

FELLOWSHIP



APRIL 2008



Samantha Holladay picks up a children's book outside of Jennie Wilson's home. Both Samantha and Jennie are members of First Baptist Church in Allendale.

TORNADO IN ALLENDALE **SC/CBF finds ways to be** **the presence of Christ**

A tornado hit Allendale County March 15, bringing even more distress to South Carolina's poorest county.

SC/CBF missions coordinator Beverly Greer spent much of the following week there working with Chip Reeves and Carol Holladay from First Baptist Church, Allendale to evaluate how we can help, and more importantly, being the presence of Christ on our behalf.

"In spite of the devastation, inconvenience and frustrations, without exception those we talked with expressed gratitude for life and safety," Beverly said.

Multiple tornados bounced around indiscriminately striking whatever was in their paths — pecan orchards, houses, cell phone towers, cars, tractors, tool sheds and chain link fences. "One of the most important things we did was listen as people told their

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The 2008 Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching **For many SC/CBF women, preaching is not unusual**

Seven South Carolina Fellowship churches were among 70 nationwide who observed the second annual Martha Stearns Marshall (MSM) Day of Preaching, a specific day where women are invited to preach.

For those in South Carolina who participated, it was nothing out of the ordinary. "Having women in our pulpit is a part of our/my commitment to demonstrate the calling and giftedness of all people—male and female," said Johnny McKinney, pastor of Boulevard Baptist Church in Anderson, where minister of education/administration Marcy Mynatt preached.

"Women proclaimers are always well received in our church," Johnny said. "As a matter of fact, most in our congregation would prefer for Marcy to preach in my absence.

It is a testimony to her giftedness, to the ministerial role that she plays within the life of our family of faith and to our congregation's commitment to women in ministry."

Christina Whitehouse-Suggs, SC/CBF's Associate Coordinator, was invited to preach at Lakeview Baptist Church in Camden. "It was a very affirming experience," she said. "As a young minister, to be afforded the opportunity to preach is a gift, and Martha Stearns Marshall Day makes it possible for women to do so."

"Additionally, it provides individual churches with the name and history of a woman in Baptist life who made significant contributions to the growth of Baptists in the

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Because I preach regularly at Boulevard, having a woman preach here is not a big deal, making an MSM Day in our setting in many ways unnecessary. I recognize that we are a unique congregation, and I do affirm the MSM Day as it encourages churches to hear the word of God from a female perspective or even a different voice. If indeed we are all one in Christ Jesus, then we must affirm the value that each person brings, whether male or female, to the body of Christ. It is in the hearing of each other's perspectives and insights that we gain a broader perspective of who God is and who we are in the light of God's grace.

— Marcy Mynatt, Boulevard Baptist Church, Anderson





Teenager takes the pulpit at New Hope

At New Hope Baptist Church in Columbia, MSM Day happened to coincide with Youth Sunday. Michelle Stokes, a teenager, was selected to preach. "At New Hope, with an all woman staff (custodian, youth/children ministries, music ministries, and pastoral ministries) I am not inclined to make a big deal about MSM— which if I did would surely be preaching to the choir," said pastor Brenda Kneece. "Congregations asking a woman to preach one out of 52 Sundays a year on a special day probably makes less of an impact on our stubborn Baptist family than does the reality that Methodist, Lutheran, AME, Presbyterian, Christian (Disciples), and Episcopal congregations in their communities are calling women to pastor 365 days a year."

← Michelle Stokes

MSM Day of Preaching —

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South," she said. "I think another important thing to note is that it allows young girls and teenagers in the congregations to see a woman in the pulpit and realize they could be called to do the same thing."

At Augusta Road Baptist Church in Greenville, associate pastor Toni Pate filled the pulpit, but that is not unusual either. "Toni preaches here on a regular basis — once every month or two," said pastor Chris Cadenhead. "For ARBC having women in the pulpit is as ordinary as having female deacons — and that has been the case for a long time. Toni is a good preacher and an excellent teacher. Our congregation is enriched by the bringing of her gifts to bear on the ministry of the word at ARBC."

Carol Holladay, the minister of children and youth at First Baptist Church in Allendale, preached for that congregation on MSM Day. "It was a great day as we celebrated women of faith participating in all areas of worship," she said.

In Charleston, minister of music Deanna McBroom preached at Providence Baptist Church, which also hears regularly from women. "One of our core beliefs is that God doesn't speak with just one voice," said that church's pastor, Don Flowers. "The priesthood of believers says that each of us is/can be a priest, speaking a word for God, speaking a word from God. The Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching reminds us that oftentimes that voice is female. That is not unusual at Providence. Women have preached here often. As one member said, 'Deanna preaches every Sunday—it's just that most of the time she does it with music.'"

Baptist Women in Ministry in 2009 will again sponsor the Martha Stearns Marshall Day of Preaching the first Sunday in February.

SC churches that participated in MSM Day

- ▶ Boulevard Baptist Church, Anderson
- ▶ New Hope Christian Fellowship, Columbia
- ▶ First Baptist Church, Greenville
- ▶ Augusta Road Baptist Church, Greenville
- ▶ Providence Baptist Church, Charleston
- ▶ Lakeview Baptist Church, Camden
- ▶ First Baptist Church, Allendale

Greenville pastor goes to Texas for MSM Day



Michelle McClendon, minister of education at First Baptist Church in Greenville, had an unusual MSM Day experience.

She was asked to preach at Second Baptist Church in Lubbock, TX, where she had served on the staff nearly 20 years ago. "They made a big deal out of me preaching on that particular Sunday," she said. "But for me the experience is tinged because I had not been back to Lubbock in 18 years. So the actual experience of preaching there eclipsed the MSM thrust. I don't know if I would have been asked to preach that day, however, if it had not been MSM Day."

"I do think it is important to give women a place and time to preach and to highlight the fact that we, as moderate Baptists, celebrate and encourage women to claim and develop their gifts of proclamation. I hope that one day we can get to the place in our churches where we won't need a specific day because women are in the pulpit as often as men."

While Michelle was in Lubbock for MSM Day, singles minister Gina Brock filled the pulpit at First Baptist Church Greenville.

WHO WAS MARTHA STEARNS MARSHALL? An eighteenth-century Separate Baptist preacher. She often stood alongside her brother Shubal Stearns and spoke at Baptist meetings. She also assisted her husband Daniel Marshall in his churches and preached to his congregations. In the late 1750s, the Marshalls founded a Separate Baptist church at Abbott's Creek in North Carolina. There Martha served with her husband and "was noted for her zeal and eloquence," and her preaching "added greatly to the interest of meetings conducted by her husband." The first difficulty the new church encountered was that no minister would cooperate with Stearns in ordaining Daniel. A pastor in South Carolina refused to participate in an ordination service because Daniel and the Separate Baptists "allowed women to pray in public and illiterate men to preach, and encouraged noise and confusion in their meetings." The ordination service finally took place when Elder Ledbetter, Daniel's brother-in-law, agreed to participate in the ordination. In 1771, the Marshalls moved to Columbia County, Georgia, where they founded the first Baptist church in Georgia, located at Kiokee.

PHOTO FROM THE 2007 SC/CBF FALL WORK DAY IN ALLENDALE. →→

Mark your calendars:
Fall Work Day 2008 | Saturday, October 4



REFLECTIONS

Coordinator's
Column



By Marion Aldridge
Coordinator

... on why there seems to be so much trouble in churches

"Why does there seem to be so much trouble in churches?" That is a question I have been asked countless times as congregations suffer through a painful crisis. Here are some of my responses:

1 There is no more trouble in churches than at your local Starbucks coffee shop or Wal-Mart, and I would argue that there is less! The newspaper records at least one murder per weekend in the honky-tonks of Columbia. Otherwise, you don't know about the internal squabbles of most local merchants and businesses. But you know about the problems at your church. Furthermore....

2 You care about the troubles in your church. You have an investment there. You have given your time and money, and you have volunteered and voted. When somebody does something you find offensive at church, it matters to you. If the local Laundromat ruins one of your shirts, you can find a new laundry, but if someone in the church offends you, cleaning up that mess is much more complicated and difficult.

3 In church, we have higher expectations than we do in other areas of our lives. The church is the place where we are taught love, peace and patience. Nobody ever said the football coach was supposed to be even-handed and even-tempered. He is trying to win football games, and he is allowed a great deal of latitude in how he accomplishes that goal. Pastors and Deacons, on the other hand, are expected to be kind, generous, and full of grace. When we see their humanity and sinfulness, we are disappointed and offended. We want them to be "better than" other people. Sometimes they are, and sometimes they aren't. It hurts us more when they fail.

4 In Christian congregations, many people are in "management" who have never managed anything else in their lives. Since everybody in the church has a vote and is a shareholder, at least in congregationally governed churches, every man and woman, and even every boy and girl who has joined the church, has a right to an opinion. So people in church have opinions about things they never think about in other public places and businesses—the color of the carpet and the salary of the employees. That is a lot of responsibility for some people who have proven themselves, in other areas of their lives, clueless.

5 Christians have a long history of rooting for the underdog. We believe that God has a special place in his heart for widows and orphans, for the poor and the oppressed. Some people will take the side of the church janitor or secretary in a dispute with the pastor 100 times out of 100. They are always on the side of the person with the least power. Two people or groups with contrasting world views need a lot of love and grace to hear and understand each other.

6 Likewise, the Christian faith lifts up as true two apparently irreconcilable concepts: conservatism and liberalism. Christians are taught to conserve many of the cherished traditions of our elders. Yet Christians are also taught to leave behind the past and to embrace change. When we work out these disparities in church, we have a breeding ground for conflict.

7 Much of what we do in church is subjective, a matter of taste and opinion, not objective, a matter of science and fact. If you purchase a sofa, but a television is delivered, you can call the store from which you made the purchase, show your receipt, demonstrate that you have received the wrong merchandise, and the sofa will be delivered. But in a church, does a preacher really need to be sent back to the seminary when his or her sermons are interesting to you only two Sundays out of four? Do we switch churches when we don't like the choral anthem for three weeks in a row?

8 The most tragic, graceless, even blasphemous, aspect of controversy within a congregation occurs when a member or members begin to raise their opinions to the level of Holy Writ, when they self-righteously justify their beliefs as the only option for a godly person. They speak of the opposition as "Satanic." Whether they are Muslim terrorists or polarizing Christians, they condemn everyone with whom they disagree. The Bible and the Koran are both big enough to excuse or defend all kinds of misbehavior. That is why the Bible keeps on reminding us: "The greatest of these is love."

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina

P.O. Box 11159
Columbia, SC 29211

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April 2008

Helen Phillips **MODERATOR**
(864) 489-9673 | moderator@cbfosc.org

Marion Aldridge **COORDINATOR**
(803) 779-1888 | Fax: (803) 779-2242
marion@cbfosc.org

Christina Whitehouse-Suggs **ASSOCIATE COORDINATOR**
(803) 779-1888 | Fax: (803) 779-2242
christina@cbfosc.org

Beverly Greer **MISSIONS COORDINATOR**
(864) 338-9923 office | (864) 360-1396 cell
beverly@cbfosc.org

Sue Poss **EDITOR AND WEBMASTER**
(864) 469-0779 | editor@cbfosc.org

SC/CBF Website: www.cbfosc.org

National CBF: www.thefellowship.info • 800.352.8741

Register now for the General Assembly April 25-26 in Charleston

Allendale tornadoes —

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stories," Beverly said. "We stopped at a number of places where people were sitting or standing in the yard not knowing what to do next. Some had a stunned disbelieving look about them, like 'Did this really happen to me?'"

"They wanted to tell their stories, where they were when the tornado hit, what it sounded like, how it felt as it whirled over and through their property and what was going through their mind," Beverly said. "We listened. The experiences were as different as the people telling them."

Chip and Carol gave them a number to call at the church if they needed anything. "We saw on their faces a look that said 'somebody cares,'" Beverly said. "And we do!"

There will be recovery needs for some time. Chip, Carol and members of First Baptist Church of Allendale will lead the way for CBF of SC to assist with recovery and renewal in that community. If you would like to volunteer to help, call the SC/CBF office.



Above: Tristan and Bob Fields stand by their house which was lifted off its block foundation and moved six feet. Tristan was in the house during the tornado.



Left: Maude Douglas, a member at First Baptist Church in Allendale, talks with a Red Cross worker about the tornado damage she sustained at her home.

**Consider giving
a portion of your
government
economic stimulus
check to help
Allendale**

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina is searching for ways to have an ongoing presence in Allendale County, South Carolina's poorest, much like what we have in North Charleston. This presence can help us discover ways to stimulate change and affect systemic problems. We need to begin building a fund for this purpose. Many of us will be getting an unexpected economic stimulus check from the federal government soon. We are asking you to consider giving 50 percent, or whatever you can, to the **SECOND CHANCE OFFERING** to help stimulate change in Allendale. A pledge card is included in this newsletter for you to indicate your participation in this effort. You have been blessed. Will you bless Allendale with a gift to the Second Chance Offering?

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