

VISIONS



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NOW SERVING: Atlanta



Participating in Now Serving: Atlanta was an **eye-opening experience** for me. As a student juggling classes, student organizations, an internship, friends, and family, it is easy to cut off from the world and lose focus on what your faith calls you to do. Now Serving: Atlanta allowed me the opportunity to put my faith into action through volunteering at Medshare, a nonprofit organization that recovers and then redistributes medical supplies all over the world, and at the United Methodist Children's Shelter. I met several amazing individuals, and the whole experience allowed me to refocus and answer my faith's calling. —*Bonnie Tumlin, CSF Mercer*



LOVE *in deed!*

1 John 3:18 - "...let us not love in word or tongue but in action and in truth"

When I went to Now Serving: Atlanta, I did not know what I was signing myself up for. What I ended up with was something that **blew me away**. I had a wonderful experience getting to meet students from other CSF organizations in the area, serve with them, and worship with them. The speaker for the weekend was great, and the message was inspiring.

I served at the Stewart Center and was able to help organize a gym and build a basketball goal for kids in less fortunate homes. I really learned how to "love in deed" and would love to get involved again next year! —*David Murray, CSF Georgia Tech*



Eighty-eight students and group leaders, with an additional fifteen program leaders, participated in Now Serving: Atlanta this year.

- CSF Athens • CSF Clemson • CSF Georgia Tech
- CSF Mercer • FBC Athens • FBC Auburn
- FBC Columbus • FBC Commerce • Garden Lakes Baptist Church, Rome • Haven Fellowship Church, Conyers
- Trinity Baptist Church, Madison, AL



2010 Giving Report

SUZANNE POWELL spowell@cbfga.org

Once again it is time to report on CBF/GA's finances. I will try to give you a picture of where CBF/GA stands financially, as of December 31, 2010, and what our projections are for the future. Our 2010 (unaudited) contributions to the budget totaled \$516,725. This was under our budget goal by \$8,850 and down 6.4% from the previous year's giving. Our 2010 (unaudited) expenses were \$506,170, with a positive cash flow of \$10,555.



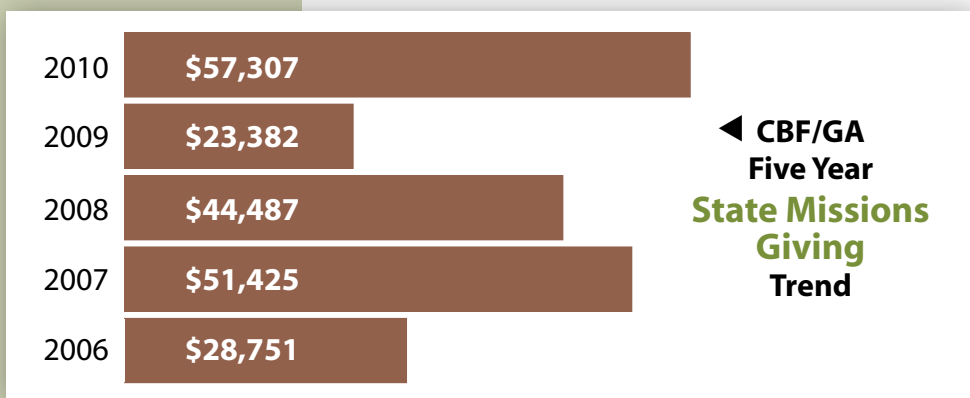
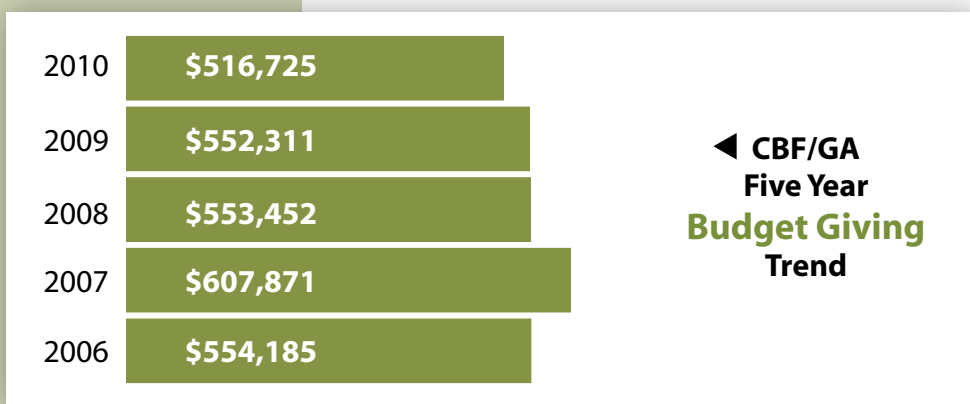
For that same time period, temporarily restricted receipts totaled \$194,582, an increase of 24% over the previous year. Of that temporarily restricted total, \$86,349 was received for ministries such as state missions, international missions, Touching Taliaferro with Love Summer Day Camps, and college ministries. Revenues totaling \$108,233 were received for CBF/GA-sponsored events like March Mission Madness, ReCharge, Georgia Youth Choir Festival, and Now Serving: Atlanta. Total expenses for ministries were \$35,837, and total expenses for events were \$114,863, giving a grand total of temporarily restricted expenses of \$150,700, with a positive cash flow of \$43,882.

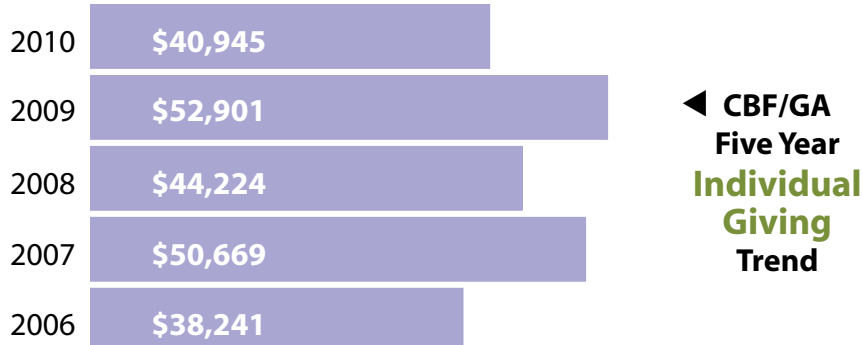
Our budget for 2011 is \$559,537. Our projections are very hopeful, and as the economy struggles to rise and move forward, so is our prayer for our churches and church families to grow. We will be starting to work on the 2012 budget

soon, now that the new council is in place and the committee members have been chosen.

The charts on the left show CBF/GA's churches' budget and state missions giving trend for the past five years. The chart on the top right shows CBF/GA's individuals' giving trend over the last five years.

In this issue of *Visions*, we list our contributing churches (pages 4-5). We also include a list of the top twelve congregations giving by percent and the top twelve congregations giving by dollar (see right).





▼ **Top Twelve Churches Giving by Total Percent** (Churches in **bold** are on both lists.)

CHURCH	BUDGET	STATE MISSIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
1. Rehoboth Baptist Church, Cave Spring	\$3,384.03.....	\$0.00	\$3,384.03.....	7.26%
2. Fellowship Baptist Church, Americus.....	\$3,000.00.....	\$0.00	\$3,000.00.....	5.45%
3. First Baptist Church, Forsyth	\$16,846.27.....	\$1,772.93	\$18,619.20.....	4.41%
4. Ila Baptist Church, Ila.....	\$2,281.23.....	\$1,813.65	\$4,094.88.....	4.15%
5. Community Baptist Church, Milledgeville.....	\$4,050.63.....	\$2,436.49	\$6,487.12.....	4.11%
6. First Baptist Church, St. Simons Island	\$26,760.38.....	\$0.00	\$26,760.38.....	3.98%
7. First Baptist Church, Lumpkin.....	\$4,434.68.....	\$0.00	\$4,434.68.....	3.80%
8. First Baptist Church of Christ, Macon	\$25,065.32.....	\$0.00	\$25,065.32.....	3.29%
9. First Baptist Church, Commerce	\$10,925.32.....	\$0.00	\$10,925.32.....	2.86%
10. First Baptist Church, Claxton.....	\$9,114.83.....	\$0.00	\$9,114.83.....	2.73%
11. College Hill Baptist Church, Mount Vernon	\$2,440.00.....	\$350.00	\$2,790.00.....	2.47%
12. First Baptist Church, Griffin	\$27,594.86.....	\$720.19	\$28,315.05.....	2.30%

▼ **Top Twelve Churches Giving by Budget Amount** (Churches in **bold** are on both lists.)

CHURCH	BUDGET	STATE MISSIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
1. First Baptist Church, Griffin	\$27,594.86.....	\$720.19	\$28,315.05.....	2.30%
2. First Baptist Church, St. Simons Island	\$26,760.38.....	\$0.00	\$26,760.38.....	3.98%
3. First Baptist Church of Christ, Macon	\$25,065.32.....	\$0.00	\$25,065.32.....	3.29%
4. First Baptist Church, Dalton.....	\$21,523.03.....	\$0.00	\$21,523.03.....	1.08%
5. Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carrollton	\$19,774.38.....	\$0.00	\$19,774.38.....	1.15%
6. First Baptist Church, Augusta.....	\$18,311.07.....	\$0.00	\$18,311.07.....	0.54%
7. First Baptist Church, Forsyth	\$16,846.27.....	\$1,772.93	\$18,619.20.....	4.41%
8. Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta.....	\$12,362.13.....	\$0.00	\$12,362.13.....	0.91%
9. First Baptist Church, Tifton	\$12,025.21.....	\$0.00	\$12,025.21.....	0.48%
10. First Baptist Church, Gainesville	\$12,004.11.....	\$0.00	\$12,004.11.....	0.47%
11. First Baptist Church, Lavonia.....	\$11,215.50.....	\$0.00	\$11,215.50.....	1.61%
12. First Baptist Church, Commerce	\$10,925.32.....	\$0.00	\$10,925.32.....	2.86%

Your giving supports many educational and missional events throughout the year, including (left to right): Cooperative Student Fellowship, Georgia Youth Choir Festival, and our Fall General Assembly.



Georgia Contributing Churches 01/01/2010 - 12/31/2010

(All contributions include gifts sent directly to CBF/GA or through National CBF and are listed in descending order according to budget amount.)

CHURCH	BUDGET	STATE MISSIONS	TOTAL
First Baptist Church, Griffin	\$27,594.86	\$720.19	\$28,315.05
First Baptist Church, St. Simons Island	\$26,760.38	\$0.00	\$26,760.38
First Baptist Church of Christ, Macon	\$25,065.32	\$0.00	\$25,065.32
First Baptist Church, Dalton	\$21,523.03	\$0.00	\$21,523.03
Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carrollton	\$19,774.38	\$0.00	\$19,774.38
First Baptist Church, Augusta	\$18,311.07	\$0.00	\$18,311.07
First Baptist Church, Forsyth	\$16,846.27	\$1,772.93	\$18,619.20
Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta	\$12,362.13	\$0.00	\$12,362.13
First Baptist Church, Tifton	\$12,025.21	\$0.00	\$12,025.21
First Baptist Church, Gainesville	\$12,004.11	\$0.00	\$12,004.11
First Baptist Church, Lavonia	\$11,215.50	\$0.00	\$11,215.50
First Baptist Church, Commerce	\$10,925.32	\$0.00	\$10,925.32
Central Baptist Church, Newnan	\$10,710.00	\$0.00	\$10,710.00
Madison Baptist Church, Madison	\$9,705.13	\$0.00	\$9,705.13
First Baptist Church, Claxton	\$9,114.83	\$0.00	\$9,114.83
Trinity Baptist Church, Moultrie	\$8,108.12	\$65.00	\$8,173.12
First Baptist Church, Columbus	\$8,011.22	\$7,650.00	\$15,661.22
Highland Hills Baptist Church, Macon	\$7,929.97	\$0.00	\$7,929.97
First Baptist Church, Jefferson	\$7,434.13	\$0.00	\$7,434.13
First Baptist Church, Rome	\$7,336.84	\$771.71	\$8,108.55
Smoke Rise Baptist Church, Stone Mountain	\$7,204.37	\$0.00	\$7,204.37
First Baptist Church, Marietta	\$6,827.75	\$3,746.48	\$10,574.23
First Baptist Church, Morrow	\$6,719.99	\$1,487.25	\$8,207.24
First Baptist Church, Milledgeville	\$6,676.54	\$100.00	\$6,776.54
Mount Zion Baptist Church, Macon	\$6,564.20	\$0.00	\$6,564.20
First Baptist Church, Roswell	\$6,457.31	\$0.00	\$6,457.31
First Baptist Church, Athens	\$6,000.00	\$8,580.00	\$14,580.00
Parkway Baptist Church, Duluth	\$5,892.42	\$0.00	\$5,892.42
Royston Baptist Church, Royston	\$5,413.47	\$0.00	\$5,413.47
Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta	\$5,254.89	\$0.00	\$5,254.89
Second Avenue Baptist Church, Rome	\$4,955.83	\$0.00	\$4,955.83
Dunwoody Baptist Church, Atlanta	\$4,675.00	\$0.00	\$4,675.00
Johns Creek Baptist Church, Alpharetta	\$4,488.79	\$0.00	\$4,488.79
First Baptist Church, Lumpkin	\$4,434.68	\$0.00	\$4,434.68
Memorial Baptist Church, Savannah	\$4,120.12	\$0.00	\$4,120.12
North Broad Baptist Church, Rome	\$4,091.84	\$0.00	\$4,091.84
Community Baptist Church, Milledgeville	\$4,050.63	\$3,161.49	\$7,212.12
Garden Lakes Baptist Church, Rome	\$3,913.46	\$0.00	\$3,913.46
Haddock Baptist Church, Haddock	\$3,750.00	\$0.00	\$3,750.00
First Baptist Church, Eatonton	\$3,503.79	\$0.00	\$3,503.79
First Baptist Church, LaFayette	\$3,462.00	\$0.00	\$3,462.00
Rehoboth Baptist Church, Cave Spring	\$3,384.03	\$0.00	\$3,384.03
Northside Drive Baptist Church, Atlanta	\$3,375.00	\$0.00	\$3,375.00
First Baptist Church, Fort Oglethorpe	\$3,200.01	\$0.00	\$3,200.01
Heritage Baptist Fellowship, Canton	\$3,187.50	\$1,062.50	\$4,250.00
First Baptist Church, Carrollton	\$3,137.50	\$0.00	\$3,137.50
First Baptist Church, Hartwell	\$3,095.00	\$3,820.00	\$6,915.00
Fellowship Baptist Church, Americus	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,000.00
First Baptist Church, Montezuma	\$2,907.02	\$0.00	\$2,907.02
Dahlonega Baptist Church, Dahlonega	\$2,901.46	\$926.75	\$3,828.21
Horizon Baptist Fellowship, Summerville	\$2,600.00	\$0.00	\$2,600.00
College Hill Baptist Church, Mount Vernon	\$2,440.00	\$350.00	\$2,790.00
Ila Baptist Church, Ila	\$2,281.23	\$1,813.65	\$4,094.88
First Baptist Church, Jasper	\$2,232.67	\$0.00	\$2,232.67
Fellowship Baptist Church, Fitzgerald	\$2,168.55	\$0.00	\$2,168.55
Druid Hills Baptist Church, Atlanta	\$2,016.15	\$0.00	\$2,016.15
Briarcliff Baptist Church, Atlanta	\$2,013.86	\$0.00	\$2,013.86
Milledge Avenue Baptist Church, Athens	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Monticello Baptist Church, Monticello	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$2,000.00
Greenwood Baptist Church, Gray	\$1,997.03	\$0.00	\$1,997.03
First Baptist Church, Fitzgerald	\$1,815.04	\$0.00	\$1,815.04
First Baptist Church, Thomaston	\$1,594.36	\$0.00	\$1,594.36
First Baptist Church, Decatur	\$1,525.00	\$0.00	\$1,525.00
Haven Fellowship Church, Conyers	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00

CHURCH	BUDGET	STATE MISSIONS	TOTAL
Rocky Creek Baptist Church, Forsyth.....	\$1,500.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,500.00
Pine Grove Baptist Church, Thomson.....	\$1,499.54.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,499.54
First Baptist Church, Cornelia.....	\$1,441.56.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,441.56
Park Avenue Baptist Church, Atlanta.....	\$1,342.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,342.00
First Baptist Church, Tucker.....	\$1,331.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,331.00
Maranatha Baptist Church, Plains.....	\$1,313.43.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,313.43
First Baptist Church, West Point.....	\$1,307.95.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,307.95
First Baptist Church, Bogart.....	\$1,145.37.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,145.37
First Baptist Church, Hawkinsville.....	\$1,057.50.....	\$1,364.50.....	\$2,422.00
Heritage Baptist Church, Cartersville.....	\$1,030.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,030.00
First Baptist Church, Savannah.....	\$1,013.28.....	\$0.00.....	\$1,013.28
First Baptist Church, Covington.....	\$890.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$890.00
Central Baptist Church, Gray.....	\$800.00.....	\$1,313.00.....	\$2,113.00
First Baptist Church, Manchester.....	\$753.65.....	\$25.00.....	\$778.65
First Baptist Church, Ringgold.....	\$690.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$690.00
Buckhead Baptist Church, Atlanta.....	\$660.00.....	\$71.00.....	\$731.00
Fellowship Baptist Church, Edison.....	\$600.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$600.00
First Baptist Church of Lakeview, Rossville.....	\$600.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$600.00
First Baptist Church, Riverdale.....	\$590.50.....	\$0.00.....	\$590.50
Iglesia Bautista El Buen Pastor, Newnan.....	\$550.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$550.00
Shekinah Baptist Assembly, Louisville.....	\$550.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$550.00
Peachtree Baptist Church, Atlanta.....	\$517.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$517.00
First Baptist Church, Valdosta.....	\$508.15.....	\$168.40.....	\$676.55
New Heights Baptist Church, Macon.....	\$500.00.....	\$850.00.....	\$1,350.00
Union Baptist Church, West Point.....	\$500.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$500.00
Union Baptist Church, Warthen.....	\$499.92.....	\$0.00.....	\$499.92
Carlton Baptist Church, Carlton.....	\$464.50.....	\$0.00.....	\$464.50
National Heights Baptist Church, Fayetteville.....	\$455.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$455.00
Scott Boulevard Baptist Church, Decatur.....	\$450.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$450.00
Un Nuevo Amanecer, Morrow.....	\$450.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$450.00
Clarksville Baptist Church, Clarksville.....	\$411.00.....	\$710.71.....	\$1,121.71
Ocilla Baptist Church, Ocilla.....	\$410.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$410.00
New Life Christian Ministries, Marietta.....	\$400.00.....	\$50.00.....	\$450.00
First Baptist Church, Americus.....	\$360.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$360.00
Isle of Hope Baptist Church, Savannah.....	\$283.51.....	\$0.00.....	\$283.51
First Baptist Church, Rossville.....	\$263.85.....	\$0.00.....	\$263.85
The Oaks Baptist Church, Lyons.....	\$258.16.....	\$1,864.83.....	\$2,122.99
Glenwood Hills Baptist Church, Macon.....	\$180.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$180.00
First Baptist Church, Union Point.....	\$178.82.....	\$0.00.....	\$178.82
North River Baptist Church, Roswell.....	\$130.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$130.00
First Baptist Church, Cedartown.....	\$104.17.....	\$0.00.....	\$104.17
First Baptist Church, Cave Spring.....	\$100.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$100.00
Northeast Baptist Church, Atlanta.....	\$79.28.....	\$92.48.....	\$171.76
First Baptist Church, Evans.....	\$25.00.....	\$0.00.....	\$25.00
First Baptist Church, Marshallville.....	\$0.00.....	\$3,504.46.....	\$3,504.46
Highland Hills Baptist Church WMU, Macon.....	\$0.00.....	\$600.00.....	\$600.00
Unity Baptist Church, Summerville.....	\$0.00.....	\$600.00.....	\$600.00
First Baptist Church, Rockmart.....	\$0.00.....	\$350.00.....	\$350.00
New Community Church, Buena Vista.....	\$0.00.....	\$84.15.....	\$84.15
Total Church Giving.....	\$475,780.45.....	\$47,676.48.....	\$523,456.93
Total Individual Giving.....	\$40,945.00.....	\$9,630.35.....	\$50,575.35
Total Giving 01/01/2010 - 12/31/2010.....	\$516,725.45.....	\$57,306.83.....	\$574,032.28

Budget—includes missions, congregational life, administration, personnel, communications, and fellowship.

State Missions—includes projects such as benevolence, disaster response, interfaith dialogue, Hispanic outreach, leadership development.

*All funds received during the period of January 1, 2010, and December 31, 2010, are UNAUDITED.

*Audit results should be available May 2011.

The above list is not intended to be a CBF/GA church directory. It is simply a report of those churches that have supported our budget or state missions ministries in the previous year. All contributions listed came directly to CBF/GA from the individual or church, or they came through National CBF. It is important to remember that National CBF does not have a set formula for giving. In order to give to both CBF/GA and National CBF, the individual or church must write two separate checks or request that one organization pass a certain amount or percent along to the other. In Georgia funds are not automatically forwarded from state to national or national to state without a specific request from the donor.

CBF/GA is very appreciative of your missional giving, and our aim is to provide the most complete and accurate accounting possible. If for any reason you think the data is incorrect or incomplete, please let us know. It is always a pleasure to serve you.

FRANKLY SPEAKING

FRANK BROOME fbroome@cbfga.org



It was true then, and it is true now—people respond to real life stories. They don't want to hear much about the needs of the organization or the church. They want to hear what the organization or church is doing to change lives.

... we are going to do our best to share our stories about lives that are being changed.

For seventeen years, I worked as a home missionary, most of the time in Columbus, Georgia. I was charged with the responsibility of helping fifty or more congregations respond to the needs of individuals who had fallen on hard times. Once or twice a year, I was asked to participate in world missions conferences around the United States. It did not take me long to figure out that clergy and laity alike put home missionaries in the second tier just below foreign missionaries. It was always hard to follow a foreign missionary, especially if that person were dressed in native costume and holding some object or relic related to the foreign country and indigenous people.

Once while I was in a north Georgia church, I began my missions sermon by using a kind of urban dialect and brandishing a switch blade knife that I had taken from a teenage boy. Needless to say, that got everyone's attention! Then there was the time I interrupted a large church meeting in south Georgia by confronting the speaker about the lack of care for the homeless in the community. I was dressed as a "street person" and spoke in broken English. Of course, I had been asked to do that by the speaker, but it took awhile for the congregation to figure that out.

One thing both of these stories share in common has to do with the offering that followed the speakers. In both cases, the offering was quite large. It was true then, and it is true now—people respond to real life stories. They don't want to hear much about the needs of the organization or the church. They want to hear what the organization or church is doing to change lives. If this is effectively communicated, the evidence seems to indicate that the money will come.

In the past, the organization or

church did not need to make appeals for support of the infrastructure. The need was understood, and donations just came automatically. Special appeals were exactly that. They were infrequent special appeals, sort of like icing on the cake. And they worked. Today we find ourselves trying to exist on special appeals because the "automatic" funding is not what it used to be. Some of that is a result of the economic downturn, some of it is a result of localization of ministry, and some of it is a result of changing patterns of giving by the younger generations. So that brings us back to the issue of communication. If people respond to flesh and blood stories, then we must do a better job of sharing those stories with those who are likely to give.

Over the next few years, we are going to do our best to share our stories about lives that are being changed. By "our" I mean the individuals and congregations that make up the CBF/GA family. Some of those stories will be about children in poverty; some will be about troops returning home from war; others will be about the struggles of starting new churches or revitalizing old ones. Some of the stories will be about the development of young leadership through the Georgia Youth Choir Festival, March Mission Madness, and ReCharge, our annual spiritual formation retreat. Of course, there will be stories that cannot be completely told, stories about helping churches through conflict and helping clergy through crisis.

Trust me, those stories are real, and they are just as important as any other story. You and your congregation may have a special story to tell. Please let us know. We will do our best to get that story out. I strongly believe that God is working through us individually and as churches, and CBF/GA has stories worth telling and ministries worth supporting. CBF/GA

Growing *Generosity* in Our Congregations

LAURA WHEELER lwheeler@cbfga.org

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of co-facilitating a breakout session at CBF's ChurchWorks conference at FBC Decatur. My co-facilitator, Ruben Swint of The Columbia Partnership, and I led the session entitled "Mac Giving in a PC Envelope." We looked at new models and trends within church stewardship and how churches might begin engaging in those trends. In a down economy, with the Generation X and Millennial generations who are now adults and leaders within our churches, it is a conversation worth having.

During our discussions with local church leaders, several themes emerged. Here are some ideas and questions that churches may want to consider as they think about stewardship, especially in the midst of intergenerational differences in our congregations:

What venues of giving does your church provide for its members? It is no secret that electronic forms of payment are becoming the norm now, and many of your church members may rely solely on online methods to pay bills. The reality is that cash and checkbooks are far less likely to be in the pockets of those under forty. Churches may want to begin considering electronic ways of allowing members to tithe and make financial contributions. As churches think about this, they should research the bank fees involved, the types of payment methods allowed (i.e. credit cards vs. debit cards), and the theological implications behind online giving, such as setting up one-time automatic drafts. How do online givers participate in offerings during corporate worship, and is there a numbness that comes with automatic giving, as members do not always think about their gifts once they are automated? Also think of the benefits, such as more balanced and consistent giving throughout the year, as well as the intentionality of members committing a predetermined gift.

What language are you using about stewardship? Unfortunately, the word "stewardship" often has negative connotations because churches have used it synonymously with "fundraising" and "meeting the budget." Consider changing the word "stewardship" to "generosity," or change "budget" to "ministry plan." For many, just a change in language can provide a more positive approach to the giving of time and money.

What is your church's narrative, and how can it assist in growing generosity? It is one thing to present a numerical budget to your congregation, but how can you make your budget (or ministry plan!) more of a narrative? Consider having church leaders, members, and ministry partners develop stories for line items within your budget. Many people, especially those of younger generations, are more likely to give when ministries become personal and are not just a vague part of the church institution. How are you sharing the stories of what God is doing through your congregation?



Consider changing the word "stewardship" to "generosity," ... just a change in language can provide a more positive approach to the giving of time and money.



Continues to page 10.

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

DANIEL VESTAL dvestal@thefellowship.info

In an article titled “Why Incremental Changes Won’t Work,” Paul M. Dietterich, executive director emeritus of the Center for Parish Development, writes:



North American church bodies today must learn how to engage in transformative change if they are to be faithful to their calling and effective in their ministry and mission...Transformative change is qualitatively different from incremental change. For North American church bodies, transformative change requires a break with many of the inherited ways of perceiving, thinking, and behaving that characterized both the Imperial church (c.312-1790) and the Establishment Church (c.1790-1960). The old assumptions (1) that the church is merely a personal sanctuary dedicated to a deeply inward and solitary religious experiences for its members, (2) that it functions as society’s chaplain, (3) that its resources (scripture, tradition, doctrine, worship, sacraments) are deemed useful only to the extent that they serve as functional guides for personal belief and morality, (4) that clergy are professionals and lay people are consumers, (5) that the church is an agent rather than the locus of mission, require deliberate dissolution.

I agree. We are living in a time of cultural, denominational and congregational deconstruction. But I believe that CBF is also part of a Spirit-created reconstruction. For the past twenty years, we have been a grand experiment in Baptist life that has resulted in transformational changes. The very language we have used to define ourselves is itself evidence of this transformation and reconstruction.

*We are a fellowship of Baptist Christians and Churches
Doing missions in a world without borders*

A new way to be Baptist

Being the presence of Christ

Engaging in God’s mission

We speak of spiritual formation and missional church,

a biblical vision of justice and ministry among the most neglected. We have become advocates for women in ministry, the least evangelized and most marginalized, the Millennium Development Goals, ecumenical involvement, and interfaith dialogue. Our governing body (Coordinating Council) is a blend of male/female and clergy/laity, and our annual gathering (General Assembly) is anything but a typical ecclesial convention. These are transformative changes.

Now as the “2012 Task Force” works toward making recommendations that will address missional and organizational effectiveness, and as younger and newer leadership is emerging among us, I am very hopeful that this grand experiment will continue. I am also hopeful that it will bring even more transformative change. To foster that hope, let me offer some reflections.

First, the resources that are needed for us to thrive into the future are rich and real. I am not afraid to talk about money and ask people to participate with their resources in the mission of God. People will give when they believe in the vision of a ministry and in the integrity of those who are involved in it. There are thousands of Baptists who do believe in this Fellowship, and I believe there will be thousands more.

Second, the Baptist witness to the Gospel is still very important, even in a “post-everything” world. Baptists’ love of freedom and love of Scripture make us viable and vital to today’s culture. The fact that we disagree with one another on many issues but refuse to force conformity makes us attractive and attractable. Local church autonomy and religious liberty are part of our Baptist birthright, and we will not sell it.

Third, we are maturing and becoming “established” and “institutional” in a good way. Partnering seminaries are preparing future leaders, and other ministries are gaining influence and having an impact in the public square. We have a “place at the table” in the worldwide Baptist family and the worldwide missionary enterprise.

Fourth, even our challenges (and we have many) are accepted by people of enormous good will and great ability. There is in this Fellowship a significant level of trust and genuine conviction about shared ministry. We are

surely not perfect, but we have been blessed with an unusual number of highly motivated and deeply committed followers of Jesus Christ.

Fifth, no one clique/caucus/cluster of individuals in Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is trying to predict or control the future. Let me quote Dietterich again,

In transformative change, while the vision of the church as a faithful sign, foretaste, and instrument of the reign of God guides the change process, the specific future conditions are unclear. In fact, since it is not certain when the transition period ends (or at least abates), the whole concept of arriving at a specific and precisely-defined future state has little meaning and may even be misleading...Transformative change requires the church body to become a learning system, a system that is constantly in the process of analyzing and learning from its own experience, always in the process of discerning God's vision afresh, always in the process of becoming a more faithful embodiment of life in the reign of God.

Again I agree. We are richly blessed by a geographical and demographical diversity that is willing to live with the tension of an uncertain future and seek even greater transformative change without trying to dictate exactly how that change will look. We are aware that we are still learning and have so much yet to learn. Sometimes it seems we will "talk something to death," but it is our way of being sure we are listening and learning from one another.

Finally, our God is the One who is making all things new. We worship and trust the gracious and loving Creator/Redeemer who is always renewing and remaking, always transforming. We need not be afraid.

Daniel Vestal has been the executive coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship since 1996.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

JIM BRUNER jamescbruner@gmail.com

A successful president of a major Japanese automotive manufacturer was asked, "How many years does your company plan into the future?" Without hesitation he stated, "Five hundred years." A well thought out vision for the future is a vital part for the success in any organization, and CBF/GA is no exception. Is there a bright future for CBF/GA? This is a relevant question and raises some challenges for the present and the future. There are some things we can do that could help us to embrace the future with hope.

The following thoughts are not exhaustive, but are at least foundational for the growth and development of CBF/GA.

As a pastor for over thirty years, I know the key to mission support, to a large extent, rests with the minister or ministers of the local church. This means they must engage the leadership of their congregation in the mission component in budget planning. The real surprise is that the laity of our churches are waiting, and in many cases longing, for the challenge from their ministers to engage them in mission endeavors and support. This does not mean it will not be a cost to pay, but after all, Jesus didn't promise it would be easy.

In a difficult economy, one way to raise the mission support is through the CBF/GA state mission offering. Even if budgets are already set for 2011, usually there is more latitude to maneuver and raise a mission offering for CBF/GA. In every congregation, there are individuals who want to be challenged to give beyond their regular support of their local congregations. Give them the opportunity. The women of our church have known this for a long time. Thanks be to God.

In 2010 CBF/GA set a goal of \$40,000 for the state mission offering. We exceeded the goal, for which we give thanks. The 2011 goal for the state mission offering is \$60,000, a modest benchmark, which by God's grace we should exceed. Sometime this year, all of our supportive churches hopefully will take a state mission offering. CBF/GA can provide you with any information and materials to support the offering.

You have heard much about "the greatest generation." Whether this is a true description or not, one thing is clear the greatest transfer of wealth has already begun as the World War II generation passes from the scene. All Christians should consider and plan to provide a lasting legacy by remembering the Lord's work in their wills. This is a stellar way to support the ministry that one believes in and loves long after he or she has gone to be with the Lord.

The CBF/GA Foundation is designed as a way to help you plan for the future and keep on giving to missions for generations to come. Please contact CBF/GA to explore ways in which you can support the work of the Lord through your will.

Jim Bruner is treasurer of the Coordinating Council of CBF/GA.

... the laity of our churches are waiting, and in many cases longing, for the challenge from their ministers to engage them in mission endeavors and support.

Envisioning the Future of the Church

MIMI WALKER *walker_m@mercer.edu*

Thinking about the future of the church is both sobering and inspiring. It is a sobering task because, if one looks honestly at the present state of the church, it becomes clear that there is no going back. The make up of American society is changing, and the way the world interacts and communicates continues to change so drastically that “church,” in the way we experienced it in the past, no longer fits the trajectory of the future.

In an internationally connected world, there can no longer be an “us” versus “them” mentality; local and foreign lose their hard distinctions as businesses send people back and forth across oceans and national borders on behalf of the global economy. As cities like Atlanta spread outward in all directions, the distinctions between urban, suburban, and rural become less sharply defined and more fluid. And as the next generation grows up in this world, examining and testing everything they are given, their ways of building community and identity are changing as well.



We will need to bring Scripture alive for the next generation in a way that is honest, examining all of our sacred text in its historical complexity, bringing out the narrative of God’s presence in this world, and each person’s place in the unfolding of that story.

Given these new realities, it is sobering and a little unnerving to try to imagine the place of the church in the decades that lie ahead of us. But I believe those same realities are also inspiring. If we allow ourselves to believe that change can be good, and if we believe that God is still working among us and beyond our efforts in ways we may not yet be able to see, then we will be inspired.

In reading Daniel Vestal’s article, “Transformative Change,” one paragraph stood out for me. “The Baptist witness to the Gospel is still very important, even in a ‘post-everything’ world. Baptists love of freedom and love of Scripture make us viable and vital to today’s culture. The fact that we disagree with one another on many issues but refuse to force conformity makes us attractive and attractational.” These are the values that we need to hold on to as the organizational forms and structures of the church continue to change.

We will need to bring Scripture alive for the next generation in a way that is honest, examining all of our sacred text in its historical complexity, drawing out the narrative of God’s presence in this world, and each person’s place in the unfolding of that story. If we can continue to “agree to disagree” and still work together in ministries of compassion with one another and with those outside our denominational boundaries, I believe we as Baptists will have a place and an influence in the future of God’s ever changing world.

Mimi Walker is moderator of CBF/GA and co-pastor of Druid Hills Baptist Church, Atlanta, with her husband, Graham Walker.

Growing Generosity in Our Churches (Continued from page 7.)

How are you educating your congregation in the spiritual discipline of generosity?

Like changing language, you can begin to educate and lead your members in a culture of generosity. Stewardship is not merely about giving to the budget, but it is about the discipline of living our lives as generous, faithful followers of Christ. Make generosity a recurring theme within the worship, education, and spiritual formation of your church. Also find ways to include and lead your children and youth in learning and embracing generosity and giving practices.

As times change and generations approach life with different mindsets and experiences, churches and other institutions are often called to make changes as well. I hope that these questions will facilitate conversations within churches in how you embrace generosity giving within your congregations. CBF/GA

OPPORTUNITIES, NEWS, & REPORTS

Summer Mission Opportunity

Community Baptist Church, Milledgeville, is requesting available mission construction teams to come this summer and help the church work on its new sanctuary and fellowship hall. The foundation is already laid, with plumbing and electrical “stubbed in.” The missions team of FBC Columbus will be working with Community the first week in May to get the project “dried in,” if possible. Other tasks will be converting present larger areas into Sunday School rooms. Interested churches should contact Alan Mitchell, pastor, at 478-957-2295.

Baptist-Jewish Dialogue

CBF/GA and the Atlanta Jewish Committee held a Baptist-Jewish dialogue on Thursday, February 24, at Atlantic Station in Atlanta. The group ate dinner together, discussing what it means to stand for one’s faith in daily life. They then watched the film *Chariots of Fire*. The director, Hugh Hudson, attended the screening and participated in a post-film questions and answers session. For more information on getting involved with the Interfaith Task Force, contact Laura Wheeler at lwheeler@cbfga.org or 478-742-1191, ext. 28.



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VISIONS is published six times a year by CBF/GA. All questions and comments may be directed to ElizaBeth Copeland, ecopeland@cbfga.org or 478-742-1191, ext. 23.

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

20th Anniversary General Assembly June 22-25, 2011 • Tampa, FL

This year’s General Assembly will be one of the most historic gatherings in the Fellowship’s history as Fellowship Baptists from around the country and world will gather to celebrate an important milestone. Those who started the Fellowship in 1991 may never have imagined all the ways God would work and move through this Baptist community. Now, twenty years later, it’s time to remember our story, to celebrate what God has done, and to continue our journey toward faithfulness.



FINANCIAL UPDATE

Budget Receipts as of 2-28-2011

Year to Date.....	\$ 45,582.43
Requirement.....	\$ 46,627.33
Over/Under.....	\$ 1,044.90

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2011 EVENTS CALENDAR

■ **April 4**
Senior Celebration
FBC of Christ, Macon

■ **April 5**
Senior Celebration
Second-Ponce De Leon Baptist,
Atlanta

■ **June 13-17**
Taliaferro Summer Day Camps
Taliaferro County

■ **June 20-24**
Taliaferro Summer Day Camps
Taliaferro County

■ **June 22-25**
CBF General Assembly
Tampa, FL

■ **September 25-27**
Preaching Consultation
St. Simons

■ **September 30-October 2**
ReCharge

■ **November 6-7**
CBF/GA Fall General Assembly
Johns Creek Baptist Church,
Alpharetta



Now Serving: Atlanta
a big success (see front cover)

Keep up to date with Calendar Events ...

www.cbfga.org

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.