

What we do matters to God and to the church

by Tony Vincent

As I explored my call to ministry during my seminary days, I experienced a clear and powerful connection with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship through my Baptist heritage, my forming theology, and the relationships with family and peers interconnected with CBF.

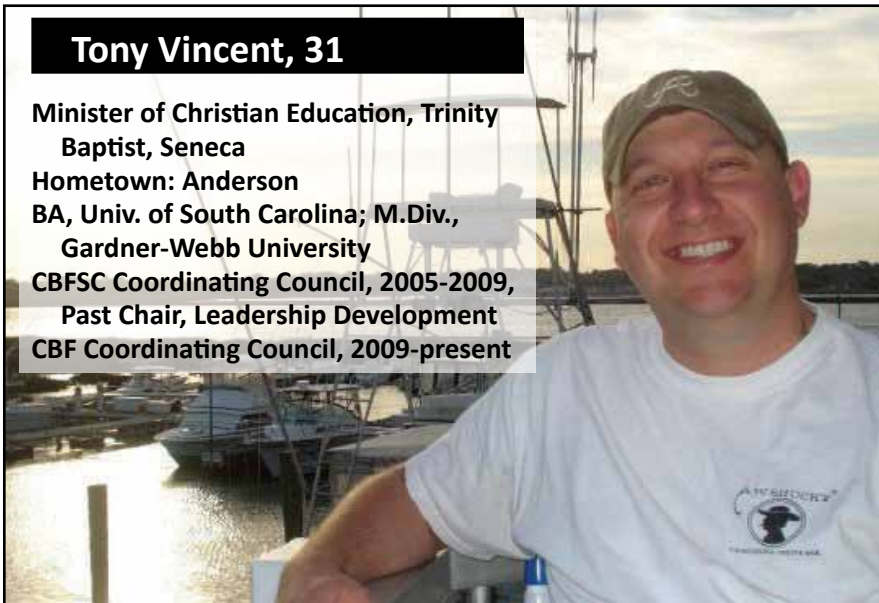
When I returned to my home state nearly six years ago, I was welcomed into the CBFSC family immediately and was given a seat at the table, an invitation to lead, and the great gift of being heard.

CBFSC has been following this model for years. Today as you look around our state organization, you see young leaders, women and men, from Anderson to Aiken, Charleston to Clemson, all over our state, who are passionate about CBF. They know that their voice, their vision, and their passion matter!

When I moved to Oconee County in 2004, I realized that I was serving in the only CBF-supporting church in the county. I felt isolated and alone. However, the relationships that have formed with friends, fellow ministers, and laity across our state have given me a great sense of belonging and connection that would otherwise be missing from my life.

Chances are that you will see me at a CBF gathering laughing and reconnecting with other folks from South Carolina. I believe that I am a better minister to my church through the interactions I have with other Fellowship Baptists in South Carolina. As we continue to learn with and from each other, we are joining in the movement of God in our state.

At the General Assembly in Charlotte, held at the end of June, I saw how God is at work despite many obstacles and questions. God is still calling people, and we are still responding and moving forward in a great way. I am thankful for my place within this fellowship. I am passionate about CBF because what we do matters to God and to the church. I am excited about our future. I see how God is moving right here amongst us and through us today in South Carolina!



Tony Vincent, 31

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CBF Coordinating Council, 2009-present

Tony and Kristen Vincent, who met through CBF connections, recently began supporting CBF and CBFSC directly, in addition to their regular church giving. "We felt it was important enough during these difficult financial times to strengthen our support directly with CBF and CBFSC," Tony said. "We are thankful for the work of CBF, and we want to be a more active participant in that work. We want to challenge everyone who is passionate about CBF, particularly young leaders involved in the movement, to consider joining us with regular, consistent giving to support CBF and CBFSC."



LEADERSHIP SCHOLARS

"My scholarship from CBF of South Carolina helped me pay for class and health fees at Candler School of Theology. Thank you for your continued support and prayers along my vocational journey." — Sarah Sheehan Reddish (first year student)

Each semester CBFSC helps students attend seminaries through the Leadership Scholar program. Sarah Sheehan Reddish is one of them. Look inside for more about/from our most recent scholars.



Living out our calling and participating in God’s story — together

by Anne England

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is important to me because it has become my larger Baptist family. I have had the privilege to serve on the Personnel Committee of South Carolina CBF and now I am on the Leadership Development Committee.

As a 31 year-old ordained woman, I know the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will support me as I live out my vocational call. CBF is made up of people whom I respect and people who encourage me. While these reasons are important, it’s not all about me!

I am involved with the Fellowship because I believe in working together with other Christians who are serving God and equipping the saints.

I attended the General Assembly in Charlotte and was impacted by Bill Leonard when he reminded us to reclaim our ‘audacious identity.’ As a young leader in the 21st century, it would be easy for me to abandon my Baptist heritage. I was challenged to embrace my identity and hold fast to the Baptist principles that, as Leonard said, “help center me in the world.”

During my time in Charlotte I was also able to connect with other young leaders from across the country...women and men who are serving God and the local church. Being active in the Fellowship community and having these encounters with other leaders reminded me that we are all striving to live out our calling and participate in God’s story.

I will continue to listen to God’s voice as I discern my calling as a minister. I know that my friends at CBF will walk along side me on this journey and for that I am grateful.

I grew up in Texas where I earned my undergraduate degree from Baylor University. I moved east of the Mississippi to attend Candler School of Theology at Emory University. My husband Jordan and I now call Beaufort home. We have lived in the Lowcountry for three years, so the salt air and marshes of the Carolina coast have become a part of my story. I am currently serving as the minister to children at The Baptist Church of Beaufort.

CBFSC’s scholarship has allowed me to purchase all of the books required for each semester. That is a very big help to me and my family’s budget. As a full time seminarian and someone who is employed full time, the CBF support has been very valuable. The state office also helped me learn about ministry positions in churches near my home. Because of this, I am now serving as the interim minister of children and families at First Baptist Church of Orangeburg.



— Joel Campbell, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary student

It is an honor to be a representative of CBFSC while I am attending seminary at the McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta. As a Leadership Scholar, I am recognized for my academic achievements and potential for Christian ministry. The scholarship you provide me helps me pay for various expenses associated with attending seminary."

— Jason Ranke, first year-student



SCHOLARSHIPS RECIPIENTS

- John Callaway (Wake Forest)
- Joel Campbell (LTSS)
- Tiffany Gibson Cox (McAfee)
- Clary Gardner (McAfee)
- Crystal Ham (McAfee)
- Jerry Benjamin Lucas (LTSS)

- Angel Ann-Marie Onley (LTSS)
- Jason Ranke (McAfee)
- Sarah Sheehan Reddish (Candler)
- Brittany Riddle (BTSR)
- Lori Strickland (BTSR)
- Robert Franklin Sullivan (McAfee)

On Thursday, June 17, 2010, I was in a bad wreck. The people at the scene of the accident could not believe that I survived my car taking a direct hit from a logging truck. But, thankfully, I did. A week after the wreck, I have only one small scratch remaining. People told me how “lucky” I was. They mentioned that I had been protected by my guardian angel. “God is not finished with you yet,” was a frequent phrase. I don’t intend to argue with any of those sentiments.

My primary thought and emotion has been one of gratitude. As a pastor, I know how many dumb things people say after a tragedy. They may be well-meaning, but there is a lot of bad theology that surrounds heartbreaking disasters. Be careful with your words in times of crisis.

The two sentences that made the most sense to me are these:

I say my Alleluias softly, and God is present.

I am happy to be alive. I am grateful that on July 3, 2010, I was able to walk my baby girl down the aisle and present her to the man who is now her husband and my son-in-law. All four of Julie’s grandparents are dead and my best friend, her second dad, passed away this past year. I am grateful that I was there for Julie and Tom, and

not in a hospital room or in a grave! I am glad that I am still here to cuddle with Sally at night. I am thankful I can still take my other daughter and her husband and my grandson to a baseball game. More than ever, I appreciate peach cobbles, roses, jazz, waterfalls, and good books. I love my friends. I am grateful to be alive.

But I do say my Alleluias softly, because everyone who has been in a wreck did not survive and/or thrive. Many sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, mothers, dads and best friends have been seriously injured or even died in tragic accidents. I don’t think



COORDINATOR’S COLUMN

By Marion Aldridge



God loves me more or that my prayer life is better. Anything that credits my survival to my good works is probably bad theology.

As I was sharing this perspective with two friends at our recent Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly, I discovered that one of them, my seminary buddy Don Garner, had indeed lost a son in a car wreck about a decade ago. God loves and loved Don and his wife and their son as much as God loves me. Don told me that their “lesson” during their awful grief is that God is always present. God is present when I survive my wreck, and God is there when Don’s son did not survive his wreck. God is present.

Those are lessons enough for me.

2004 General Assembly brought Darcie Smith to place she felt “at home”

by Darcie Smith

Ministry was never the intended plan, even though I had been doing it almost all of my life. I wanted to carve my own path in life, and, as a CBF minister’s daughter, that meant doing something, anything else.

Growing up in Fayetteville, Ark., and later Hickory, NC, I was taught that I could do anything God called me to do (even be a minister). I have always felt “at home” in church since several of my church families helped raise, encourage and nurture me into the person I am today.

Even though I felt a calling toward seminary in those scary what-am-I-going-to-make-of-myself last semesters in college, I hesitated because church ministry was just not right for me. However, during one of the worship services at the 2004 CBF national

General Assembly, I could not deny that where I felt most “at home” might be where God most needed me.

I chose to attend Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond because I felt that they were going to be a community that would challenge me and provide me with a safe space to question my faith and truly make it my own. While at BTSR, I enrolled in the dual degree program with Virginia Commonwealth University.

Over the three years, I earned my Master of Divinity and Master of Science in Patient Counseling. I also developed a love for chaplaincy and ministering to people who may never enter a church. I now serve as a part-time chaplain at Abbey Road Hospice in Columbia and am on the coordinating council for CBFSC. CBF provides me with a family of believers who help me be the presence of Christ to many who are in a sacred and usually difficult part of their lives.





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Greenwood youth get a one-night glimpse of global poverty

Fourteen youth and four adult chaperones from First Baptist Church in Greenwood drove to Maryland in June to spend the night in another person's shoes. They participated in Heifer International's Global Village education program known as The Global Gateway at Shepherd Springs, Md.

This overnight experiential education program is designed to invite youth and adults to spend one night in the shoes of some of the world's poorest inhabitants. The Global Village is a collection of small, culturally-accurate constructed dwellings in the middle of the woods. There is no electricity or running water; cell phones and iPods must stay packed in luggage at the retreat center. Youth were permitted to bring bug spray, a pillow, a change of clothes, a flashlight, and a sleeping bag.

"We learned about global poverty and the percentage of a country's private consumption versus that country's percentage of the world's population," said Blake Kendrick, Associate Pastor for Students and Spiritual Formation. "Our youth were floored to learn that North America makes up only 5 percent of the world's population but consumes 38 percent of the world's private commodities."

The youth were randomly assigned to one of three "Global Village" dwellings: 1) a refugee camp in Chad, Africa, for refugees from West Darfur, Sudan, 2) an upper middle-class dwelling from Kenya, and 3) a dwelling from Guatemala.

Further, one youth from each group was randomly selected to be "pregnant" and one was selected to have a physical disability and that person immediately loss the use of one arm due to limited access to healthcare.

The Guatemalans received some masa flour, eggs, cooking oil, and ample drinking water. The Kenyans received carrots, potatoes, onions, and modest drinking water. The refugees received NOTHING! "We were told to trade and barter for our evening meal," Blake said.

"It was an eventful night but after it was over, all of us had a new perspective on global poverty and resource management," Blake said



For more information about this program, go to www.shepherdsspring.org