



DECEMBER 2006

FELLOWSHIP



COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Teaching English in China

Lori Strickland of Mauldin found job at college in Nanning through CBF

By Beverly Greer
Missions Coordinator

Two years after graduating from Samford University in Birmingham, AL, Lori Strickland from Mauldin is teaching English in college. Her only past experience has been as a fourth grade teacher and an assistant in a pre-school and kindergarten classroom for a year.

This year she is teaching English at Guangxi University in Nanning, China, the top university in the Guangxi Province.

"It's not so much that the Chinese people or Asia could use my training in teaching, as it is having a passion for countries where it's hard for the Gospel to get a good hearing," she said when asked what drew her to China. "It's a place where a majority of the population have no knowledge of God and where people are less willing to serve."

Lori searched the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship web site and saw there were teaching opportunities in China. The fact that she would be teaching college students really appealed to her. Lori teaches classes in listening and reading. Even outside of class students and others want to talk to her to practice English.



Lori is the daughter of Stephanie and Gary Strickland. Gary is pastor of First Baptist Church in Mauldin. She said some people have asked her parents if they are afraid for her to be in China. Their response is, she said, that "She's in God's hands."

A CBF volunteer, Lori is one of four CBF-related teachers at Guangxi University. Dee Edward, a Student.Go appointee and a 2006 graduate of Meredith University in North Carolina and affiliates Karen and Don Barnes, retired Ph.D. chemistry professors, also teach at the university. All four are paid by the university.

Lori expects to be in China more than a year.

Lori Strickland, right, is in China to teach English but she always looks for ways to show her Christian faith, like talking with this mother of a handicapped child.

Missions Coordinator Beverly Greer was one of 16 CBF women who visited leaders of the church in China and CBF representatives in Lanzhou, Chengdu, Nanning and Macau. The objective of the trip was for the participants to have the opportunity to observe first-hand how CBF Global Missions works alongside churches in China.

Beverly is available to speak in churches throughout the state about global missions in general or her trip to China in particular. Email her at beverly@cbfofsc.org.



CBF making a difference in China through cerebral palsy ministry

By Beverly Greer
Missions Coordinator

On my recent trip to China, I learned about the impact one person can have when presented with a need. In China there is very little help for children with disabilities. Angel House Rehabilitation and Education Center in Nanning Guangxi, China, is a testament to the determination of a mother of a child born with a disability.

Kate Wang Fang had twins, a girl and a boy. When the girl was born with cerebral palsy, Kate set out to learn all she could about the condition. The more Kate learned about helping her child, the more she wanted to provide the same services for other children with the disease.

The result is Angel House, a place where 20 children with cerebral palsy live during the week and receive specialized help from teachers, rehab workers and care givers. When asked, Kate tells people these services are provided because, "We are Christ's followers."

Brenda Lisenby, CBF representative in China, learned about Angel House and saw an opportunity for CBF to partner

with this vital ministry. CBF provides some financial resources but mainly provides a connection for volunteers with a variety of skills needed at Angel House. Karen and Don Barnes, AsYouGo affiliates with CBF who teach English at Guangxi University, have helped recruit student volunteers from the University.

Kate made a difference when she founded Angel House. Brenda made a difference when she introduced Angel House to CBF. CBF people can also make a difference in the lives of children in China born with cerebral palsy by giving generously to the Global Missions Offering.

CBF field personnel have been asked to cut 20 percent from their ministry budgets for the coming year because of decreased giving. Our mission efforts depend on the Global Missions Offering to provide financial resources to support all of our ministries.

One person can make a difference. Will you pray? Will you give a generous offering and be one person who makes a difference in the spiritual and physical lives of the least of the least?



Global Missions Offering support needed

to continue ministry

CBF helps provide the education for this young Chinese girl and others like her who suffer cerebral palsy. It is only through your continued support of the CBF Global Missions Offering that work like this can continue, in China and among the least of these all over the world.

Churches in transition: Several senior pastors announce moves

Terry Brooks has never seen so many SC/CBF churches in transition between pastors. "We usually have four or five vacant pulpits in an entire year," he said. "Now, we're about to have twice as many as that all at once."

Several pastors have announced either retirements or impending moves to other churches, causing the unusual number of vacancies.

For Terry, the Reference and Referral Associate for SC/CBF, it means trying to connect churches in need with appropriate candidates. "I have more than 150 resumes of people interested in serving CBF churches, and usually I have only a few spots to fill."

Terry also has suggestions for churches facing a transition. One option is for a church to take advantage of a program called "bridge to an interim," where a trained person comes in for a four-week period early in the interim to

help the church sort through where it is, who it is and what it wants to be. From there a church may decide to do a longer intentional interim or move directly into a search for a new full-time senior minister.

"If a church has a clear idea of who it is and no underlying issues, it can move forward immediately," Terry said. "But if a church has grown, lost its identity, or has an obvious conflict, it is better to deal with it in the interim before a new pastor is called."

Terry is available to provide resources, training, and candidates' names to churches in need not only of a senior pastor but any ministerial staff position.

Recent pastoral announcements

Todd Wilson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Clemson for the past eight years, announced his retirement effective at the end of the year. "The timing is good for the church in that we have completed our new building, begun a visioning process for our future and will enter

our second century of ministry this next year," he said. Todd said he and his wife Frances will continue to live in Seneca.

Terry Peele, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orangeburg, has announced his resignation effective Nov. 30. He has accepted a call to First Baptist Church in Burlington, NC. Terry has served in Orangeburg almost eight years. He is a native of Laurinburg, NC.

Howard Wimmer, pastor at Augusta Heights Baptist Church in Greenville, announced his retirement.

Randy Wright, pastor of Fernwood Baptist Church in Spartanburg, announced his retirement effective at the end of the year. Randy will be executive director of Snail's Pace, a retreat center in Saluda, NC.

Other churches, such as First Baptist Church in Inman, have been without a pastor for quite a while, and continue their search.

QUICK PEEK

2007 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

When: April 27-28

Where: First Baptist Church, Clemson

Theme: Building Relationships Around the Table

Speakers: Friday Lunch: History of FBC's ministry to students at Clemson. Friday Missions Banquet: CBF Global Missions Coordinator Rob Nash. General Assembly Keynote Speaker: CBF moderator Joy Yee.

Hotel information

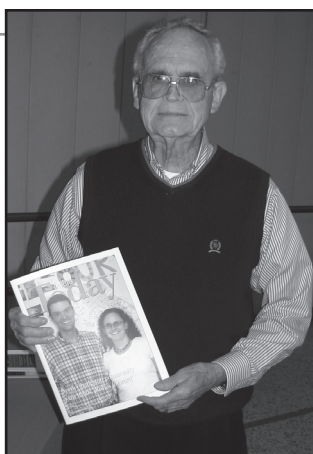
Host Hotel: Ramada Inn and Conference Center, U.S. Highway 123 & 76. 864-654-7501. \$68 single or double occupancy (plus tax). Rate includes full breakfast. Deadline for reservations is April 13, 2007.

Alternate hotel: Comfort Inn Clemson, 1305 Tiger Blvd. U.S. Highway 123. 864-653-3600. \$65 single or double occupancy (plus tax). Rate includes full breakfast. Deadline for reservations: April 13, 2007.

Also upcoming:

Women of the Church Conference: March 1-4 at Hilton Myrtle Beach at Kingston Plantation. Speaker: Colleen Burroughs. Sponsored by CBF, CBF of South Carolina and CBF of North Carolina. A brochure with more information is posted at www.cbfofsc.org. Or call Christy McMillin-Goodwin, 803.328.3864.

Alex Hash of FBC Clemson holds up a copy of *Baptists Today* that features Evelyn and Bill and the work of Metanoia.



In case you missed it

Metanoia, the SC/CBF sponsored ministry in North Charleston, was the featured article in the November issue of *Baptists Today*. SC/CBF urban ministers Evelyn Oliveira and Bill Stanfield were on the cover.

Baptists are an opinionated crowd. We were taught to be that way. Preachers invest a lot of time and energy saying we ought to do this and that we should not or must not do that. If you grew up when I did, we were given instructions three times each week—Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday night—on how to behave in every conceivable circumstance. And, as if that weren't enough, we were "trained" in Training Union and warned in Sunday School about a thousand temptations that never made their way into sermons. We were taught to care mightily about everything from dancing to drinking.

Actually, we didn't even know these were opinions. Our parents, our pastors and our Sunday School teachers established our religious DNA earlier than most of us remember. We just accepted certain things as right and wrong. Taking a soft drink into the sanctuary was akin to desecrating the Temple. Some things just weren't done!

I graduated from high school in 1965 and lived on the cusp of the Hippie Revolution. The full blown "Don't trust anybody over 30" anti-war flower-power thing never made it to North Augusta in full force, but like everybody in America, I was affected. Once the door was open to questioning "just because I said so" authority, once Rosa Parks sat down on that bus in Montgomery and refused to get up, the world changed for all of us, whether we knew it or not.

Once I learned that the Bible doesn't say anything about a lot of things that were a part of our tradition, from what we wear to church, to whom we let come to church, I have been in the process of discovering what the Bible actually does say. *The Bible, it turns out, says we need to hold onto most of our highly valued opinions lightly—"Love doesn't insist on its own way."*

- Quit judging.



By Marion Aldridge
Coordinator

Coordinator's Column: Too many opinions

- Don't be so anxious.
- Treat others as you want to be treated.

- Quit being so easily offended.
- Love one another.
- Be patient.

Why are some church people so critical? So angry? So indignant? So easily offended? So afraid? Why do some people demonize what they do not agree with? Does it have some-

thing to do with being an Alpha Male Bully or a Fearful Female, or vice versa? Doesn't each of us have enough sin in our own life to keep us busy?

I've begun to notice how much in the Bible is actually an effort by the people of God to work out what is right and what is wrong. Paul says, more often than people who don't read the Bible would believe, "This is not an explicit command from God, but it is my best wisdom." That is true of much of our Holy Scripture. The book of Acts is the story of the church trying to learn how to be the church. The Christian life was and is a process of trial and error, of give and take, and much that was attempted did not turn out well—from the early experiment in communism (Acts 2) to the attempt to make Jews out of Gentiles (Acts 15). Just because a preacher, or a parent, or a beloved Sunday School teacher, or a friend at church has an opinion does not make that judgment true. We need to distinguish between Universal, Eternal Truth and human opinions.

If anybody ever fought religious traditions and customs, it was Jesus. Instead, he taught Grace, Liberty, Openness to the Holy Spirit, Compassion. Read the Bible. Jesus tells us to listen more than he tells us to talk, to forgive more than to judge, to be grateful more than to be critical, to be understanding rather than to be arrogant.

What a wonderful church that would be!

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of South Carolina**

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Merry Christmas!



2006 Fall Convocation

- 1** Evelyn Oliveira from Metanoia preached in the afternoon session.
- 2** Participants line up to speak to CBF moderator Emmanuel McCall who preached in the evening session.
- 3** SC/CBF disaster response coordinator Marion Black of Orangeburg led a breakout on disaster response.
- 4** Jeff Hayes, pastor of First Baptist Church in Blackville, was one of several leaders in a session on being the missional church.
- 5** Betty and Lewis Walker, right, are relatively new members of First Baptist Church in Greenwood. They were attending the meeting with Charles Murphy, left, and his wife Nancy, and others from the church. The Walkers had been involved with CBF in Rome, GA.
- 6** Carol Hopkins, also from FBC Greenwood, sang in the afternoon session.



**The Fall Convocation was held Nov. 13
at First Baptist Church in Clinton.**