Growth is a central issue for most churches. We hope to do more than survive. We hope to be a vital presence in a community. Creating healthier structures and relationships is certainly an important place to begin. Often churches develop so many layers of tradition that even modest changes become difficult and disillusioning to our younger segment. The very people we seek to attract, we tend to discourage. A culture of “No” can develop where any idea that does not fit in traditional parameters is automatically dismissed. Preserving the past takes precedence over building a future. Any change, however, must fit the congregation. No church should become something it is not.

One of the wiser strategies we have utilized in our congregation is listening intently to the dreams of all strata of our congregation and, as much as possible, removing the obstacles for people to pair their passions with ministry possibilities. Some moderate congregations are homogeneous in their membership profile and tend to agree more readily on directions. FBC Griffin is a heterogeneous congregation. Sweeping differences in economic background, educational background, theological perspectives, denominational loyalties, worship preferences, and generational makeup abound. Several mantras have emerged in our shared journey to keep us working together. The first is, “Respect our differences.” Following quickly behind that is, “We are a church that provides choices.” In other words, what speaks to me may not necessarily fit you, but we are about connecting at the point of real needs and, insofar as possible, we will accommodate to real needs within reasonable boundaries.

The primary way we make it work is through a cohesive staff that is constantly looking for ways to develop leadership and move new members into leadership roles. It certainly helps that we are in a relatively small community so that there are natural connections outside of church as well. It is also a boon that we are a moderate congregation that reaches beyond the borders of our county in attracting people.

What this strategy of empowering people to follow their passions means in practical terms is this. It was member dreams that led us to develop a coffee house within our facilities to promote friendship and support across our church. There was an expressed need for an early morning service, so we developed an intimate Chapel Service that is scaled down from our 11:00 a.m. traditional service. We reworked a small building adjacent to our sanctuary as a gorgeous chapel highlighted by radiating stained glass windows. The chapel itself was also a dream for members, and attendance in that setting normally varies from fifty to seventy-five.

For the somewhat large segment that dreamed of a more energetic contemporary service, we blessed, church-wide, the expansion of our fledgling contemporary service. We moved it to Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. in the auditorium of our large family life building and...
all to participate with God in His mission. We must simply have eyes to see all the needs that surround us and think ‘globally.’

**Facilitator:** Chris Robertson graduated from Carson-Newman College with a degree in religion and sociology. He is pursuing a master of divinity degree at McAfee School of Theology with an emphasis on global Christianity. As a part of this degree program, he traveled last summer to Pune, India, and had the opportunity to serve alongside the Banjara gypsies, an unforgettable experience.

**Katie Robertson** graduated from Carson-Newman College in May 2009 with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education. She now lives in Atlanta and has been teaching for the past two-and-a-half years at Peachtree Elementary School in Norcross. She is certified to teach kindergarten through fifth grade, as well as English to speakers of other languages.

**Together for Hope: A New Approach to Domestic Missions**

This interactive session will provide an overview of CBF/National’s rural poverty initiative known as Together for Hope. Participants from endeavors around the country will add to the discussion of Together for Hope’s faith-based community development philosophy, principles, objectives, goals, and insights.

**Facilitator:** Chris Thompson recently completed a term as facilitator for the Together for Hope council and began a one-year term as the organization’s interim manager. Thompson has served with Together for Hope for over seven years as coordinator of its initiatives in South Dakota.

**Telling the South’s Story**

**Georgia Baptists and the Civil War:**

In Their Own Words

Religion played a crucial, and critical, role in the Civil War. Historians contend that the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845 in Augusta signaled the inevitability of the war. In Southern Baptists’ own words, slavery was the central issue, the truth of the Bible was at stake, and the Confederate States of America was God’s Kingdom on earth. In the face of Christian nationalism, the Baptist heritage of separation took a back seat. In this session, hear and learn from the voices of Georgia Baptists during the war.

**Facilitator:** Bruce T. Gourley is executive director of the Baptist History & Heritage Society (www.baptisthistory.org) and online editor for Baptists Today. Bruce is the author of several books, including the soon-to-be-released Mercer Press volume, Diverging Loyalties: Baptists in Middle Georgia during the Civil War. He is also the author and creator of CivilWarBaptists.com, a critically acclaimed digital project that is an online, daily journal of the Baptist experience during the American Civil War.

**Telling Your Story on the Internet**

**The Changing Church Website: Making Your Website Part of Your Church’s Ministry**

Church websites began as “online brochures” that offered basic information and directions. Today
churches are using their websites to tell their story and do ministry. Learn how to grow your website into a vital communications hub and how to use video and audio effectively. Discover how new technologies are helping to make updating church websites faster and easier.

**Facilitator:** David Cassidy is president of FaithLab, a creative services and publishing firm focused on the needs of churches and religious organizations.

**Social Media and the Church**

Many churches have been slow to respond to the social media phenomenon. Not only has rapid evolution of social media become dizzying, the etiquette and responsibility to use technology wisely and appropriately have also increased. The ability for people in the church to be conversant and agile within such media can be cause for anxiety and frustration. It doesn’t have to be that way. Social media can be fun! Michael Gregg and Chris Aho will take participants through the basic use of Facebook and Twitter while presenting tips and tricks for using social media and technology more effectively within the church.

**Facilitators:** Michael Gregg is a pastor, husband, director of technology, and avid baseball fan. He is currently the associate pastor at Northside Drive Baptist Church in Atlanta. His ministry is to reinvigorate the church for an increasingly postmodern world. Gregg received a bachelor’s degree from Belmont University in Nashville and a master of divinity degree from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem. He is currently a doctoral student at McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta, aiming to graduate in 2014. Gregg is a believer that the postmodern church should be conscious of building relationships through social media and electronic networking. Chris Aho currently serves the Hillcrest Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama, as pastor and is a member of both CBF and Wilshire Baptist Church’s pastoral residency cohorts. He is a graduate of Baylor University and Duke Divinity School. Though Aho was raised in an IBM household, he now professes love for his MacBook, iPad, and iPhone. Though he grew up in a traditional Baptist church in Texas, he now professes love for CBF and interest in the emerging church conversation, even as it relates to mainline Christianity. Aho is active on Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and is even linked-in.

**CHAPLAINS NETWORK**

This workshop will explore the challenges of chaplaincy when ministering to individuals with complicated family dynamics. There will be interactive discussion around contemporary chaplaincy issues and considerations that arise when serving diverse populations. Topics will include cultural diversity, family systems, and community chaplaincy.

**Facilitator:** Ca Trice Glenn dedicates her life to participating in God’s healing of others. She is a Level II chaplain, pastoral counselor, nationally certified licensed professional counselor, and adjunct professor. As a chaplain, she has served in hospital, juvenile detention, and community settings and recently served as a guest chaplain for the Atlanta Dream WNBA basketball team. She is a staff counselor and satellite director of The Care and Counseling Center of Georgia in partnership with Turner Chapel A.M.E.

**CHILDREN’S MINISTRY NETWORK**

This breakout will focus on two topics of interest in children’s ministry: recruiting volunteers and ministering to special needs children. Participants are encouraged to bring their own ideas and experiences to a discussion on better ways to involve gifted volunteers and to resource a church’s children’s ministry to best serve those with special needs.

**Facilitator:** Better known to the kids of Johns Creek as Ms. Jill, Jill Jenkins is a thirty-plus year veteran of children’s ministry. The last sixteen years have been spent serving the needs of the families at Johns Creek Baptist Church. She is a graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and an ordained minister, working on her second generation of youngsters. Jenkins considers it a privilege to be able to plan for and lead volunteers to do most of the heavy lifting work of ministry to children and their families. Helping volunteers find their niche, getting parents connected to the church, and guiding children on their spiritual journeys are her favorite parts of the job. Jenkins is married to Rick and has two children, Jack (17) and Maggie (21).

**MUSIC MINISTRY NETWORK**

This session will be an informal gathering of those who serve in, or are interested in, the music and worship ministries of their churches. Participants will share ideas and resources for music and worship ministry, including stories of joy and sorrow and times of reward and challenge.

**Facilitator:** Ryan Forbes has served as pastor for music and worship leadership at FBC Decatur since August 2002. Previously he served on staff for seventeen years at North Broad Baptist Church in Rome. Forbes holds a bachelor of music degree from Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, a master of church music degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and a doctor of worship studies degree from the Robert Webber Institute for Worship Studies.

**YOUTH MINISTRY NETWORK**

**Safety and Social Networking**

Twitter, Facebook, Flick, YouTube, Google. It’s a teenage minefield. Many youth don’t realize the real impact of what they say on the Internet, or that their words will follow them for the rest of their lives. This breakout will focus on best practices for youth who are immersed in social networking, and involve discussion on how to teach youth to be safe while engaging with their friends on the Internet.

**Facilitator:** Marnie Fisher-Ingram has a bachelor’s degree in psychology with a concentration in youth ministry from Georgetown College and a master of divinity degree from the Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond. With over a

**Continues to page twelve.**

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**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6**

6:00 p.m. Registration  
6:30 p.m. Pre-service Music  
6:45 p.m. Business Meeting/Worship Service  
8:30 p.m. Dessert Reception

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7**

7:30 a.m. Advocates and Pastors Breakfasts  
9:00 a.m. Session 1: Breakouts and Staff Networks  
10:15 a.m. Break  
10:45 a.m. Session 2: Breakouts and Staff Networks  
12:00 p.m. Missions Luncheon  
*(schedule tentative and subject to change)*

**HOSTED BY**

Johns Creek Baptist Church  
6910 McGinnis Ferry Road  
Alpharetta, GA 30005  
678-474-4400

**Directions**

**From North Georgia:** Take I-75 South to Exit 259 for I-285 East. Take Exit 27 for US-19 North/GA-400 North/GA-400 South. Keep left at the fork and merge onto GA-400 North/US-19 North. Take Exit 10 and turn right at GA-120 East/Old Milton Parkway. Continue straight onto State Bridge Road. Turn left at Kimball Bridge Road and then turn left at Jones Bridge Road. Turn right at Sargent Road and then turn right at McGinnis Ferry Road. The church will be on the left.

**From South Georgia:** Take I-75 North to Exit 227 for I-675 North. Take I-675 North to I-285 East. Take Exit 31B to GA-141 North/Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. Continue to follow GA-141 and turn left at McGinnis Ferry Road. The church will be on the right.

**HOTELS**

**Hilton Garden Inn**  
11695 Medlock Bridge Road  
Johns Creek, GA 30097 • 770-476-1966  
$89 per night • Code: CBFG  
Rate cut-off date: Monday, October 24

**Hyatt Place**  
11505 Medlock Bridge Road  
Duluth, GA 30097 • 770-622-5858  
$99 per night • Code: CBFG  
Rate cut-off date: Sunday, October 23
CBF/GA works to encourage individuals and churches in starting new churches by providing legal and administrative assistance, as well as peer group support for the church planters.

CBF/GA sponsors campus ministries at several universities in Georgia. Cooperative Student Fellowships (CSF) allow students to collaborate with one another, serve in their communities, and grow in their relationships with God.

For those of us who grew up in a churched culture, the image of church planting brings a number of thoughts to mind. Some will recall churches sending out groups of members to start a new church near where these members lived. Others envision a church plant that began through pain, prayer, and deep levels of discernment as one group moved away from a former congregation and gave birth to a new family of faith. Still others may think of the church planter who moves to a new place, begins a new work through a small group in his/her home, and leads that group of neighbors to become the new congregation.

The question for CBF/GA is, What does church planting look like now? How will we engage as a fellowship in church planting that builds healthy communities of mature disciples? The truth is, we as the people of CBF/GA are at a church planting crossroads. We must decide together how we are going to do church planting, in concert with CBF/National, and how we are going to fund the church planting work that God is already doing and will be calling us to do in the future.

So, why is church planting so important? Studies show that church plants are more effective than existing churches at drawing persons who are disconnected from God and church into a relationship with God. In order to flourish, church plants must invest in building friendships with people who are far from God. This means that all CBF/GA churches benefit from church plants. Church plants remind us that evangelism is not a dirty word when practiced with love, grace, and a spirit of servanthood. Please pray for the CBF/GA staff and coordinating council as we listen for God’s direction in our church planting initiatives.

Randy Shepley, pastor of FBC Tucker

The Cooperative Student Fellowship is a CBF/GA sponsored religious organization for college students.

One of the locations for this organization is Mercer University, where every Wednesday evening we hold a Bible study. This is always a very enjoyable time for those who participate because we have fellowship and friendly discussion with those of similar beliefs and those of differing ones. Each month we have a service activity that allows us to become more involved in the surrounding Macon community.

We also have an exciting opportunity to interact with CSF members from other schools during our fall retreat in November. Along with these activities, we have planned multiple social activities throughout the 2011-2012 school year that we are excited about, possibly including a trip to watch an Atlanta Braves game.

The CSF has come to mean a lot to its members. We feel comfortable and welcome, and we look forward to growing in our faith in ways that we have not yet seen possible.

Hannah Watson, president of CSF Mercer

CBF/GA provides disaster response by working with CBF/National to determine the needs and available resources. Efforts are made to connect volunteers with onsite individuals who can direct and support their work. Frequently CBF/GA establishes a designated account for financial contributions related to specific local and international disasters.

Please see page nine for an article on CBF/GA and disaster response.
The *Georgia Youth Choir Festival* (GYCF) gives students the opportunity to practice their choral skills with other youth choirs in sectional and combined groups during a weekend of fellowship and fun. The event concludes on Sunday with morning and evening concerts in local churches.

Plans are underway for a *Handbell Festival*, and additional information will be published in our upcoming newsletters and on our website.

There is so much that is wonderful about *Georgia Youth Choir Festival*. This year will be my third year! *Georgia Youth Choir Festival* is about reaching out to others with Christ’s message as we sing from church to church. You never know what kind of music we will learn, but it is always neat to hear the different church choirs come together to rehearse and sing.

We also play games, enjoy fellowship, and explore the activities at the Calvin Center. I am able to meet new people, learn new personalities, and make friends. My favorite experience last year was singing a solo in one of the pieces. It was a God-given opportunity, and it made me feel a part of God’s family.

One of my goals is to sing professionally. Preparing and singing for the festival helps me to become a better musician. I feel God’s presence during rehearsal and in the churches where we lead worship. *Georgia Youth Choir Festival* offers many worship leadership opportunities to its participants, and singing with other youth is a great experience.

*Karley Patching*, member of Vineville Baptist Church, Macon

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**Handbell Festival** CBF/GA is in the early stages of planning its first festival for churches with handbell ministries. The date of the inaugural festival is Friday-Saturday, April 27-28, 2012; other details will be announced as plans are finalized.

This festival is being launched with the idea of adding to the musical offerings of CBF/GA. Much like the existing *Georgia Youth Choir Festival*, a handbell gathering has the potential of allowing ringers experiences in a larger group setting that may otherwise be impractical or unlikely.

Believing that there is a place in many of our churches for handbells in worship, this festival is being designed to be spiritually nourishing and musically challenging, so as to encourage those whose place of service includes handbells.

If you are interested in having your handbell choir participate, please contact Laura Foushee at lfoushee@cbfga.org.

*Jeff Allred*, minister of music, Vineville Baptist Church, Macon

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*www.cbfga.org* | Page 5
CBF/GA’s **Interfaith Taskforce** seeks to facilitate understanding between the CBF community and people of other faith traditions through workshops and face-to-face statewide events of learning, sharing ideas, and fellowship.

**March Mission Madness** (MMM), a weekend missions retreat for church youth groups, is held in three cities across the state of Georgia, and students are involved in fellowship, worship, and mission work.

**March Mission Madness** combines fun, fellowship, mission involvement, and engaging worship in an atmosphere that is youth-focused and close to home.

My youth love the opportunity to leave town for a weekend, take a break from the demands of school and their many other commitments, and spend time with other teenagers who, like themselves, want to learn more about their relationships with God and give some time in service to others.

As a youth minister, I appreciate taking my youth to a function where I know the theological content, mission philosophy, and activities will both complement what my youth experience at our home church and also challenge them to think in new ways about how they interact with God and the world around them.

When one of my eighth grade boys turns to me in August and says, “We’re going to March Mission Madness again, right?” I feel confident that it is a worthwhile investment of my time and theirs.

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**Interfaith activity** takes on many forms—people of different faiths asking, “Why do you believe ‘this’?” or ‘Why don’t you believe ‘that’?” It may be a serious debate—“But the Bible says this...,” followed by, “Yes, I know what the Bible says, but I really don’t think it means what you say it does.”

The ministry of interfaith might simply be an effort among the religious traditions of the community to find causes for working together instead of identifying reasons for going their separate ways. Our differences are obvious, but our hope is found more in accepting one another than in trying to change each other.

There is no finer goal for interfaith activity than the words in an old hymn, “Make Friends of God’s Children...” Like little children on the opposite sides of the street, wondering if they could be friends, the CBF “walked across the street” and our friendship began.

We’ve come a long way since that time seven years ago. We’ve eaten together in temples and shared meals in Baptist churches. We have observed the beauty in our particular art and patted our feet to the tunes of our faiths. We’ve asked the Jews about their passion for the land of Israel, and they have questioned the Baptists’ obsession with missions, which to them seemed aimed more at them than at the rest of the world.

Friendship with those people on the other side of the street is our greatest challenge. It is our greatest witness, and with each gathering of Baptists and Jews, trust of one another deepens and respect for each other grows!

*Wayne Martin, chairperson of the CBF/GA Interfaith Task Force*
Now Serving: Atlanta is a collegiate mission service weekend sponsored by Mercer University’s McAfee School of Theology and CBF/GA. Participants meet and worship on the university’s Atlanta campus and serve on diverse mission sites across the city.

CBF/GA and McAfee School of Theology sponsor the Preaching Consultation, a two-day retreat for pastors to experience the art of homiletics at St. Simons Island in the fall.

Now Serving: Atlanta has, for the last two years, provided me a way to participate in serving the Atlanta community and meet other college students in surrounding schools.

This past year our group first worked with two staff members at CHRIS Kids, an organization for social change, to build a stage that would be used at their annual fundraiser. We were able to change the design of the stage and assemble most of it before lunch.

After lunch we worked with a volunteer at the furniture bank to rearrange and organize the furniture. Neither experience involved interaction with the people we were actually helping, which made it a challenging volunteer weekend.

I gained valuable experience in learning that “behind the scenes” work is just as necessary as interacting with those you are serving (the theme of the weekend was “Love in Deed”). Before Now Serving, I had no idea these organizations even existed, and through this experience I learned the importance of loving through service, even if others never recognize my contribution.

Matthew Coleman, member of CSF Athens

ReCharge, CBF/GA’s fall youth retreat, is an opportunity for students to escape the world and “recharge” their souls. Through worship, breakouts, fellowship, and fun, youth have the opportunity to think critically about their faith, commune with God and other students, and take some time away from their busy lives to rest and reflect.

Last year was my first ReCharge. The theme was Messy Spirituality, which helped us learn that sometimes we have to wrestle with our faith that sometimes our faith can be confusing and messy, but God will always be there for us.

During worship we sang songs with the band and listened to preaching. The worship services were great for youth because they related to us.

I had three breakout sessions: Finger Painted Faith, World Crosses, and Youth Group 101. My favorite was World Crosses, because we got to see different crosses from diverse countries.

During Saturday afternoon free time, you can do all kinds of things around the camp, such as canoeing, disc golfing, resting in your cabin, playing volleyball, walking around, or hanging out with friends. On Sunday morning before the final worship service, we played games from the TV show Minute to Win It. My favorite was trying to get an Oreo cookie from your forehead into your mouth without using your hands.

It also was cool to interact with other youth groups and make new friends. Thank you, CBF/GA, for sponsoring ReCharge. I am looking forward to ReCharge 2011.

Lydia Adkins, Madison Baptist Church

Over the past few years, I have been privileged to attend the Mercer University Preaching Consultation at St. Simons Island. As a pastor who is in the pulpit every Sunday, I seldom have the opportunity to hear other preachers. And herein lies the greatest benefit of attending the Mercer Preaching Consultation—it provides pastors with this opportunity of learning from other pastors, which in turn helps expand and nurture our vocational perspectives.

Pastors are often seen as the last of the Renaissance men/women, and as such we are expected to wear a number of hats. Pastors, by common congregational definition, are supposed to be eloquent in their speech, insightful in their theology, educated in their exegesis, and sensitive in their pastoral counseling. These demands, whether warranted or not, are somewhat sated and indeed softened by being exposed to the quality and depth of preaching that are the norm at the Mercer Preaching Consultation.

The financial assistance provided by the CBF/GA enables all of this to happen. Most young pastors don’t have the church budget to afford the cost associated with attending a conference such as the Mercer Preaching Consultation. Fortunately, organizations like the CBF/GA understand both the importance of the preaching craft and the need for young pastors to be present at these preaching conferences and consultations.

Ron Handlon, pastor of Buckhead Baptist Church, Atlanta

Ron Handlon, pastor of Buckhead Baptist Church, Atlanta

Matthew Coleman, member of CSF Athens

Lydia Adkins, Madison Baptist Church
Senior Celebration is a day for CBF/GA to say “Thank you!” to the senior adults across Georgia who are faithful supporters of our ministry. It is an event full of worship, fellowship, food, and laughter!

Every summer CBF/GA and its partner churches sponsor two weeks of summer day camps in one of Georgia’s poorest counties, as part of the Touching Taliaferro with Love (TTWL) initiative. Held for students in grades kindergarten through fifth, the camps consist of rotational centers, including arts, crafts, music, storytelling, and recreation.

There is a small county in southeast Georgia called Taliaferro County. In 2002 a group of people had a vision of a ministry for this county and with the help of CBF/GA began Touching Taliaferro with Love. They began with a two-week camp for grade school children using various volunteers from around the state. I was fortunate to be one of those volunteers, and each year I look forward to my experience with this camp!

It has been a blessing to watch TTWL grow and to see how God truly works in people’s lives. By having a mission inside the state, we have been able to return every year and maintain relationships with the children. The kids are excited to see faces they remember—one even remarked that the two weeks were “better than Christmas!” They are always sad to see the churches leave and want to know if they are coming back next year. A song was written about TTWL’s being Holy Ground. I know that it is true because once you spend time with this community, you realize there is more at work here than just people.

Rhonda Harris, member of Northside Drive Baptist Church, Atlanta

CBF/GA offers scholarships to students who have demonstrated a connection to CBF/GA and are enrolled in master’s level degree programs at accredited institutions. This is one of the ways we support future ministers and leaders who are already showing potential for leadership within CBF.

Please see page ten for this year’s scholarship recipients.

Senior Celebration represents an emerging focal emphasis of the Georgia Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. From its beginning in 1992, CBF/GA has worked well with music, youth, fellowship, finances, and other important endeavors. In 2009 Coordinator Frank Broome perceived that more attention should be given to senior adults. They have been on the front lines of organization, participation, and support. The idea of a Senior Celebration to say “Thank you” was born.

The first Senior Celebration was at Vineville Baptist Church in Macon on March 17, 2010. The very special speaker was Cecil Sherman, the first executive director of CBF/National. Having fought in the battles that established the fledgling organization, he spoke about what we have done right. Only a month before his death, he was at his best as a speaker. His terminal illness was in remission, and he inspired a crowd of over four hundred seniors. Good fellowship, food, and afternoon entertainment completed an exciting day.

The response was so good to the initial Senior Celebration that two such events were scheduled in 2011. The first was at FBC of Christ, Macon, on April 4. A day later the setting was Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church in Atlanta. Another very noted Baptist, Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, was the key speaker. She served as the national WMU executive director for many years and was another pioneer in the struggle to establish CBF. Many of the attendees knew her in both capacities, so she related well to two good audiences.

The 2010 and 2011 speakers have been Baptist giants, and I have known them as mentors and dear friends. I was honored to introduce both of them at the celebrations. We have a great foundation to build upon for future Senior Celebrations. Let’s make this recognition an annual affair!

Gwen Colwell, past moderator of CBF/GA’s coordinating council and member of FBC of Christ, Macon

Other Ministries of CBF/GA include Sunday School Training, Peer Learning Groups, Staff Networks, Reference and Referral, Search Committee Training, and Pulpit Supply.

For more details, contact Frank Broome at fbroome@cbfga.org or Laura Foushee at lfoushee@cbfga.org.
Can Every Church Do Disaster Response?

JOHN WYATT  jwwyatt@windstream.net

Yes, every church can do something in a time of disaster to provide some measure of relief. What that might entail will depend upon the unique resources and the nature of the disaster. I do believe very strongly that every church can do something, whether it be the hands-on involvement of its people, providing food and water for volunteers, opening its facilities for overnight housing or food preparation, or merely the gathering of funds to be channeled to helping agencies and organizations. I will even insist that every church should do something. Why not have disaster relief in the church’s budget? Why not be prepared ahead of the actual need?

Most of us do not think about disaster relief until disaster strikes, and then we scurry around frantically trying to come up with means and methods to assist. Often we call upon our denominational or fellowship leaders to somehow magically connect us to a place and means of assisting. In the case of the CBF/GA, we are simply not financially able at present to have a paid staff person who might organize and develop a disaster relief ministry. Even so, as with the local church, we can still do something regardless of our budget limitations.

I therefore offer these suggestions as to how the local church might do disaster relief.

• Firstly, gather those persons together who care about and have a vision for doing disaster relief. Don’t be deterred if the group is small at first.

• Secondly, gather information about what is being done and what is needed. Use your Internet search engines and visit websites of agencies, organizations, and even churches to see who is doing what and how. In those contexts, ask such questions as, “How may we help? May we connect with you?”

• Thirdly, take a look at your church’s resources. What do you have that could be used? Building facilities come to mind immediately, but there are valuable human resources in each congregation. At FBC Fort Oglethorpe, following Hurricane Katrina, there came together a group of some twenty-five persons with varying carpentry, trash removal, heavy machine operating, painting, and chain saw skills. We made the first of many trips to the Gulf Coast within a few weeks of our initial meeting. In the tornado outbreak earlier this year in our area, that team became a trash and debris removal team, joining hands with hundreds of others from churches, associations, and secular organizations.

FRANKLY SPEAKING

FRANK BROOME  fbroome@cbfga.org

As I write this brief article, a storm is developing in the Caribbean and is heading toward the east coast. Hopefully it will not develop into a category five storm. Of course, sooner or later, one will. When disasters strike, our office finds itself in a tight spot. People want detailed information that is often not available. Some will want to respond immediately by sending a team to the stricken area. In some cases that can be done, in others it cannot. If we have a local contact, especially a CBF congregation that is willing to help, such a response is possible. Otherwise, we must find an alternate contact outside our CBF family. That can take a while, in some cases a long time. This was certainly true following the recent Ringgold tornadoes. We have been encouraged by leaders in Ringgold to focus on other places in Georgia, since there is an abundance of volunteers in that area. We have also channeled some funds through FBC Warm Springs to cover the rebuilding effort in west central Georgia, where significant damage was done to a large number of homes.

Read here an article by John Wyatt, a retired pastor and active disaster relief volunteer. John is interested in helping our congregations respond to disasters in Georgia and surrounding states. If you would like to help with our response effort or be the contact person for your congregation, please let us know via email or signing up on our web page. You will be invited to join a conference call to discuss and help develop our disaster relief effort.

Continues to page eleven.
CBF/GA Scholarship Recipients

MARY KATE CHRISTIAN is in her second year of seminary at McAfee School of Theology with a concentration in Christian education. A native of Hickory, North Carolina, she attended Mars Hill College near Asheville and received a bachelor’s degree in music education with a choral emphasis. In college Christian served as a youth ministry intern at FBC Hickory, where she discovered her passion for ministry and eventually accepted her calling. She currently serves as the minister of faith formation at Peachtree Baptist Church in Atlanta, coordinating Bible studies, leading congregational retreats, and spearheading pastoral care.

MEGGIE DANT is a first-year student at McAfee School of Theology. She is from Macon, where she is a member at Highland Hills Baptist Church. Dant graduated from Georgia College and State University in May with a degree in marketing. She was given the privilege of working at Passport Camps for two years, where she served as a Bible study leader for youth and as the assistant director for kids. It was while working for Passport that she felt called into full time ministry. She is not sure what that ministry will be exactly, but is looking forward to exploring many options over the next three years!

NOELLE OWEN grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee, before going to college at Belmont University in Nashville. At Belmont she earned a bachelor’s degree in Christian leadership and a minor in social work. Currently she is a master of divinity student at the McAfee School of Theology, pursuing a dual-degree with Mercer’s counseling program. Over the years she has been blessed with opportunities to serve at several CBF churches, including Signal Mountain Baptist, Peachtree Baptist, and Smoke Rise Baptist. Her current membership is at National Heights Baptist Church in Fayetteville. She now serves as an intern at a nearby children’s home for Mercer’s counseling program. Owen enjoys being part of CBF and looks forward to continued involvement with CBF/GA. She is grateful for CBF/GA’s support as she pursues her education and vocational calling.

JASON RANKE is a third-year seminary student in the master of divinity program at the McAfee School of Theology of Mercer University. Originally from Aiken, South Carolina, he is a graduate of the University of South Carolina at Aiken and Clemson University with undergraduate and graduate degrees in history. He recently completed a unit of clinical pastoral education at Saint Joseph’s Hospital in Sandy Springs. Ranke was licensed to the ministry by his home church, FBC Aiken, in July 2009. He also served there as a pastoral intern prior to attending seminary. Since moving to Atlanta in August 2009, he has been worshiping and engaged in ministry at the FBC Decatur. From February 2010 to August 2011, Ranke served as a children’s ministry intern. He has since begun serving as a pastoral intern and is currently employed by the American Baptist Historical Society as an archival assistant and researcher. Ranke’s theological interests include homiletics and liturgics; pastoral care, pastoral theology, and chaplaincy; and liberation and process theologies.

Through your contributions, CBF/GA provides scholarships to students who demonstrate a potential for leadership within CBF and who are connected to CBF/GA. Scholarships are available to upcoming seniors and students in a master’s level degree program at an accredited institution. Interested applicants may visit http://www.cbfga.org/church_life/scholarships.html for information about the application process and to download an application.
OPPORTUNITIES, NEWS, & REPORTS

Changes in the CBF/GA Office

Renée Bennett has begun work in the CBF/GA office as assistant to the coordinator for finance. Her email address is rbennett@cbfga.org, and her phone number is 478-742-1191, ext. 21. She is a member of Highland Hills Baptist Church, Macon. Renée was previously chief operating officer for Morningstar Children and Family Services, Inc.

In Sympathy

CBF/GA extends sympathy to the families of Ed Corson of Macon, Dale Couey of Fitzgerald, and Brantley Harwell of Otto, North Carolina.

Dreams (Continued from page one.)

empowered our minister to students and associate pastor to lead that service. To reach young adults and teenagers requires a later time slot. We blessed it by providing the money, equipment, and lay support needed for it to prosper. All of our ministers have high visibility in all of the services. We hold joint services several times a year. I cross over to preach in the contemporary worship, as well, several times a year. Another mantra to keep us united is, “When we bless, we create strength; when we criticize, our differences divide us.”

We have also refocused our deacon fellowship, according to members’ vision and passion, into ministry groups. One is a greeter ministry; another provides support to those in personal assistance homes; and yet another utilizes golf carts to get people from our parking areas to the entrance nearest to their activity. This has especially benefited our senior adults, and these are only a sampling of ministry teams.

In short, we seek to empower people to follow their dreams of service and ministry and there is room. We believe that the Holy Spirit is working in all of our lives. Who knows what blessing may come our way as we listen to each other and create the space for people we respect to do something new? As people feel useful, heard, and needed, they are bound more tightly to the mission of our church.

Disaster Response (Continued from page nine.)

We have learned in disaster relief that if you lose yourself in the work, you can get something done. If you must have recognition, however, and work as a single entity, you will do negligible work and even have difficulty finding a place to work. Someone has said that the universal church shows up in disaster relief work. It is amazing what Christ’s church can do TOGETHER as it loses itself in the unselfish concern for the welfare of others.

The key to successfully working in an area when a disaster strikes is to act before the disaster strikes. Get yourself ready. Get your church ready. Let your sister churches know what you are doing and what you are prepared to do when a disaster strikes. Get in touch with other churches, agencies, and organizations. Get on their mailing and e-mailing lists.

In retirement now, I want even more to stay connected to the ministry of disaster relief. I offer my e-mail address to you. It is jwwyatt@windstream.net. When you contact me, tell me if I can share your address with other persons and groups doing disaster relief.

Get ready, network, and do not forget: Each church can do something to help! Each one of us can contribute something.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Budget Receipts as of 8-31-2011

Year to Date....................... $ 368,993.64
Requirement....................... $ 372,241.05
Over/Under....................... $ (3,247.41)

August Contributions......... $ 44,162.34
August Requirement......... $ 46,627.33
Over/Under....................... $ (2,464.99)
ONLINE REGISTRATION for Fall General Assembly is now open on the CBF/GA website, www.cbfga.org.

Reservations for Monday’s luncheon ($10 at the door) are required and should be made on the registration form.

If you have already registered online, but not made arrangements for the luncheon, please contact Kelley at kdixson@cbfga.org or 478-742-1191, ext. 26.

Reservations are also required for breakfast (one for Advocates and another for pastors) and can be made by contacting Kelley.

CBF/GA Fall General Assembly  (Continued from page three.)

decade of experience in congregational ministry in Virginia and North Carolina, Fisher-Ingram has a genuine love for work with students. She has worked for Passport, Inc., for fifteen years with the last five as the youth camp coordinator. She currently lives in Birmingham, Alabama, with her husband, Daniel, also on Passports’ staff, and four-year-old daughter, Mollie.  CBF/GA