothecary that helps us put into words

what we feel, but cannot find the words within us to say. I understand that the teachings of Jesus are preserved to inspire us into becoming a better version of ourselves, as we recognize the rich potential that God has placed within us.

What this means in practical terms is that the flaws of biblical characters are as important, if not more important, than their virtue. When Moses is called to be a liberator, he argues with God and flatly declares that he does not want the job. Yet, it is in arguing that he finds a greater knowledge of God and is better equipped for his task. His task is humanly impossible. We can idealize Moses and pontificate that he was wrong in his rebellion—an asinine approach which disregards our own humanity. A better approach is to see in Moses our own response to God's call. His own responses to God mirror and illustrate our

own at critical junctures throughout our lives. Moses said what we often say, "I can't do it," "I don't know enough," "I may not be liked," "I don't have the ability," and "I don't want to."

In the gospels, there is a wonderful story, where Peter comes to Jesus, walking on water, then cries out as he sinks. It is both shallow and meaningless to ridicule Peter, because Peter mirrors our human tendency to be both believing and disbelieving. The message is that even in our weakness Christ can be depended on to help us.

The value of such an approach is that it validates our common humanity yet challenges us to become more than we are. In some wonderful way, God is with us in moments of success and failure, shaping us and making us more whole. Not even the best of us have reason to brag. The truly wise among us know that we all struggle to resist that gnawing hunger of sin every day of our life. None of us is truly righteous if by that we mean we have overcome all our flaws. But, all of us can be truly righteous, if we understand that to mean Just as I Am, God is with us to lead us to become stronger, more filled with faith, and more confident in God's favor. CBF/GA

The task of preaching
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journey of faith.

Preaching Must Be Number One

William L. Self, Pastor, Johns Creek Baptist Church, Alpharetta

“The church is dead.” This was the cry of the mid-sixties. There were many who talked about problems in the church’s organization, its attitude, its theology, and its tradition. I found only one book that placed the focus of the problem where it ought to be.

Helmut Thielicke’s *The Trouble with the Church* placed the blame squarely on the pulpit. The church is dead because the pulpit is dead. The church is alive only when the pulpit is alive.



Why is the pulpit dead? There is a loss of confidence in the effectiveness of preaching. Donald Miller, author of *The Way to Biblical Preaching*, said, “If Protestantism ever dies with a dagger in its back, the dagger will be the Protestant sermon.” Many good pastors preach routine sermons expecting and receiving only a few positive results.

How did this happen? Congregations have systematically added to the role of the local parish minister to the point that there is little time for study or prayer. They talk about wanting effective pulpit work and a significant worship encounter, but they play an effective game of demanding personal services and asking that the minister jump to their tune. Ministers assert that preaching is primary, but they may give time to it only after filling the roles of administrator, pastor, priest, and organizer, according to Samuel Blizzard. The minister may find it easier to visit than to organize, to attend committee meetings than to wrestle with ideas, study, struggle in prayer, and preach the gospel. This is no plea that the pastor become invisible six days a week and

incomprehensible on the seventh, but I do wish to express a strong concern—everything scheduled from Sunday noon to Saturday night takes away from preparation to stand before the congregation and preach from the heart.

What is preaching anyway? Preaching is not just “religious talk” in which one person gives his or her views on theological, psychological, sociological, and philosophical subjects, nor is it public speaking with a religious flavor which degenerates into some talk about God. The famed Andrew Blackwood has defined preaching as “divine truth voiced by a chosen personality to meet human need.”

Preaching is God talking. God is not so much the object as the source of Christian preaching. Thus, preaching is speech by God rather than speech about God. This begins to make the weight of understanding preaching very heavy. The preacher carries God’s Word to the people. The preacher is God’s ambassador. In true preaching, the preacher does more than just speak about the mighty deeds of God for our salvation. The preacher speaks in order that God may say these things himself. Ideally, preaching is an event in which God acts.

Those who see preaching as the primary function of their role have a good example in Jesus. He was a healer, counselor, and teacher. However, he obviously gave preaching the central place in his ministry. The gospel writers continually affirm that Jesus came preaching. “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God ... for I was sent for this purpose” (Luke 4: 43, RSV).

Let us also remember that Jesus sent his disciples “through the

villages, preaching the gospel” (Luke 9:6, RSV). When the pastor stands to preach, it is done in the tradition of the prophets and the company of the apostles. The emphasis of the church through the years has been on preaching. “How shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14, KJV). There is not now nor has there ever been an acceptable substitute for Christian preaching.

When we stand to preach, we stand in the tradition of John Wesley whose assailants dropped stones from their hands as he preached and said, “See, he shines! He glistens!”

We stand with Arthur Mursell of Aberdeen whose congregation “seemed to burst into flame,” as reported *The British Weekly* after one of his sermons.

We stand with Jonathan Edwards, the mightiest philosophical intellect of the American pulpit, standing up with a candle in one hand and a manuscript held before his dim eyes with the other.

Pastor, there will come a day when we shall stand before the great white throne, and from its midst there shall sound a voice like unto that of the Son of God, asking, “I gave you my gospel. What did you do with it?”

Our day demands preaching. People are not weary of the gospel; they rarely hear the gospel. People are not weary of preaching; they rarely hear preaching. The pulpit is stronger and the church is freer when its pulpit is free. We have seen that words can move men and women. We have only to recall Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, crying out, “I have a dream,” in a memorable address in Washington, D.C., or Billy Graham’s ability to fill stadiums around the world as examples of

Continues to page 14.

Pentecostal Preaching in a Multicultural Paradigm

Charles F. Johnson, Visiting Instructor in Preaching, McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, Atlanta

In order to hear the Word of God in the multicultural context in which we live, we must freely give and gratefully receive the church's preaching and worship as a gift from God. This means that our role as judge, assessor, evaluator, critic, and observer of the church's worship and preaching



must end. We must divest ourselves of any compulsion to compare, contrast, dissect, examine, parse out, or deconstruct the proclamation of God's Word. In short, we reject all homiletical voyeurism.

We will never merge into the marvelous family of faith across all our respective lines of generation and gender and race and denomination and tradition and styles of spirituality as long as I posit myself as the chief arbiter and broker of my own relationship with God.

Rather, in a posture of repentance and humility, I must submit myself to the community of faith in celebration of God's deeds of power. I must renounce what Christopher Lasch called the "culture of narcissism" in my own flesh. I must forsake in my own spiritual life what Tom Oden perhaps more helpfully termed the distortion of "autonomous individualism." I do not go on my own power. I am not the best judge of what is best for me. I am not the final decider of my spiritual future. I have faith that my community knows what is best for me before and above my own judgments, biases, perspectives, assessments, and evaluations.

Furthermore, the more diverse my community is, the more trust and submission I must invest in it. When I sit down with someone like

We enter into the preaching event with commitment. We give ourselves to it, we submit ourselves before it. We vow before God only to participate: to participate fully, unselfconsciously, sacramentally, in the event as if the Spirit were speaking through the preacher's voice, however strange and different from our own, and causing us to hear, really hear, in the tongue native to our understanding.

me in denomination, gender, race, economics, and nationality, I am often subconsciously seeking ratification of my own point of view.

Rather, I must sit down at table, like the original Pentecostal community, with Parthians and Medes and Elamites and Cretans and Arabs and folks outside my region, my denomination, my sex, my class, my age, my theology, my worship style, my, my, my... In this understanding, you are my priest as much as you are your own priest. Pascal put it right: "One Christian is no Christian."

In this day of consumer religion, where the customer is always right, it's no wonder our new churches look like malls. Popular religion incubates this narcissism in publishing, broadcasting, and recording industries that crank out program after program, book after book, CD after CD that tell us the same thing: God loves everybody, but secretly, way down deep in the divine innermost heart of hearts, God loves me just a little bit more than God loves everybody else, and wants a very special, intimate, one-of-a-kind love affair with me, wants nothing more than for me to have my best life. Not later. Now! I am amazed at how St. Augustine's famous homily has become hideously distorted into something the old pastor would never have embraced: "God loves you as if you were the only one to love," Augustine said. But, we end the famous quote there without

completing it: "And God loves all of us as God loves each of us."

Because I cannot go on my own power, because my self, my ego, is not the basic building block of human existence, because my future is tied to a community of people who know better than I know what is best for me, the only response that is accurate with regard to my situation is gratitude. There are powers of advocacy and provision all around me, working ingeniously on my behalf and independently of my awareness and knowledge. That is confirmed on a daily and hourly basis.

The folks gathered in one accord at Pentecost were there in Jerusalem that day to give thanks. They knew at that festival of God's goodness that no matter how much they plowed, planted, cultivated, and reaped, only God caused their crops to grow. Do you suppose that it was this spirit of gratitude that determined their openness to a new way of hearing the great good news of God?

We dedicate ourselves to receiving the preaching event in all its unique character, not defining it by our own terms, but rather by the terms inherent in the event itself. We bracket out our own sex, race, class, understandings—they're not adequately definitive and certainly not determinative—and we accept by faith, the sex and class and race of the one speaking, believing that a Mysterious Spirit will cause us to hear in our

Continues to page 14.

SERMONS: More Than a Preacher's Responsibility

Nikki Hardeman, Associate Coordinator for Congregational Life,
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THE QUESTION has been asked, "If a tree falls in the wilderness and no one is around to hear it fall, does it make a sound?" While this is a fun question to put up for debate, fundamentally, I think the real question is, "If no one is there to hear the tree fall, does it really matter if it makes a sound or not?"



Much is the same with sermon delivery. We might ask, "If a sermon is delivered and there is no one around to hear it and respond to it, does it make any kind of impact?" Sermons are a part of the ministry of proclamation and if there is no one to proclaim them to, they cannot be effective. I have no doubt that the sermon preparation has an impact on the preacher. As one who has prepared sermons, I have been deeply impacted in my preparation time. However, without a congregation who is willing to listen and respond, the sermon falls like a dead weight somewhere just past the communion table before it makes it to the first pew.

The congregation listening to a sermon has as much responsibility to it as the one who is delivering the sermon. A preacher can work for hours to deliver a strong, meaningful, action-inducing sermon. However, if the congregation does not listen to the sermon or respond in

some way, it will not matter how many hours the preacher puts into preparing it.

Sermons are meant to do more than send the congregation away from the Sunday morning worship experience with a warm and fuzzy feeling. Sermons are meant to call people to action for peace, justice, and reconciliation in their own lives, in their families, communities, and world. If you are a congregant who sits in the pew on Sunday morning, I challenge you to begin to listen for some kind of action you can take in response to the sermon you are hearing. Listen for what the sermon is calling you to do.

Another way you can respond to the sermon is by dialoguing with the preacher following the sermon. Call him or her the next day to discuss what you thought, what you heard, and what you are going to do in response to the sermon. If you disagreed with something, politely offer to discuss it with him or her over coffee sometime. Your feedback to your pastor is one of the best gifts you can offer. It is important for the congregation to let the pastor know how her/his sermons are impacting you.

Sermons need someone to hear and respond to them. Without that, the words offered in them are offered in vain. Next time you are sitting in the pew listening to a sermon, remember, you have as much responsibility to it as the preacher does. CBF/GA

...if the congregation does not listen to the sermon or respond in some way, it will not matter...

Where We've Been

Now Serving ATL – On February 15-16, about a hundred people participated in Now Serving ATL. Students from Georgia churches and college groups, as well as groups from Alabama and South Carolina, gathered to worship at Mercer University's Atlanta campus, and then went out into the city in smaller groups for a day of work. They participated in a variety of projects, such as yard work, cleaning out a building that is being sold, packing and sorting



medical supplies to be sent to developing countries, caring for pets at a no-kill adoption site, and much more. It was a meaningful event for everyone involved.

Georgia Youth Choir Festival – About a hundred youth and adults from four churches participated in the second annual Georgia Youth Choir Festival sponsored by CBF/GA and the McAfee-Townsend Institute of Mercer University over Martin Luther King, Jr., weekend, January 18-20. The event, held at the Calvin Center in Hampton, included periods of extended rehearsals as well as times for fellowship. On Sunday, the mass choir led worship at FBC Forsyth in the morning service and at FBC Athens in the evening service.



Preaching Madness

Scott Ford, Associate Coordinator for Missions, sford@cbfga.org

TWELVE YEARS after he and a group of friends invented March Mission Madness, Kurt Varney served as the Madness event preacher of 2008. And what a fine job he did! One of the most impressive elements of Kurt's preaching is his ability to understand and communicate to young people. With thirteen years of experience as youth minister with FBC Decatur, and several years of summer youth camp leadership experience before moving to the Atlanta area, Kurt knows youth well. He knows their struggles, temptations, habits, joys, troubles, inferiorities, drivenness, weaknesses, and strengths. And he knows how to challenge youth in ways that make them better followers of Christ and more faithful worshippers of God.

During the three worship services at each March Mission Madness 2008 weekend, Kurt challenged youth and adults to rid their lives of hate, to stop mistreating people in their youth groups and churches, and to lovingly accept all others despite their situations in life. Overall, Kurt's messages addressed relationships and how Christian youth relate to others. He challenged youth to consider how Jesus and Paul would want them to treat one another, including "the fat kid, the weird kid, the smart kid, the gay kid, the kid with gay parents, the poor kid." Faint snickers came from different areas of the auditorium when each stereotype was mentioned. In the quietness of the service, the discomforted responses served as indicators that some youth do indeed struggle with each of the types mentioned.

On opening night Kurt used an analogy related to *Facebook* (a popular social networking website), but his delivery was not flashy glitz and glamour. No yelling, running, back-flips, or fireworks. But with a calm and strong demeanor, Kurt used straightforward exegesis followed by striking applications drawn from each scripture passage. Kurt's messages were first and foremost Biblical and then deftly applicable to the lives of youth.

So what makes Kurt's messages so effective when preaching madness to youth? Historical context helps. Understanding is necessary. Relevance is key. But mostly, I think, that which makes all the difference in this world and beyond is this: Kurt has devoted his life to loving, teaching, and shaping the hearts and minds of young people. His daily devotion of ministering to and with youth has shaped him into a person who God uses to communicate in word and deed God's love and care for others. The central message of God's love is something Kurt professes and lives each day.

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Making Madness This Year

March Mission Madness 2008 was hosted by Highland Hills Baptist Church and Mercer University on February 29-March 2 in Macon, GA, and by FBC Augusta on March 7-9

695 youth & adults participated in MMM 2008 they performed about 4,500 hours of mission service

Visit www.marchmissionmadness.org to view more pictures.

Join the Madness Group on Facebook: I♥MADNESS!

MMM 2008 Participating Churches

Black Springs Baptist Church, Milledgeville
Bowdon Baptist Church
Carlton Baptist Church
Central Baptist Church, Newnan
Clarkesville Baptist Church
Community Baptist Church, Milledgeville
FBC Athens
FBC Augusta
FBC Carrollton
FBC Columbus
FBC Commerce
FBC Decatur
FBC Eatonton
FBC Forsyth
FBC Jasper
FBC Macon
FBC Manchester
FBC Marietta
FBC Morrow
FBC Rome
FBC Warm Springs
Haddock Baptist Church
Haven Fellowship Church, Conyers
Highland Hills Baptist Church, Macon
Horizon Baptist Fellowship, Summerville
Johns Creek Baptist Church, Alpharetta
Madison Baptist Church
Milledge Ave Baptist Church, Athens
New Life Christian Ministries, Marietta
Northside Drive Baptist Church, Atlanta
Parkway Baptist Church, Duluth
Peachtree Baptist Church, Atlanta
Sardis Baptist Church, Hartwell
Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta
Sharpsburg Baptist Church
The Hill Baptist Church, Augusta
Trinity Baptist Church, Moultrie



The 2008 Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching

Pamela R. Durso, Associate Executive Director, Baptist History and Heritage Society

Seventy Baptist churches across the nation joined together on February 3, 2008, to observe the second annual Martha Stearns Marshall (MSM) Day of Preaching. Churches in fourteen states (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington) and the District of Columbia invited women into their pulpits to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. The event has grown since last year when fifty-five churches participated in the inaugural MSM Day of Preaching.

Sponsored by the Baptist Women in Ministry, the MSM Day of Preaching is named for Martha Stearns Marshall, an eighteenth-century Separate Baptist woman preacher. The event is both a celebration of women in the pulpit and an opportunity to educate congregations about women in ministry.

As a result of the MSM Day of Preaching, one Alabama congregation will have a woman preacher in its pulpit for the first time. Pintlala Baptist Church in Pintlala, Alabama, will observe the Day of Preaching in April. The church's pastor, Gary Burton, is looking forward to having Ellen Sims, associate pastor at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama, preach to his congregation. "Inviting female clergy to preach for the Pintlala Baptist Church was something I had always wanted to do," Burton noted, "but I was bound by the inertia of the past. Cultural traditions blinded me to present opportunities. So the Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching became the impetus I needed to invite Ellen Sims to preach in April. I can't wait."

Other churches observed the Sunday for a second time, including Second Baptist Church in Lubbock, Texas, where the guest preacher for the MSM Day of Preaching was Michelle McClendon, a former staff member at that church. Philip Wise, pastor of the Lubbock church, recounted a story from McClendon's sermon. Some years ago McClendon had a conversation with a Second Baptist church member while they were standing in the hallway listening to a guest preacher. The member said to McClendon, "You should be doing that." McClendon

remembered responding, "I can't do that. I'll never do that." The member retorted, "You're just chicken." McClendon then told the congregation: "I'm here today because nobody calls me 'chicken.'"

Both Sims and McClendon are experienced preachers, but for some Baptist women, the MSM Day of Preaching provided their first or one of their first opportunities to preach in a church. Allison Hicks, a second-year student at McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta, had preached in her home church before, but February 3 was the first time she had preached in another church on a Sunday morning. Preaching at Covenant Community Church in Elba, Alabama, was "a wonderful experience in learning and growing," she said. "I was absolutely blessed by the church's hospitality and the words of affirmation that now echo in my ears." After the service, Hicks attended a "dinner on the grounds" in celebration of the church's fourth anniversary. During the meal, a man told her how much he appreciated her voice as a young woman. He expressed his gratitude for the tone and expression that her voice lent to the preaching event. For Hicks, "His words are for me a blessing upon my life and evidence of the goodness of diversity in the pulpit."

The sermons preached on MSM Day of Preaching were as varied as the women participating. At Northside Drive Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, Liz Harris-Lamkin delivered a sermon titled, "Testimony—One Woman's Experience in Ministry." Telling of her own baptism, Harris-Lamkin recalled that as she waited to wade into the waters, an older woman's hands rested on her shoulders. The woman's hands were trembling, and Harris-Lamkin concluded, "Perhaps ministry is like that. We live out our baptism, called into deep waters, though there is plenty to tremble about."

Baptist Women in Ministry in 2009 will again sponsor the Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching. Churches are encouraged to mark their calendars now and plan to invite a woman preacher into their pulpit on the first Sunday of February. CBF/GA

2008 Georgia Participating Churches

FBC Augusta

FBC Fitzgerald

Haddock Baptist Church

Milledge Avenue Baptist Church, Athens

North Broad Baptist Church, Rome

Northeast Baptist Church, Atlanta

Northside Drive Baptist Church, Atlanta

Park Avenue Baptist Church, Atlanta

Parkway Baptist Church, Duluth

Peachtree Baptist Church, Atlanta

Smoke Rise Baptist Church, Stone Mountain

Meet Your CBF/GA Scholarship Recipients

2007-2008 Scholarship Recipients for CBF/GA

*Lee Ellen Carter
Clayton Davis
Katelyn Dellinger
Will Dyer
Katie Gilbert
Erin Hall
Rachel Huston
Darryl Mathis
Chad McGinnis
Justin Nelson
Matt Norman
Kyle Schenkewitz
Jan Thompson*

Scholarships for the 2008-2009 year are still available. April 1 is the deadline for applications. Visit http://www.cbfga.org/church_life/scholarships.html for information on the application process. If you have questions, email Nikki Hardeman at nhardeman@cbfga.org.

Lee Ellen Carter was born in Concord, North Carolina, to Reverend Barry Carter of Booneville, Mississippi, and Mrs. Lin Carter of Atlanta, Georgia. She moved to Cochran, Georgia, as a toddler and later moved to Macon, Georgia. Lee Ellen attended Central High School, where she completed the International Baccalaureate Program. She was president of the Beta Club, National Honor Society, Science and Earth Club, and Habitat for Humanity. She also won the Golden Eagle award in Science. Her hobbies include spending time with her older sister, Allison, attending church activities, reading, cooking, traveling, singing, and playing the flute and piano. She is currently a senior at the University of Georgia majoring in anthropology, with a minor in Spanish, and is a member of the Environmental Ethics Certificate Program. Since 2001, she has been a devoted volunteer to Habitat for Humanity. She is currently Co-President of the UGA Habitat for Humanity Campus Chapter. Lee Ellen has been a member of FBC Macon since 1998.

Clayton Davis is a third-year student at McAfee School of Theology. Before attending McAfee, he graduated from Auburn University and later worked for the United States Department of Agriculture. His theological interests include Christian ethics, spirituality, and New Testament studies. Upon completing seminary, Clayton is considering pastoral ministry or continuing his education in a Master of Theology program with an emphasis on Christian ethics.

Clayton first sensed a calling to seminary and ministry while living in Montgomery, Alabama, and working with the AIDS Caring Team of his church. Through this ministry opportunity, he was enlightened to avenues of ministry that he had previously never considered. Clayton committed to attend seminary in response to the strong urging he felt to dedicate his life to service and ministry to others.

Clayton and his wife, Anna, have a nine-month-old son, Ty, who consumes most of their time. They enjoy spending family time together, experiencing the joys of parenthood. In Clayton's free time, he enjoys running, kayaking, and being a news and politics junky.

Will Dyer was born and raised in Gainesville, Georgia. He attended college at the University of Georgia where he received a bachelor's degree in religion and graduated with honors (Magna Cum Laude). Will is a senior at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He will finish school in June of 2008 and will move to Augusta, Georgia, to be with his fiancée, Sara, who is a junior dental student at the Medical College of Georgia. In his spare time, Will enjoys golfing, reading anything other than school textbooks, spending time planning a wedding, and taking time to visit his mother, who lives on the beach in North Topsail Island, North Carolina.

Katie Gilbert is a second-year student at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta. Daughter of Tim and Karen Gilbert, Katie is a native Texan, who grew up in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. From there, she moved to Waco to attend Baylor University where she graduated in 2006 with a bachelor of arts in religion. Currently she works part time with face2face at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Atlanta and serves on the CBF/GA Coordinating Council. She also currently serves as an intern at Peachtree Baptist Church and enjoys volunteering with their Sunday evening ESL classes. Katie has one sister, Mary Beth, who is a sophomore at Samford University. When not working or studying, Katie likes to run and play guitar. She also really enjoys eating Mexican food anytime!

Erin Hall, a native of Greenville, South Carolina, is a third-year master of divinity student at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. At Candler, she is focusing on religious education and a certificate in Baptist studies. A former English teacher to grades 7, 8, and 9, Erin considers herself an educator at heart. She has served at Peachtree Baptist Church in Atlanta as a Ministry Intern and recently at First Baptist Church of Marietta as a Ministry Intern and Day Camp Director. She loves getting to know people and hearing their stories; her best moments are spent laughing and catching up with friends. Erin resides in Canton where her husband, Jake, is the Pastor of Heritage Baptist Fellowship. She and Jake are the proud parents of an English bulldog named Harley.

Rachel Huston lives in Macon, Georgia, and attends Highland Hills Baptist Church. She is in her first year of seminary at McAfee School of Theology, where she is challenged academically and led to grow in her faith. Throughout her life,

Continues to page 12.

God has placed Rachel in environments that have shaped her to be the person she is today. Her life experiences have made her a stronger and more passionate person. Rachel is committed to following God's call on her life into ministry. Her focus for ministry is to nurture, listen, and comfort those who are in need, doing her best to be Christ to them. Rachel is feeling led towards chaplaincy. Her plans are to earn a Masters of Divinity at McAfee, complete units of Clinical Pastoral Education, and then begin the chaplain endorsement process for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Darryl Mathis is a part-time student at the McAfee School of Theology. He is forty-three years old. He felt a strong calling to ministry about four years ago. He is currently in the process of transitioning from a full-time business career to a full-time ministry career. The last few years have been both wonderful and difficult at times for Darryl between going to school, working a full-time job, being a husband, and a father of four daughters. His entire family has been very supportive throughout the past four years. He knows that God is guiding him on his journey, and while he may not be completely satisfied with his progress, he knows that God is!

In June 2007, Darryl was ordained by his home church, Milledge Avenue Baptist Church in Athens, Georgia. His church family has stood alongside him and has encouraged him both by their words and with their prayers. Darryl feels blessed to be a part of such a loving and supportive church family as he has at Milledge Avenue. God has opened many doors for him so far and he is excited about his calling in which he will strive to be a faithful follower and servant of God.

Chad McGinnis was born in Jacksonville, Alabama, and graduated from Jacksonville High School in 1999. He attended Samford University, where he graduated with a bachelor of arts in religion in May of 2003. After graduation, Chad moved to Tampa, Florida, and married his beautiful wife, Melissa. After Melissa completed her studies at the University of South Florida, the couple moved to Atlanta to attend Candler School of Theology. This past summer they had a beautiful baby girl, Mae Jewell, who has brought a lot of excitement and joy into their lives. Chad and Melissa are currently in their last year at Candler and are on schedule to graduate in May of 2008. They have been very involved in Peachtree Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, by serving in a ministerial internship for fifteen months.

Justin Nelson, a third-year student at McAfee School of Theology, is looking forward to graduation in May. While at McAfee, he has had the great opportunity to work for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship National office in the area of Advancement. Justin is married to Bailey Edwards Nelson, who is also a third year McAfee student, and is currently employed by the New Baptist Covenant. After graduation, he feels called into non-profit mission ministry, while Bailey will enter local congregational ministry. Justin would like to thank McAfee School of Theology for teaching and equipping him to become a better minister as well as CBF/GA for assisting him along this great journey.

Matt Norman works with CBF Global Missions as associate coordinator for career and affiliate selection, based in Atlanta, Georgia. His responsibilities include mentoring candidates interested in mission service through the CBF appointment process. He is also responsible for the development of the AsYouGo Affiliate category of mission service. AsYouGo service calls people to "be the presence of Christ" through "partner funded" as well as "tent making" possibilities.

Matt is well equipped for mentoring potential Global Missions field personnel. He and his wife, Michelle, previously served with Global Missions as Global Service Corps personnel, working among international students in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He also has a long history of missions exposure, growing up as a missionary kid in Uganda and Greece, and living in five countries on three continents.

A graduate of Gardner-Webb University with a bachelor of arts degree in communications, Matt worked in advertising and marketing positions in North Carolina, before beginning service with Global Missions in 2003.

Kyle Schenkewitz is a native Texan, but grew up near Pascagoula, Mississippi. He received a bachelor of arts in biblical studies with minors in philosophy and biblical languages from William Carey University and a master of arts in philosophy from the University of Southern Mississippi. He is currently attending Candler School of Theology at Emory University and will receive a master of theological studies degree in May 2008. Kyle is applying to Ph.D. programs and planning to study early Christian theology and practice. He attends Peachtree Baptist Church and sings in the choir.

The mountains of northeast Georgia have been **Jan Thompson's** home all her life. She first learned of God in a little white church sitting on a knoll in a splendid mountain valley of Rabun County. In Persimmon Baptist Church, she made her profession of faith as a child, and then more than twenty years later, Jan and her husband were married at that same altar. Jan holds a bachelor of science in biology from North Georgia College and a master of education in science education from the University of Georgia. After fifteen years in teaching, she finds herself on the other side of the desk, at least part of the time. As an advisor to students enrolled in the college where she served as biology instructor, she attended advisement seminars in the Southern School of Pharmacy on the Atlanta campus of Mercer University a few years ago. While on the Mercer campus, she spotted the McAfee School of Theology building next door. Although she had no desire at that time to leave her job and career as a college biology instructor and had never entertained any hope that she would have the opportunity to return to school as a student, she felt herself mysteriously drawn to McAfee. Years later, Jan finds herself enrolled as a student with more than half the credits required for a master of divinity tucked safely under her belt, a certificate on the wall declaring that she has been ordained for the gospel ministry, and a church

Continues to page 14.

More Information about CBF/GA General Assembly

Networking Meetings

Following is a list of network meetings that will be available at the General Assembly meeting. The networks will meet from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., April 5. We encourage the networks to go to lunch together following their meetings for a time of fellowship around the table.

- The Chaplain’s Network** meeting will be convened by Milton Snyder.
- The Children’s Minister Network** meeting will be convened by Debbie Britt.
- The Church Administrative Assistant’s Network** meeting will be convened by Mike Copeland.
- The Church Start Network** will be convened by Rory Naeve.
- The Lay Network** meeting will be convened by Frank Broome.
- The Music and Worship Leader’s Network** meeting will be convened by Ryan Forbes.
- The Pastor’s Network** meeting will be convened by Julie Pennington-Russell.
- The Youth Minister Network** meeting will be convened by Kurt Varney.

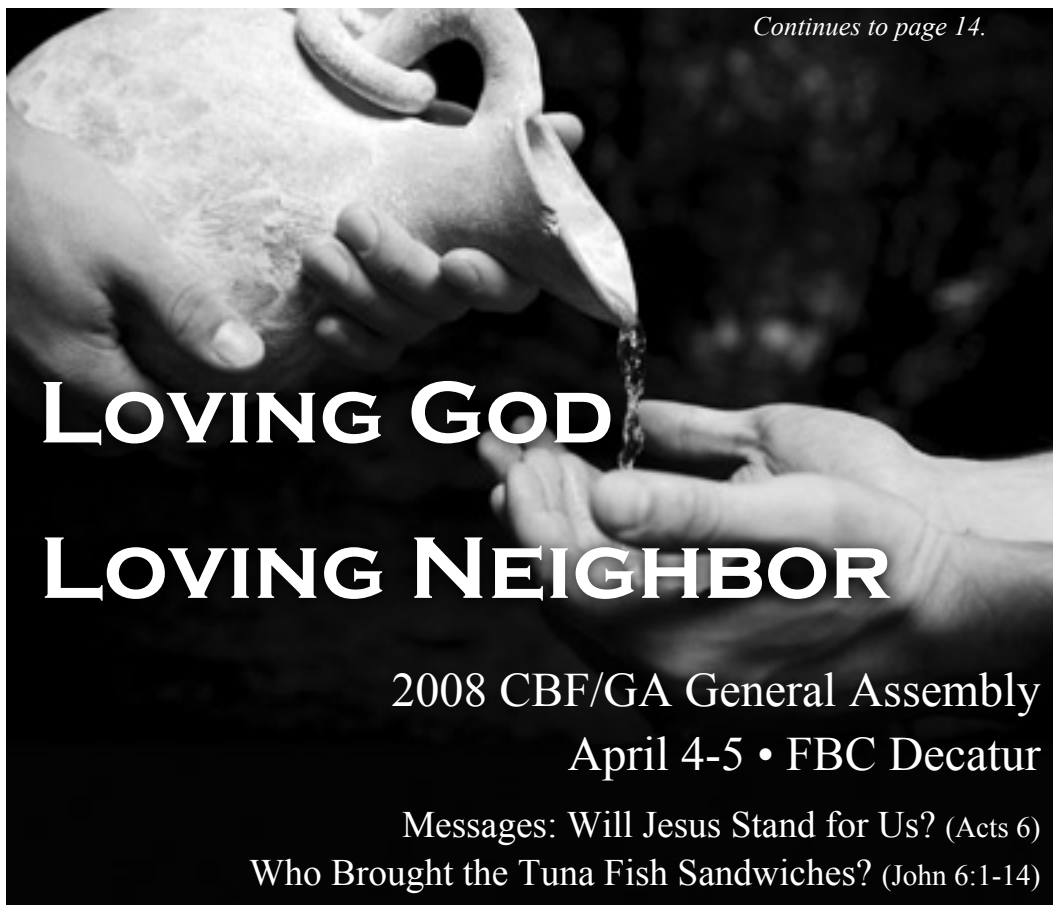
Administrative Assistant Network Meeting Zoo Keeper 101 — Mike Copeland

Do you ever feel like you work with a “bunch of animals” in a zoo? Well, maybe you do! Plan now to attend the first meeting of the church secretarial/support staff network at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 5 during the CBF/GA Spring General Assembly. Learn how your personality type and those of your co-workers, can be described in such a way that you can learn “to manage the zoo” while maintaining your sanity!

Have fun while gaining practical insights on how to develop better communication with all personality types based around animal characteristics. Learn ideas on creating more effective relationships with co-workers, friends, and even family.

Mike Copeland has worked as a trainer for the Georgia Farm Bureau for eight years. During this time, he has conducted workshops and seminars for office managers and secretaries in the areas of personal development and technology. He is a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Macon, where he is an adult Sunday School teacher, member of the adult choir, an ordained deacon, and currently serving on the finance and pastor search committees.

The Baptist Heritage Council will be having its annual breakfast and program April 5 in the Fellowship Hall at FBC Decatur. The cost will be \$10.00 for a buffet breakfast. The program theme is The New Baptist Covenant—What’s Next? A panel discussion will be held with Dr. Emmanuel McCall, Pastor at The Fellowship Group Baptist Church, and Julie Long, Minister of Children and Families at FBC Macon. Come hear what is being planned for the future from a senior pastor and a young minister and talk about what you hope will come from this meeting. For reservations, email baptistheritage@bellsouth.net or call 706-583-8618 and leave a message.



Continues to page 14.

LOVING GOD

LOVING NEIGHBOR

2008 CBF/GA General Assembly
April 4-5 • FBC Decatur

Messages: Will Jesus Stand for Us? (Acts 6)
Who Brought the Tuna Fish Sandwiches? (John 6:1-14)

Two New Breakout Sessions!

A Christian Perspective on the Death Penalty

—William D. Underwood, President, Mercer University

Our faith as Christians is founded on the trial and execution of an innocent man named Jesus who we believe to be the Son of God. What lessons are there for us as Christians regarding the death penalty in the life, the teachings, and the death of Jesus? Retribution is the principal theoretical foundation for the death penalty today. What should be the role of retribution in our criminal justice system? Do the teachings of Jesus address this question?

Global Women: An Overview

—Trudy Johnson, Director of Education and Development, Global Women

An opportunity to investigate opportunities and resources to pray for and respond to the global needs of women; influence and be influenced as you affirm and collaborate with women called into missions and ministry; and, involve yourself in giving, ministering, and serving God to make a difference in the lives of others. Individuals participate in Global Women as well as in groups organized to live out the missions' purpose: motivated by the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, Global Women seeks to create global friendships among women for shared learning and service.

Directions from Holiday Inn Express Decatur to FBC Decatur

1. Head west on North Decatur Road toward Webster Drive.
2. Turn left at Clairmont Road.
3. Proceed straight. Clairmont Road will become Clairemont Avenue in the city of Decatur.

Directions from Double Tree Hotel to FBC Decatur

1. Head east on North Druid Hills Road Northeast toward I-85 South.
2. Take a slight right toward Clairmont Road.
3. Turn right at Clairmont Road.
4. Proceed straight. Clairmont Road will become Clairemont Avenue in the city of Decatur.

Scholarship Recipients

(Continues from page 12.)

bulletin in her Bible that lists her name as pastor of Covenant Baptist Church of Cleveland, Georgia. Only God could cause such changes as these to occur.

Just after she completed her second year of seminary, and was enjoying her first year in her first pastorate, Jan was diagnosed with breast cancer. While missing a year of seminary, with the support of her family and church she underwent surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy, and then began her recovery and a new segment of her life. Now, she is back, complete with her own natural hair, and continues to serve as the pastor of Covenant Baptist Church. Jan is celebrating twenty-one years of marriage to her husband, William, and the accomplishments of their son, Jacob, who is about to embark on his own college journey, while setting his sights on studies in biomedical engineering and music.

CBF/GA

Preaching *(Continues from page 5.)*

great preaching with words that transcend all pictures. Charles Spurgeon said, "If there be a place under high heaven more holy than another, it is the pulpit whence the gospel is preached." Pastor, set yourself on fire and people will come to see you burn. People long to hear the authentic word served from the warm heart of an authentic servant of God. CBF/GA

This is an edited version of William L. Self's article. The article, in its entirety, can be found on CBF/GA's website under the category of preaching resources.

Pentecostal *(Continues from page 6.)*

own language nothing short of the Word of God.

We enter into the preaching event with commitment. We give ourselves to it, we submit ourselves before it. We vow before God only to participate: to participate fully, unselfconsciously, sacramentally, in the event as if the Spirit were speaking through the preacher's voice, however strange and different from our own, and causing us to hear, really hear, in the tongue native to our understanding. As our friend, John Claypool, said in his remarkable Beecher lectures, and said every chance he got, "The preacher and the preaching is a gift. Sheer gift."

Women and men of God, we get wrapped around that truth, and Pentecost may just break out all over again. CBF/GA

This is an excerpt from a paper delivered at the Mercer Preaching Convocation in August of 2007.

OPPORTUNITIES / REPORTS / UPDATES

An Urban Ministry Workshop will be held at the McAfee School of Theology and feature Dr. Robert Franklin from Morehouse College. The dates for the event are April 1-2. Visit http://www.cbfga.org/church_life/partner-opportunities/urban-ministry-workshop.html for more information.

The Fellowship of Baptist Pastoral Musicians will be conducting its first annual conference, *Polyphony—The Holiness of Beauty*, April 3-5, 2008, at the First Baptist Church in Asheville, NC. Visit http://www.cbfga.org/church_life/partner-opportunities/polyphony.html for more details.

Hosted by The Center for Baptist Studies of Mercer University and cosponsored by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia, the **2008 Baptist History and Heritage Society annual meeting** will be held May 22-24 on Mercer University's Atlanta campus. The theme is *Baptists and First Amendment Issues*. The keynote speaker is Bill Underwood, President, Mercer University. For more information, contact Pam Durso at 770-457-5540 or visit the CBF/GA website.

CBF/GA... enabling the people of God who are committed to historic Baptist principles to carry out the Great Commission under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a fellowship where every Christian has the freedom and the responsibility to exercise God's gift and calling.

Financial Picture

Budget Receipts as of 2/29/08

Year to Date:	\$444,362.90
Requirement:	\$498,899.97
Over/Under:	(\$54,537.07)
Month to Date:	\$41,108.23
Monthly Req.:	\$55,433.33
Over/Under:	(\$14,325.10)



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Ministers on the Move

Alan Mitchell, Assistant to the Coordinator for Reference and Referral, amitchell@cbfga.org



Amelia Cotten is organist at FBC Milledgeville.

Chris Borders is Minister of Youth and Education at FBC Manchester.

Dale Tadloc is Associate Pastor for Young Adults and Youth at FBC Waynesboro, VA.

David Brooks is Pastor of Edenton Baptist Church, Edenton, NC.

Della Lago is Minister of Church Administration at Dahlenega Baptist Church.

Doug Beltzner is RESTART Pastor at Memorial Baptist Church in Savannah.

Doug Ivey is Pastor of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Watkinsville.

Drew Ross is Minister to Children at Sharpsburg Baptist Church.

Eydie Jones is Minister of Youth at FBC Jasper.

Gregory Smith is Pastor of Scott Boulevard Baptist Church in Decatur.

John Cotten is Minister of Music at FBC Milledgeville.

John Silver is Pastor of Sardis Baptist Church in Hartwell.

Kendell Cameron has been called as Pastor of FBC Mt. Holly, NC. He begins his ministry there on March 16.

Lanny McManus is music department chair and choral director at Judson College.

Matt McGee is Minister of Music, Fine Arts, and Worship at Emerywood Baptist Church in High Point, NC.

Noel Schoonmaker is Pastor of FBC Valdese, NC.

Richard Dickson is Minister of Music at FBC Jefferson.

Ruth Demby began her ministry on staff at FBC Gainesville on January 1.

Ryan Tucker will be moving to Billings, MT, in July to work in a church planting venture with National CBF, CBF/NC, and other partners.

Tom Barden is Minister of Music at FBC Hartwell.

Velvie Banister began her ministry at Dahlenega Baptist Church as Minister to Children on January 2.

COMING UP

■ April 3

Baptists Today Judson Rice Dinner
Loudemilk Center, Atlanta

■ April 3-5

Polyphony—The Holiness of Beauty—FBC Asheville, NC

■ April 4-5

CBF/GA General Assembly — FBC Decatur

■ May 22-24

Baptists and First Amendment Issues Baptist History and Heritage Society Annual Meeting — Mercer University, Macon

■ June 9-13 & 16-20

Taliaferro Summer Camps — www.tcamps.org

■ June 19-20

CBF/National General Assembly — Memphis, TN

■ Nov. 9-10

CBF/GA Fall Convocation — FBC Augusta

CBF GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MEMPHIS, TN JUNE 19-20, 2008



John 20:21

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