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## From Ministers to Missionaries

BILL ROSS [bross@mariettafbc.org](mailto:bross@mariettafbc.org)

*Here is the seventh in a series of articles called The Pastor's Sounding Board. This series gives you a chance to hear from senior pastors of CBF/GA. Bill Ross, pastor of First Baptist Church, Marietta, is the writer for this issue.*

*A sounding board is a structure over a pulpit or rostrum to give distinctness to a speaker's voice. In these articles, we expect to hear about some of the "best practices" occurring in our churches, and we hope to hear some of the "best thoughts" that our lead pastors have. We hope these words will challenge you and your church to open new vistas of ministry in Georgia and around the world.*

At one time, "missions" is what united us as a denomination. Baptist churches were as different as night and day, yet found unity through missions to reach the world with the gospel. Today, missions unites the church!

As pastor of First Baptist Church of Marietta (FBCM), I believe now is a great time to be a church in North America. The world is at our doorstep. We have the opportunity to share the gospel daily with people seeking to understand spirituality.

From the past, FBCM is represented by at least five couples on the mission field who work on behalf of various denominations. The church planted multiple churches in Cobb County, with some surpassing FBCM in attendance, budget, and outreach. It would be easy for the church to take the "First Baptist" stance, sitting in the midst of what used to be, remembering how great we were. Instead, FBCM is making intentional efforts to be the presence of Christ by doing missions in the community and around the world.

We encourage Sunday School classes, mission groups, children's groups, student groups, and Bible study groups to do the hands-on mission projects they have embraced. Among others, they include collecting socks for the homeless and canned food items, providing meals at various ministries for those in recovery and those in temporary housing, and adopting families at Christmas.

As a church, we are moving to develop partnerships in the community and around the world to work alongside other organizations. This did not begin with one business meeting and a vote to reach out to the community, nor a church leadership meeting designed to rewrite the mission and vision statement of the church. While each is important, they were mere steps along the way. The intentional hands-on partnerships began with the ministerial leadership, followed by church mission leadership, and permission given to all members of the church to discover their mission passion.

FBCM changed the structure of the deacons from a board of decision makers to a fellowship of ministers. I have been in churches where this was done in theory, but in practice, there was little or no change. The deacon leadership at FBCM meets on a monthly basis, receives financial reports to enhance communication, and hears a "mini state of the church" report from the pastor; however, deacons spend the majority of their meeting hearing reports of what each deacon ministry team is planning and doing to be the presence of Christ. Our deacon ministry has formed teams for prayer, home repair, communion for the congregation and homebound, new member welcome, community mission events, projects, and hospital visitation.



*(continues on page 4)*

# Celebration and Festival...

## Celebrating Senior Adults with CBF/GA



Senior Celebration was held Monday-Tuesday, May 7-8. The first event was hosted by Highland Hills Baptist Church in Macon, and the second event was hosted by Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church in Atlanta. Daniel Vestal was our keynote speaker, and Clifton Warren was the afternoon entertainment. Participants enjoyed times of fellowship and worship together.



### SINGING, RINGING, MALLETS, AND MORE...

## CBF/GA Handbell Festival

JEFF ALLRED [jallred@vbcmacon.org](mailto:jallred@vbcmacon.org)

After nearly a year of planning, the first CBF/GA Handbell Festival became a reality!

Singing, ringing, mallets, and more were all part of the first CBF/GA Handbell Festival held on Friday-Saturday, April 27-28. Approximately fifty ringers from four churches met at Vineville Baptist Church in Macon for an enjoyable week-end of ringing, instruction, fellowship, and worship.

Dan Ridley, minister of music at Hayes Barton Baptist Church in Raleigh, was the festival conductor. Dan is an expert in instrumental music, having formerly served as the team leader for the music/worship division of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. He did a masterful job of tailoring the event to meet the variety of needs present at the festival, so much so that several ringers felt the event had a "master class" feel.

The festival featured music in a variety of styles that called for a plethora of technique. Titles included *When Morning Gilds the Skies*, *How Deep the Father's Love for Us*, *Amazing Grace*, *I Am Bound for the Kingdom*, and *He's Got the Whole World*. Additionally, a special techniques class was offered that was both informative and educational.

The festival music employed at least ten different ringing techniques. One technique, the "singing bell," was new to many of the festival participants. To perform this technique, a wooden dowel is placed on the rim of a bell and rotated with the resulting friction causing the bell to sound. It is much like the trick of making a crystal goblet sing. The resulting sound has a beauty all its own!

The event featured times for group ringing, teaching ringing technique, discussion concerning uses for bells in worship and beyond, fellowship, a solo ringing performance/discussion, and worship.

Participating churches were First Baptist Church of Griffin, Milledge Avenue Baptist Church from Athens, and Mt. Zion Baptist Church and Vineville Baptist Church, both from Macon. Also present were Laura Foushee, ElizaBeth Copeland, and Kelley Dixson from the CBF/GA office. Curtis Murdock of Murdock Music provided bell technician services on Friday evening.

A great deal of thanks is due to Frank Broome and Laura Foushee for their support of this event. Plans are already in the making for next year's festival. Basic details will be available in June.

*Jeff Allred is minister of music and administration at Vineville Baptist Church in Macon.*



# March Mission Events...

## March Mission Madness

CBF/GA's March Mission Madness was hosted by First Baptist Church of St. Simons Island and Johns Creek Baptist Church in Alpharetta. Five hundred fifty-six participants explored this year's theme, *Meet the World*, through mission work and worship.



## March Mission Immersion

BRANDON TUBBS

When a youth group gets near pallets and paint, someone typically gets blasted by a paintball. Add trash bags, flour, and other random food, and someone has organized a food fight. But during CBF/GA's inaugural March Mission Immersion, these elements created an experience that helped teenagers and adults catch a glimpse of the needs of others.



Youth and adult leaders who participated in March Mission Immersion at the Calvin Center's Global Village in Hampton had their eyes opened to the needs of the world. Organizers combined service projects and worship-filled moments to raise awareness, create memories, and enhance group interaction. The work included creating an outdoor worship and meeting space, renovating and expanding simulated slum housing, cooking food for the group, cleaning buildings, and building walls for a replica of an African hut. Calvin Center leaders planned activities that encouraged groups to rely on one another to accomplish tasks, and everyone came together during formal and informal times to visit, share, and worship. All of this enhanced the feeling of community.

For anyone who isn't able to take an international mission trip, or even a mission trip to the more remote and poverty-stricken areas of the United States, the weekend allowed participants to experience the real-world needs that a countless number of people throughout the world face each day. Yes, some groups slept on wooden pallets under a roof that allowed them to see stars at night and feel the rain hit their brows. Yes, some groups ate supper from a trash bag. Yes, some people got sick during and after the trip from something that was contagious. Many of the youth with whom we minister come from a relatively stable economic environment. Few worry about where their next meal may come from. Most go home to a clean, warm, dry bed in a home that has at least one luxury item. Those who caught colds visited doctors shortly after returning home. Not everyone experiences that luxury.

As Christians strive to be the hands and feet of Christ, moments like March Mission Immersion can help raise our awareness to needs both near and far. Sure, the youth and chaperones may complain about the accommodations. Some may grumble about making bricks. But they also remember their experience, and they tell their friends, family, and classmates. And at least for a little while, or even for a long time, they consider their actions and habits and what they may do in service to Christ and others as a result.



## MARCH MISSION MADNESS

### Participating Churches-St. Simons

Community Baptist Church, Milledgeville  
First Baptist Church of Athens  
First Baptist Church of Augusta  
First Baptist Church of Bogart  
First Baptist Church of Commerce  
First Baptist Church of Savannah  
First Baptist Church of St. Simons  
First Baptist Church of Christ of Macon  
Haddock Baptist Church  
Milledge Avenue Baptist Church, Athens  
Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Macon  
New Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, Marietta  
Northeast Baptist Church, Atlanta  
Northside Drive Baptist Church, Atlanta  
Vineville Baptist Church, Macon

### Participating Churches-Johns Creek

Bowdon Baptist Church  
Evergreen Baptist Church, Milledgeville  
First Baptist Church of Jefferson  
First Baptist Church of Morrow  
First Baptist Church of Rome  
First Baptist Church of Roswell  
Garden Lakes Baptist Church, Rome  
Haven Fellowship Church, Conyers  
Heritage Baptist Church, Cartersville  
Heritage Baptist Fellowship, Canton  
Horizon Baptist Fellowship, Summerville  
Johns Creek Baptist Church, Alpharetta  
Madison Baptist Church  
New Life Christian Ministries, Marietta  
Smoke Rise Baptist Church, Stone Mountain

## MARCH MISSION IMMERSION

### Participating Churches

First Baptist Church of Augusta  
First Baptist Church of Carrollton  
First Baptist Church of Marietta  
Highland Hills Baptist Church, Macon  
Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta  
Trinity Baptist Church, Moultrie

*Brandon Tubbs serves as youth minister at First Baptist Church of Carrollton. He is a 2011 graduate of the McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University in Atlanta.*

## FRANKLY SPEAKING: Are We Willing?

FRANK BROOME [fbroome@cbfga.org](mailto:fbroome@cbfga.org)



In the previous issue of this column, I began reflecting on denominational giving by stating that, while charitable giving is not down as much as people think, denominational giving has declined significantly. I pointed out that in our fellowship such decline is a result of several factors other than just our economic slump. Several of our larger churches have invested heavily in new construction and are paying off debt. Most of our congregations are putting more emphasis on local community missions, and many are aligned to more than one convention or fellowship, thus splitting their contributions.

The lack of local CBF Advocates has played a part in the giving decline, as well. It is hard to overestimate the role that the Woman's Missionary Union played in raising funds for missions in years past. In many ways, this organization kept the local church connected to state and national organizations through a variety of educational programs and mission endeavors. If a church has a strong CBF Advocate, it tends to support CBF state and national initiatives well. There is also a correlation between the frequency with which a church invites a CBF speaker and the depth of support given by the church. There are, of course, exceptions to this, but they are rare.

The partnership/networking model that we have adopted in the place of a more denominational model has served us well in some ways and poorly in others. While it is a good model for leveraging influence, it is not that helpful when developing financial resources. Pointing congregations in the right direction is not the same as providing specific tangible resources for them, especially when they need it most. Only time will tell if the partnership model will survive. I suspect we will eventually return to a more centralized approach. The same issues that brought the era of cooperative giving are still present and will likely resurface in the next decade or so.

Finally, giving to denominations in the long run is tied to three important church endeavors—evangelism, church starts, and church restarts. If we do not find a way to reclaim these areas of our work, we will continue to decline, because our churches will decline. Evangelism can be done by everyone without significant resources. That is not true when it comes to church starting and restarting. Both require significant financial investment, and they will only happen when those with a passion for growth, both spiritual and numerical, direct significant resources in their direction. The issue is not lack of **Vision**, as some maintain. We have the **Vision**. The issue is **Will**. Are we **willing** to do what is necessary to see that a progressive Baptist vision survives? I hope so. I really hope so. CBF/GA

## From Ministers... (continued from page 1)

Ministerial staff, deacons, and mission leadership intentionally look at non-profit organizations in Marietta, asking how we can partner with their mission efforts. This has enabled us to work alongside the following organizations: The Extension, a shelter for people in recovery, where Sunday School classes prepare meals on a regular basis; MUST Ministries in Cobb County, where we will be a distribution location for a summer feeding ministry; Cobb Family Resources, where this Thanksgiving we will provide food for over 1,500 families with the "Thanks-for-giving" meal; Park Street Elementary School, a public school in Marietta at which the majority of the children receive free meals, where we ask the principal each year: "What do you need from FBCM?"; Mothers Making a Change, a recovery program sponsored by the court system in Cobb County, where mothers with drug abuse issues are reunited with their children. When the City of Marietta has a downtown event, such as the Taste of Marietta or the Fourth of July celebration, we participate by opening ourselves to the community.

On a state level, we partner with CBF/GA in New Life Christian Ministries and March Mission Madness. On an international level, we partner with India Baptist Theological Seminary in Kottayam, India. We are seeking sponsorships for thirty men and women from Myanmar, enabling them to attend the only seminary in that part of the world that offers an accredited master's degree to both men and women. We partner with Lon and Fran Turner in Zambia and Ron and Melin Green in Southeast Asia to provide clean drinking water through well projects and water filtration systems. Last year we partnered with seven students at India Baptist Theological Seminary and built seven water systems in Myanmar villages, where few, if any, Americans have visited.

We live in the best of times to share the gospel. I believe it begins when the church changes its mantra from "all members are ministers" to "all members are missionaries." We can do hands-on missions, trust others in partnerships, and trust God to lead us as the presence of Christ in Cobb County, North Georgia, and around the world.

*Bill Ross is pastor of First Baptist Church of Marietta.*



# Gathering Around the Table

LAURA FOUSHEE [lfoushee@cbfga.org](mailto:lfoushee@cbfga.org)

## **CBF/GA Interfaith Taskforce MISSION STATEMENT**

The CBF/GA Interfaith Taskforce is committed to cooperatively working together to broaden mutual understanding and to improve relationships among people of diverse faiths.

## **CBF/GA Interfaith Taskforce VISION STATEMENT**

Deriving from an authentic Baptist faith tradition that respects freedom of religious conscience, our vision is:

1. To foster a lasting community in which everyone's faith tradition is individually valued and mutually respected,
2. To develop friendships through education, hospitality, and service,
3. To discover our mutual commonalities through the sharing of our diverse stories,
4. To learn compassion, understanding, and empathy for each other through the building of relationships,
5. To enrich our faith journeys by listening with theological and intellectual humility,
6. To nourish a spirit of peacemaking that affirms the value of all people,
7. To develop sensitivity to our cultural differences.

I always love when things seem to just fall in place. About a year ago, I received several emails and contacts surrounding interest in one of our ministries: Interfaith. In particular, these individuals had experience and interest in working with the Muslim community. While most of our interfaith dialogues focused on our friendships within the Jewish community, we had yet to formalize consistent dialogue with the Muslim community. Now, in my inbox, was the human resource potential to get to work and tap into the passion these individuals had for building relationships with a new community of brothers and sisters.

Over the last year, members of the Baptist-Muslim Dialogue Committee have met several times to determine our goals and plans. We have discussed the intricacies and sensitivities of interfaith dialogue, formed a new mission and vision statement for our taskforce, and pulled together our resources and contacts to begin inviting Muslim friends to the table. Finally, on May 17, our committee hosted a small group of Baptist and Muslim leaders at Mercer University, Atlanta, for a dinner and dialogue entitled "Building the Neighborhood."

Our dialogue focused on three questions: Why bother with interfaith dialogue? What dreams would we have for building an interfaith neighborhood? What are our next steps? From participants present, we heard testimonies speaking to the personal call to peacemaking, the desire to be a positive model for grandchildren, and the conviction to create safer environments for future generations. New friendships were begun over dinner, and participants have already expressed their excitement about future events.

Our world is a place where divisiveness and polarity thrive, yet as followers of Christ, we understand the importance of sitting down at the table with one another—and all others—to share Christ's peace and love, just as He did in His ministry two thousand years ago. Our taskforce is committed to having future dialogues, and I hope you will join us in the future! CBF/GA



# Some Baptist Landmarks to Remember

JIMMY GENTRY [jimmy.gentry@tabernacle.org](mailto:jimmy.gentry@tabernacle.org)

I have always loved history. I even minored in history in college. While at Southern Seminary, more than thirty years ago, I came to have an abiding appreciation for Baptist history. Baptists are a people of history. Well, maybe not all Baptists. Some like to “revise” history. Some like to forget history. I once heard Buddy Shurden make an astute observation. OK. I’ve heard him make many astute observations! Dr. Shurden said: “Tell me what you remember, and I’ll tell you what kind of person you are.” That statement speaks for itself. I don’t have to pontificate on it.

Baptists are a people who are supposed to remember their heritage. I am so energized when I learn something new in the annals of Baptist history—and church history, for that matter. Our 403 years are marked with many significant landmarks (no pun intended, even though I was reared in the hotbed of “Landmarkism” in western Kentucky) that celebrate the missional identity of Baptists. 2012 is one of those “landmark” years for Baptists. Four significant milestones are marked in this second year of the second decade of the twenty-first century.

First, 2012 marks the two-hundred-year anniversary of the commissioning and sending of Adoniram and Ann Judson to Burma. These were the first Baptist missionaries to be sent from the United States of America, thus launching the modern missional movement among Baptists in America. Ever since, Baptists in this nation have been

sending people all over the world who have been commissioned to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom in all those places where it is news.

Second, 2012 marks the one-hundred-year anniversary of the birth of Clarence Jordan. Some Baptists have no idea who he was—even Baptists in Georgia. Born in Talbotton on July 29, 1912, Clarence received a bachelor’s degree in agriculture from the University of Georgia in 1933. Roll Tide! I mean: “How ‘bout them DAWGS?” Being called by God to vocational ministry, he graduated from Southern Seminary with a doctoral degree in New Testament Greek. Clarence and his wife Florence returned to his native Georgia in 1942, along with some others. They bought some land in Sumter County, near Plains and Americus, and founded an interracial community known as Koinonia Farm, which was an experiment in communal living in accord with Acts 2. He translated most of the New Testament into the vernacular of the rural South, calling it *The Cotton Patch Version*. Sadly, he died from a massive heart attack in 1969 before completing it. He lacked only Mark, John 9-21, and Revelation. His story is fascinating. He played a significant role in the founding of Habitat for Humanity.

Third, 2012 marks the one-hundred-year anniversary of the death of Charlotte Diggs Moon. Lottie Moon died on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1912, in Japan. The Virginia native gave her life to international missions in China for more than forty years. Her name is synonymous with “missional

journey.” While CBF doesn’t have her “name” anymore, CBF still has her. Her spirit can never be taken away from free and faithful Baptists.



And fourth, 2012 marks the one-hundred-year anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. Say what? Work with me. A Baptist preacher was on board, a certain John Harper, pastor of Walworth Road Baptist Church in London, England. He was only thirty-nine years old. He helped others get into lifeboats, telling them about Jesus. When all of the lifeboats were gone, he told as many as he could in the midst of the chaos on that sinking ship about salvation through Jesus. He died in that tragedy, inviting others to call upon the Lord’s name and be saved.

Now for good measure, I’ll toss in a fifth one. 2012 marks the twentieth anniversary of CBF/GA. There’ll be a big celebration at First Baptist Church in Griffin this November. It will be another landmark to remember in years to come.

So, tell me what you remember, and I’ll tell you what kind of person you are. Let’s remember these significant Baptist landmarks in 2012. Let’s gladly speak about them to others. If we do, they’ll know what kind of people we are—a Baptist people with many landmarks worth remembering. And who knows? Somebody might meet Jesus for the first time and get saved. Talk about a landmark worth remembering! CBF/GA

# What Would Jesus Say... to a One-Percenter?

RUBEN SWINT [RSwint@TheColumbiaPartnership.org](mailto:RSwint@TheColumbiaPartnership.org)

**H**ave you been following the nation's conversation about the one percent versus the ninety-nine percent? The one percent are defined as citizens who are in the top one percent of American taxpayers (\$343,927 in adjusted gross income in 2009). Is the church in this conversation? Should we be? What would Jesus say to a one-percenter?

## Let's Do Lunch

Jesus traveled through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, which his followers would "occupy" in a demonstration involving palm branches. In Jericho Jesus encounters a local entrepreneur I'll call Z. Z had the local tax franchise from the Romans, and he had done very well. Z was a one-percenter.

Rather than rail against Z or shun him, as did the local citizens, Jesus invited himself to Z's home for lunch. Going to the home of a person whose wealth was probably unfairly gained was not a popular thing to do. Better to have asked Z to produce his personal tax records for the last ten years.

But, Z changes! After the visit, Z comes out for Jesus, the Kingdom candidate. He pledges to give half of his wealth to the poor and to pay back twice the penalty for his questionable business tactics. He did this because Jesus saw in Z a person of worth and his potential. Z experienced Jesus and learned of a different path to success.

Jesus would say to a one-percenter what he would say to you and me: "Let's do lunch."

## It's a Gift

Jesus told a parable about a businessman going on a trip. He called in his executives and gave each of them a portion of his business to run. The two senior executives received sixty-two percent and twenty-five percent of the business, and the junior executive received thirteen percent.

While the businessman was away, the two senior execs got busy. They doubled the value of the business they controlled. The junior exec acted cautiously and put his part of the business under stringent risk controls. It is important to know that the businessman had allocated the parts of his business to his team "each according to his ability."

When the businessman returned, each exec reported; the two seniors were praised for earning more money, and the junior was criticized (and worse) for earning

nothing, not even one percent in a CD. Clearly, the junior did not have the confidence, the skills, the experience, or the ambition to make money. He didn't have the gift.



Building a business and making money is a gift. And when people with this gift increase the value of a business, then usually people are employed and savers and pensioners are rewarded. Making money is not a sin—it is a gift. And the gift is from God.

Jesus would say to a one-percenter: "Your success is the result of God's gift to you. Use your gift. Grow your business. Employ people. Increase share value and dividends. Use God's gift to you legally and morally. And give as well as you get."

Jesus would say to a one-percenter what he would say to you and me: "It's a gift."

## Check the Title

"Possession is nine-tenths of the law," as some people say. But the name on the title of ownership is the person who actually owns the stuff. There are times when it is good to check the title.

King David prepared for years for a gigantic construction project that would be paid for when it was completed. When Solomon became king, the temple project would be shovel-ready. In I Chronicles 29, there is an accounting of the financing for the project. David declared: "But who am I, and who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand...LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you."

The church teaches and encourages Christians to give ten percent of their income to God. The correct task is to faithfully manage one hundred percent of God's wealth, so that His kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus would say to a one-percenter what he would say to you and me: "Check the title."

*(continues on next page)*

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## What Would Jesus Say... (continued from page 7)

### Call Security

Jesus told a parable about an owner of an agribusiness. His farming activities produced an unexpected wind-fall. "The ground yielded an abundant harvest" (Luke 12:16). It was as if the owner had won a lottery-like income for life.

And like many lottery winners, the farm owner immediately put at risk the real wealth he had. The owner became financially richer in a short period of time. Freed from struggle, the owner saw only a life of ease for himself ahead. He failed to consider the needs of others or the purposes of God. He did not understand what true wealth is: spiritual vitality, family, friends, good deeds, and a life purpose.

He should have called security to lock down his out-of-control desire for pleasure. The conditions against which the occupy movement demonstrates in many ways resulted from an out-of-control system of borrowing for pleasure that has gone on for decades.

The one-percenters, just like us, have to guard against overindulgent lifestyles, regardless of where the money comes from, earning power, or borrowing power. They and we must guard our souls from possessions and pleasure.

Jesus would say to a one-percenter what he would say to you and me: "Call security."

### Tear Down This Wall

In his 1987 speech in Berlin, President Ronald Reagan challenged Soviet leader Gorbachev to tear down the wall separating East from West Berlin. In 1989 the wall came down. Centuries earlier, Jesus told a parable about another barrier, a great ditch.

A rich man dressed well, lived in luxury, and feasted extravagantly every day. Outside the door to his house, a poor, sick, and homeless man lay dying. And every day the rich man ignored him. When both had died, they arrived at different places, and separating the place of suffering from the place of comfort was a great, wide ditch, an insurmountable barrier.

The time to eliminate the barrier was when both were alive. The rich person could have paid attention to and provided aid and comfort to the sick one, as if he were one of his own. But instead, he treated him as an unseen other, not like me or us.

The blog <http://westandwiththe99percent.tumblr.com/> contains testimonials from people who have benefited from a lifestyle afforded by the one percent and yet still want to acknowledge the needs and dreams of the ninety-nine percent. They are consciously seeking to

eliminate the barriers of class, wealth, and color. They are recognizing that "the other" is ourselves and we are "the other."

Walls, ditches, or barriers of any kind are in direct opposition to Jesus' vision of the parenthood of God and the sisterhood and brotherhood of humanity.

Jesus would say to a one-percenter what he would say to you and me: "Tear down this wall."

### Carpe Bonum

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share." In other words, tell the one-percenters to "seize the good."

How does that conversation go in your church? What do you command the one-percenters to do? First of all, you probably don't command anyone. Even if you did, would any of them do it? How do you follow Paul's mentoring advice?

Why not ask them this question: "Why has God gifted you with the ability to gain wealth? Is it simply so that you and your family can have a good life? Or, is there more to it than that? Is it so that you can be trusted to make very good decisions that will impact other people's access to and ability to benefit from healthcare, education, employment, decent housing, secure retirement, and, yes, even eternal life?"

Why should one-percenters seize the good? Again, from Paul: "In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life." Eternal life flows to them from the good they do.

Jesus would say to a one-percenter what he would say to you and me: "Carpe bonum. Seize the good."

Throughout this article, you and I are addressed, as well as the one-percenters. Why? If you base the one percent on income levels **in the world**, then the income threshold to be a one-percenter is \$47,400 per year. Most of us qualify to be in the world's one percent. What Jesus would say to one of us, he would say to all of us.

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*This is an edited version of a Travel Free Learning Article from The Columbia Partnership. Ruben Swint is the author, and he leads the Funding Ministry Team ([www.FundingMinistry.org](http://www.FundingMinistry.org)). E-mail Ruben for a free subscription to The Generosity Letter monthly e-zine at [RSwint@TheColumbiaPartnership.org](mailto:RSwint@TheColumbiaPartnership.org) or follow him on Twitter at [@GenerosityGuy](https://twitter.com/GenerosityGuy).*



# HEARTS FOR HEROES: FBC Augusta Military Ministry

MARCIA BUCK [marb321@knology.net](mailto:marb321@knology.net)

*Care for the Troops is dedicated to the mental health care of our returning troops and their families by providing information and training to families, clinicians, congregations, and community leaders so that they become more aware of the culture, unique symptoms, and issues faced by military families. Please visit the CFTT website for additional information: [www.careforthetroops.org](http://www.careforthetroops.org).*

Contact Renée Bennett (478-742-1191, ext. 21, or [rbennett@cbfga.org](mailto:rbennett@cbfga.org)) at CBF/GA for assistance in becoming a Veteran Friendly Congregation (VFC) or a Lead Congregation (LC).



**M**emorial Day, 2005. A day I will never forget. It is the day a church friend and I decided to deliver some small flower arrangements to the Uptown Veterans Affairs Active Duty Rehab Wing. It is the day I met Sean, a twenty-six-year-old West Point graduate, seriously injured and totally unaware of anything going on around him. He didn't see me, hear me, or see the flowers, but it is the day I held his hand and promised to return.



The following Sunday, I told my Sunday School class, the Grace Class, about the visit and the impact it had on me. That day we formed the Hearts for Heroes Military Ministry. It started out as "The Sean Project," but as it grew, we renamed it to include everyone.

Since that day, First Baptist Church of Augusta has continued to support our troops in many ways. We continue to support the Wounded Warriors at the VA through visits with gift bags of homemade goodies, movie passes, restaurant passes, invitations to the church for Christmas parties, where they are the special guests, and other church activities.

Through the continued financial support of the Cason Bruker Bible Study Class and many other classes and individuals in the church, we have been able to expand Hearts for Heroes. To date we have mailed over six hundred "Love Boxes" to deployed troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our most recent mailings included numerous boxes of Girl Scout cookies donated by

church members, along with the usual requested items like hand wipes, chapstick, hard candy, beef jerky, books, magazines, snack foods, and many other things. It is interesting to note that much of the hard candy is given out to children.

Shortly after the Hearts for Heroes was started, I spoke to a men's group about the ministry. After the program ended, a gentleman came up to me and said: "I really appreciate what you are doing. I served in Vietnam, and when I came home, people spit on me." It broke my heart to hear such a story and made me even more determined to continue our ministry. How could I ever disrespect someone who has put his or her life in danger to protect me?

I continued to visit Sean and was thrilled to see his progress each week. He is now back at home in the Boston area and doing well. I will always remember his first words to me: "Thank you for the flowers."

In 2010 Andy Jones, minister of missions and faith development at First Baptist, received a letter from Peter McCall regarding CareForTheTroops and asking if we would be interested in participating in the outreach they provided. Andy forwarded the letter to me, and I was excited to become part of this wonderful program. I look forward to receiving updates from Peter that list the many projects and opportunities provided for our veterans and have forwarded information to other churches in the area that are trying to start up a military ministry. We get many ideas from these communications on how we can better carry Hearts for Heroes forward.

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Marcia Buck is a member of First Baptist Church of Augusta.

# The CBF 2012 Task Force Envisions a Seamless, Cooperative Community

ALAN CULPEPPER [culpepper\\_ra@mercer.edu](mailto:culpepper_ra@mercer.edu)



Serving as a member of the CBF 2012 task force has been a privilege and a journey of faith. During the past two years, the Fellowship has engaged in a period of prayer and sustained conversation, seeking direction for our future together. After twenty years of growth and innovation, it is time to make plans for the decades ahead. The task force was broadly representative, composed of thirteen members, lay and clergy, men and women, involved in various aspects of CBF life. Under the capable leadership of David Hull, pastor of First Baptist Church of Huntsville in Alabama, members of the task force spent the first year hosting over one hundred listening sessions. Daniel Vestal's charge for the task force to bring recommendations in three strategic areas formed the agenda.

- What is the best model of community that fosters missional collaboration rather than competition for resources?
- How can we refocus and streamline organizational structures in order to provide leadership and resources for churches and other ministries to respond more effectively to global challenges?
- How do we help Baptist churches and organizations embrace their identity as partners with this community?

Among the myriad of responses we heard, the following rose to the top as the most pressing at this point in our history: (1) we need to state our identity in positive ways, (2) we need better communication and collaboration, (3) the Coordinating Council is too large to be effective, (4) we need to keep the focus on missions, while collaborating to support theological education, congregations, and partner ministries, (5) state and regional CBF organizations—rather than national CBF—should have the primary

role in resourcing congregations, (6) we need a strategy for sharing financial resources, and (7) the paradigm for CBF should be collaboration through ministry networks. The scope of the challenges is both daunting and exciting.

I hope you will take the time to read the report of the task force and that you will share our excitement as we envision what these new ways of being the body of Christ in the world can mean for CBF. Our vision for CBF is that it become a seamless, cooperative community made up of a national organization, state/regional organizations, theological schools, and ministry partners committed to a common mission. In the section on our identity, you will find the following key statements:

“Our vision is to be a national and global community bearing witness to the Gospel in partnership with Christians across the nation and around the world. Our understanding of Baptist faith and practice is expressed by our emphasis on freedom in biblical interpretation and congregational governance, the participation of women and men in all aspects of church leadership and Christian ministry, and religious liberty for all people.”

To achieve this vision, the task force's recommendations include:

1. A **Governing Board** consisting of sixteen members recommended by the nominating committee and approved by the General Assembly;
2. A **Nominating Committee** composed of the past moderator and fifteen members who serve three-year terms. Both the composition of the nominating committee and its nominations should reflect careful attention to diversity;
3. A **Missions Council** that brings together missions leaders and practitioners from across the CBF community and CBF Global Missions staff to provide vision, strategy, education, and sustainability for CBF's missions enterprise;
4. A **Ministries Council** that identifies, develops, and deploys the assets of the CBF community;
5. The annual gathering at **General Assembly** will serve a four-fold function:
  - building and renewing relationships,
  - worship,
  - gaining information,
  - conducting the business of the fellowship and national CBF.
6. Three categories of **partnerships** that represent CBF's shared funding priorities: theological education

(continues on page 12)



# OPPORTUNITIES, NEWS, & REPORTS

## Disaster Response—CBF/GA Style TOMMY DEAL

I AM THRILLED to be part of the family known as CBF/GA! After spending a few years in Florida “handling” disaster response with CBF/Florida, God has moved me to north Georgia, as my wife has been called as the minister of music at First Baptist Church of Dalton. When Frank approached me about coordinating disaster response for CBF/GA, my first impression was that I was not confident that I could offer anything to improve on the great cooperative efforts already exhibited.

You have impressed me with the great collaborative way you have reached out to neighbors near and far when natural disasters have occurred. From the tsunamis that devastated Southeast Asia to the tornadoes right here in our own back yard, you have responded in ways that I know even surprised you. You have donated monies and supplies that have been sent to Haiti after the deadly earthquake, and you have put together a group of young and old to help clean up debris around your church and community. You have responded to Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana for months after Katrina made landfall, and you have sent help and resources through the larger CBF family around the nation and the world in times of need.



What I envision for CBF/GA is that we continue the great collaborative response when something occurs, regardless of where. We will continue to follow the guidance that we are NOT first responders. We (most of us) are not trained to be the first ones in. Those allowed in immediately by local officials do not need us in their way. For the most part, we are not the second-tier first responders either—those who come in to help restore vital services. Many larger faith-based, more equipped organizations have teams that fall in this category. What we WILL do, however, is to determine with the help of local congregations what needs are present that we CAN help to meet.

As soon as possible, contact will be made in the area. If a church needs assistance to restore its resources so that it can be a long-term presence in its community, we will coordinate our resources there. If it does not, or it is not in the affected area, we will work with and through a church as it reaches beyond its community.

I have begun to make contacts with churches and their “point person” so that we can begin to build an asset inventory of persons and equipment resources that may be called upon in the time of need. I will establish means of communication so that, as soon as is possible after you have heard on the news that something has happened, you will know that we, CBF/GA, are working to establish a plan of response.

I want to hear from you. I am very interested in your thoughts, opinions, and resources. I hope you will contact me at [tdeal@cbfga.org](mailto:tdeal@cbfga.org) or 706-313-5066.

## Ministers on the Move

HERITAGE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP in Canton has called Erin Robinson Hall as minister of congregational life.

## Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia

P.O. Box 4343, Macon, GA 31208-4343  
phone 478-742-1191 • fax 478-742-6150  
toll free phone 1-877-336-6426  
toll free fax 1-877-336-6425  
website [www.cbfga.org](http://www.cbfga.org)

### CBF/GA Staff

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### CBF/GA Coordinating Council

Moderator • Jimmy Gentry, Carrollton

Moderator-Elect • Joyce McCartney, Griffin

Past-Moderator • Mimi Walker, Atlanta

Treasurer • Jim Bruner, Macon

Finance Chair • Henry Tyson, Fitzgerald

Clerk • Randy Shepley, Tucker

Paul Baxley, Athens

Kristy Bay, Athens

Stan Braley, Macon

Gwen Brown, Grayson

Marc Burcham, Atlanta

Hannah Coe, Athens

Adair Cox, Rome

Janice Hale, Gainesville

Martha Kate Hall, Augusta

Mike Hendley, St. Simons

Neil Heath, Macon

Tom Hill, Alpharetta

Sarah Holik, Fitzgerald

Bill Ireland, Dalton

Tricia Kilgore, Savannah

Melissa Kremer, Rome

Matt Marston, Moultrie

Craig McMahan, Macon

Susan Mullis, Summerville

Barrett Owen, Fayetteville

Lee Ritchie, Commerce

Carey Russell, Forsyth

David Sapp, Atlanta

Philip Vestal, Harlem

Lauren Waggoner, Marietta

Missy Ward, Atlanta

Richard West, Edison

Ina Woodruff, Tifton

### CBF/National Coordinating Council Georgia Members

Susan Broome, Macon

Don Callaway, Moultrie

Greg DeLoach, Augusta

Ron McClung, Haddock

Mimi Walker, Atlanta

Darrell Watson, Forsyth

**VISIONS** is published six times a year  
by CBF/GA. All questions and comments  
may be directed to

ElizaBeth Copeland, [ecopeland@cbfga.org](mailto:ecopeland@cbfga.org)  
or 478-742-1191, ext. 23.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

Budget Receipts as of 04-30-2012

Year to Date.....	\$ 153,576.52
Requirement.....	\$ 200,985.64
Over/Under.....	\$ (47,409.12)
April Contributions.....	\$ 36,229.71
April Requirement.....	\$ 50,246.41
Over/Under.....	\$ (14,016.70)



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## Georgia Meeting at General Assembly

Thursday, June 21, 4:15 p.m.

Join us for the Georgia meeting  
at the CBF/National General Assembly  
in room 201B of the Convention Center  
at 4:15 p.m. on Thursday, June 21.

Pat Anderson, CBF's future interim executive  
coordinator, will be the guest speaker.



### EVENTS CALENDAR 2012

#### ■ June 21

**CBF/GA Meeting  
at CBF/National General Assembly**  
Ft. Worth, TX

#### ■ September 23-25

**Preaching Consultation**  
King and Prince Beach and Golf Resort  
St. Simons Island

#### ■ October 5-7

**ReCharge**  
Woodland Christian Camp, Temple

#### ■ November 4-5

**CBF/GA Fall General Assembly**  
First Baptist Church of Griffin

Keep up to date with events  
... [www.cbfga.org](http://www.cbfga.org)

### The CBF 2012 Task Force... *(continued from page 10)*

partners, resource partners, and  
membership partners;

7. A shared *funding strategy* that  
builds on the principles of free-  
dom and cooperation. Crucial to  
this strategy is the establishment  
of formal agreements between  
CBF/National and each state/  
regional CBF organization. These  
cooperative agreements will be  
more than financial agreements—  
they will underscore shared  
mission and values, as well as  
ministry collaboration—but each  
agreement will also specify how  
funds will be shared between  
CBF/National and that particular  
state/region.

The recommendations of the  
task force will be presented by  
the Coordinating Council to the

General Assembly for approval in  
June. If adopted, implementing  
these recommendations will take  
several years. Working with the CBF  
staff, the Coordinating Council will  
develop a sequenced plan that will  
include a timeline of steps to be  
taken, bylaw changes, assignment  
of responsibilities, and an evalua-  
tion process. There is much still to  
be done, but our hope is that these  
recommendations will serve as a  
rallying point for a renewal of com-  
mitment and resolve as together we  
embrace the dream of “a seamless,  
cooperative community” committed  
to a common mission.

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*Alan Culpepper is dean of the  
McAfee School of Theology at Mercer  
University in Atlanta.*