

FELLOWSHIP

APRIL 2006



COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Transforming Lives (through CBF)

Metanoia makes me a better person because I learn more about my Savior, Jesus. It makes me understand how a different person feels. If I didn't come to Metanoia I might just sit around with nothing to do. My favorite part of Metanoia is Imani Circle because I get to tell my feelings. Metanoia helps people deal with their problems. That's why Metanoia makes me a better person.



— Desiree, a fourth grader at Metanoia

My CSF group has become my second family. I love the close bond we share. Our Bible study gives me the chance to grow spiritually, while at the same time I have a group of friends who will be there for me whenever I have a problem with college or spiritually.

—Jeremiah Coble, a freshman broadcasting major at Winthrop who is a part of the Cooperative Student Fellowship of Oakland Baptist Church in Rock Hill



I have been involved with the Cooperative Student Fellowship for two years and with First Baptist of Clemson for three years. During this time, I have grown immensely as a Christian. I have learned that the true meaning of the Gospel is to love and accept those around me unconditionally and that no matter how "religious" I am, if I do not know how to have compassion for others, I do not know what it means to be a Christian. I am so grateful to have found an organization that shares these values, and I hope to be involved with a CBF affiliated organization for years to come.

—Ashley Triplett, a junior computer science major at Clemson University

I was a part of the Metanoia Young Leaders Program from the time the program started three years ago. I have a granddaughter in the program. I used to do a lot of volunteer work before I became employed. I watched the kids grow to care about the community and their school. We had a recycling program going on. The kids walked from house to house after school getting people to recycle to help keep our streets and sidewalks clean. This program is a God-send to our community.

—Thelma Brown (Thelma is in her 60s and serves as Metanoia's Kid's Café Director, preparing a warm meal for the children in the Young Leaders Program every day.)



CSF has provided me with a support system that I can depend on as I have transitioned into college life this past year. I have enjoyed getting to know others with similar interests who are participating in CSF; they have become my family away from home.

—Janet Ownley, a Winthrop University freshman

2006 General Assembly

April 28-29

Fernwood Baptist Church in Spartanburg

Register online at www.cbfofsc.org, or contact the CBF office for a registration form.

**Begins
with
lunch at
noon
on Friday**

ONE PERSON, ONE CHURCH, ONE COMMUNITY

Coordinator's Column: **Be Transformed**



By Marion
Aldridge
Coordinator

Culture and religion (and that includes Christianity) have both conserving and liberating dimensions. Both are necessary. Anyone who only knows how to protect traditions, who always resists change, who is addicted to the past, is already spiritually and emotionally dead. Anyone who is only interested in challenging the status quo, whose motto is "Change for change's sake," is a loose cannon, and potentially dangerous.

The challenge of the growing Christian is to walk in that middle (moderate!) ground which will probably make both the legalist and the revolutionary unhappy. The Christian who is serious about his or her faith must decide which traditions are permanent and which are transient. "Don't commit adultery" is a keeper. "Don't play cards on Sunday," is open to debate.

Biblical prophets, including Jesus, were constantly about the task of sorting out the enduring Word of God from even the most treasured religious traditions. An Old Testament example is the book of Job which challenged the biblical notion that we reap what we sow. Job is a reminder: Not always! Sometimes bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people. In Ezekiel 18: 2 and Luke 4: 23, Ezekiel, the prophet, and Jesus, our Savior, say that society's sound bytes and even the conventional wisdom of our religious forbears don't always get it right. Everything we institutionalize can take on a death of its own.

Way too many Christians get stuck at age 12, and never progress from the proverbs and customs of their childhood faith. Most people in church are not mean or demonic. Yet, in

spite of Sunday School every week, they haven't had one new thought or changed one habit in the last 30 to 50 years. They believe that the Bible message of repentance (change) is for those outside the faith.

The prophets and Jesus were persecuted because they had the audacity to say that those of us who are people of faith also need to think and do some things differently. Many cultural Christians in our churches (of all denominations) would rather die than change our lifelong habits.

For you to be a growing, biblical Christian, however, instead of simply being a pagan who attends church, you must leave your comfort zone:

1. Be kind to someone who irritates you.
2. Figure out a way to be involved with the poor.
3. Show someone mercy when you want to get even.
4. Pray for a person you do not like.
5. Listen to someone whom you usually ignore. Try to learn something. Be quiet when you are tempted to interrupt.
6. Give away more than you can afford.

You will need to ask God to help you with any of these you attempt. If you can do something without God's divine intervention, then you may be doing something worthwhile, but you have not yet been transformed.

By the way, all this is about not about somebody else's salvation...

Gardner new pastor of FBC Walterboro

Randy Gardner is the new pastor of First Baptist Church in Walterboro. He previously had been pastor of First Baptist Church in York for seven years, and before that was a pastoral counselor and chaplain in Spartanburg.

Randy is one of four South Carolina representatives on the Coordinating Council for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and will continue in that role. "Walterboro has a good CBF connection so I will be continuing my work on the council," he said.

Randy succeeds Steve Brown as pastor at FBC Walterboro, which has a membership of just over 1000 and averages 221 in Sunday School. "One of the first things I hope we'll do is a strategic plan," he said. "Then we can use

that as a beginning point of where we go and what we do."

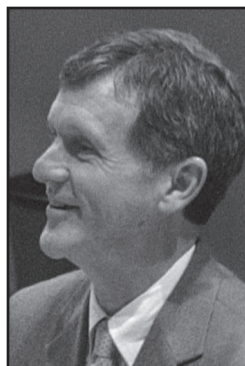
A Gaffney native, Randy is a graduate of Gardner-Webb University and earned M.Div., and D.Min. degrees from Southeastern Seminary. He and his wife Sara, a special education teacher, have two children Clay, 26, and Clary, a student at Furman who has been instrumental in organizing the Cooperative Student Fellowship there.

Outside of work, Randy enjoys reading science fiction and mysteries; likes cats and gardening.

"Leaving York was a real emotional time for us," he said. "We felt so incredibly close to people there and to the church. But Sara and I talked about it and believe this is what we

Wyatt to speak at Missions Banquet

CBF missionary Kim Wyatt will speak at the SC/CBF missions banquet Friday, April 28, at Fernwood Baptist Church in Spartanburg. Kim and her husband Marc work in Toronto with refugees, internationals in academic settings and immigrants from hard to reach countries.



Bill Leonard was the keynote speaker for the first Clergy Day for Baptist pastors held at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia.

To see a list of churches that help sponsor the Baptist Studies Program at Lutheran Seminary, visit our website, www.cbfofsc.org.

Baptist Studies Program brings Leonard to Lutheran

The Joel Osteen phenomenon and what it means

Blake Harwell thought the chance to hear his former church history professor, Bill Leonard, speak was too good to pass up, and his topic *Joel Osteen, Mega Churches and the Non-denominationalizing of American Religion*, was intriguing.

Blake, the pastor of First Baptist Church in Clinton, was among 60 Baptist pastors from South Carolina who attended the first Clergy Gathering hosted by the Baptist Studies Program at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia. Leonard is the dean of the Divinity School and Professor of Church History at Wake Forest University.

"Like most churches, we are witnessing the wane in denominational loyalty so common a generation ago," Blake said. "The rise of non-denominationalism is a reality. I wanted a big-picture look at the phenomenon and maybe hear how some other ministers/ministries are dealing with it in their contexts."

"What a successful day it was," said Ginger Barfield, director of the Baptist Studies program at Lutheran. "The turnout was good, and Leonard's topic was timely and raised lots of dialogue and

thought-provoking discussion."

"The clergy gathering had value on at least three levels for me," said Tony Hopkins, pastor of First Baptist Church in Greenwood. "Bill Leonard knows as much about the church — both as it has developed in the past and how it is evolving in the present — as anyone I know of. His thoughts were both informative and stimulating."

"The second positive effect was the opportunity for the attendees to be together," Tony said. "Both the seminar and the meal offered us the opportunity to meet some new folks, to strengthen some existing relationships, and to network with people who have some of the same dreams and challenges as we."

"The final value was the opportunity to promote and educate folks about the Baptist studies program at LTSS," he said. "For the first time since just after the Civil War (when the theological school attached to Furman moved to Louisville and became The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), would-be Baptist ministers in South Carolina have the opportunity to get a quality theological education without leaving the state. LTSS

is fully accredited, well-staffed seminary, and Ginger Barfield is the right person at the right time to run the Baptist Studies program. Our church is a sponsoring church, which is to say that we contribute to the Baptist studies program out of our annual budget. When Baptists part with their money, you know that they believe in the cause!"

"It was good to see clergy in a relaxed atmosphere, having stimulating conversations, thinking through current ecclesiastical issues together, and doing that in the context of a new Baptist Studies Program on an academic campus in South Carolina of the calibre of LTSS," Ginger said. "It will be a challenge to top this next year as we continue our Clergy Gathering tradition."

"I enjoyed connecting with old friends and meeting some new ones," Blake said. "The lecture room at LTSS was awesome, a great venue for an event like that. What I got out of the event—a confirmation (somewhat) that what Barna says about the church in his latest book is true; a mentally invigorating collection of ideas from one of Baptists' great minds."



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Providence Baptist Church celebrates 10th anniversary

By Brenda Pitts

It hardly seems possible. Providence Baptist Church on Daniel Island near Charleston has celebrated its 10th anniversary.

Members and friends gathered Feb. 26 to remember the past and reaffirm that Providence continues to be “the church outside the walls.”

Minister of Music Deanna McBroom led the children and adult choirs. The handbell choir performed *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*. Special guests included former interim pastor Posey Belcher (and wife Jean), Missy Whaley, former member and recent graduate of Wake Forest Seminary, and SC/CBF Coordinator Marion Aldridge.

Congratulatory letters came from churches, past members, and friends whose prayers and generous gifts have encouraged and sustained Providence over the years.

Don Flowers, pastor, recalled the many acts of God’s surprising grace, of unexpected gifts that came at moments of greatest need. Affirming the contribution of new members, he reminded the



Don Flowers, pastor of Providence Baptist Church on Daniel Island, greets former member Jamie Harris, now living out of state. The church had 60 charter members, and has 310 today. Posey Belcher, retired pastor of First Baptist Church in Walterboro, was the church’s interim pastor before Don became the first full-time pastor nine years ago.

congregation that the road to Daniel Island is not a stopping point, but an ever-expanding circle of worship, Bible study, community outreach, missions, and fellowship. In closing Don quoted a familiar scripture from 1 Peter: “Once you were no people, but now you are God’s people....Once you were without a home, but now you have a home.”

In “The Road to Daniel Island,” an

article published in the June 1999 edition of *Baptists Today*, Providence Baptist Church was referred to as *unconventional*, a trait that continues to define its personality. Demographics include as many members from other denominations as life-long Baptists.

Following a worship service that resonated with joy and thanksgiving, attendees enjoyed a box lunch and slide show.