

MARCH 2005

# FELLOWSHIP

COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF SOUTH CAROLINA



A team of six from Tidal Creek Fellowship in Beaufort, just one of several initial volunteer relief teams sent by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, spent 10 days at a MASH unit in Southern India helping victims of the Dec. 26 tsunami. They worked in a small fishing village just north of Sri Lanka. Team member Niña Ellison, pictured at right giving IV fluids to a small survivor, writes this first person account of the work.

## Tidal Creek team brings face of God to tsunami victims in southern India

By Niña Ellison

Early in 2004 the mission team of Tidal Creek Fellowship (TCF) began to meet in earnest to prayerfully seek the vision, mission, and goals of our young church's mission program. Our vision became to be passionate about sharing Christ through an organized, yet flexible, missions program empowered by the Holy Spirit. The second of three primary goals written was to develop a relief ministry with a global perspective.

The week after the tsunami in southern Asia, team members were returning to church after traveling to see family for the holidays. As we visited with each other, we knew that God had been preparing us for this trip for some time. Though we had not been together for several weeks, our sense of God's calling united us. David Holland, our pastor, lent the support needed to communicate our needs to our church family. Within three weeks the team had all of the funds needed for traveling and staying in India for two weeks. Expedited passports, visas, time off from work, and travel plans were orchestrated

**The Tidal Creek Team:**  
Linda Conner (team coach),  
Cherie Cahoon,  
Pam Doughty,  
Niña Ellison,  
Andy Newborn,  
and Julia Stiltner.



in a manner that let us know God was the conductor.

While in India, I was able, as a family nurse practitioner, to offer help for the physical needs of those with healthcare issues such as upper and lower respiratory infections, multiple skin lesions, worms, diabetes and hypertension — to name a few. While working, our team agreed to silently pray for each patient that we touched. Thus, even through the noise, the heat, and the busyness, there was a sense of God's Spirit pervading our experience.

One woman who had lesions on her

feet said, "You must be like a god that you are willing to touch my feet." I told her I was not a god but asked if I could speak about God. She agreed. I told her of a God who loved so much that he had come to earth and washed the feet of those who followed him. This was my God and he loved her as well.

An older woman shared how she had been placed in the pile with all the dead bodies. Then, as the bodies were being buried, she was discovered to be alive. I wrapped my arms around her and we

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**SC/CBF General Assembly • April 22-23**

**Timberlake Baptist Church  
in Myrtle Beach**

# Grace and Law



By Marion Aldridge  
Coordinator

The BIG question in Christendom in 2005 is not about the Bible or missions or any of the things we mistakenly named during the Great Convention Fight of the 1980's. The real issue then and now is (and forevermore will be): Grace.

I have been preaching a sermon around South Carolina for several years titled, "Looking for Grace in All the Wrong Places." My text is Matthew 27:1-5, and my premise is that Judas would have fared better if he had gone to Jesus to ask for forgiveness. Instead, he went to the chief priests, and they turned a deaf ear to his remorse and his attempt to make restitution. He confessed his sin, and was ignored by religious leaders with their own agenda. While the religious leaders were doing their least to redeem a fallen brother, Jesus was on the cross actually uttering the words, "Father, forgive."

Some people resist God's good news, God's message of grace, because they love their own rules, regulations and doctrines more. That was the problem Jesus had with the scribes and the Pharisees. Ultimately, for every human being — Baptist, Evangelical, Jew or Muslim — the question is, "How do law and grace fit together in your theology?"

Some Christians give lip service to God's mercy by admitting, "I know we are saved by the grace of God, but..." and then they tell you what else you need to believe or do in order to truly be counted among God's elect. What they are saying is that God's grace has a subsidiary place in their theology, but the more important issue for them is whatever comes after the "but." What comes after the "but" might be the Baptist Faith and Message of 2000 or whether or not a

person believes in evolution or some other doctrine or activity. If you fail their litmus test, they simply do not believe heaven is a possibility for you until you think or behave differently. Works and the law are the final word!

My perspective transposes grace and law, fundamentally altering the perspective of the legalist (the person for whom the law is the last word). My theology — and I think I represent many in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship — is that grace had better be the last word. If it is not, I am in trouble! So are you! So are Southern Baptists. So are Cooperative Baptists. So is everyone else.

I do believe in the law. I am a daddy. I love the law. I wanted my teenage girls, and now my grandson, to behave, to do the right thing. I am a Baptist preacher. I want all the laypeople and pastors who are out there bearing the name of Jesus to do the right thing. I love the Sermon on the Mount. I teach and preach the Ten Commandments and the two Great Commandments. I get tired of being embarrassed by Baptist misbehavior. I love the law.

But, we all fail to keep the law perfectly. I fail. My daughters and my grandson fail. The laity in our churches fail. Pastors fail. We all fail. We all need grace. We need God's grace and we need grace from one another.

God is in the grace business.

"What can wash away my sins? Nothing, BUT the blood of Jesus." That's grace.

"Just as I am, without one plea, BUT that thy blood was shed for me." The final word: Grace.



Niña Ellison, shown here checking a tsunami victim's heart, was born in Nairobi, Kenya, to missionary parents Davis and Mary Saunders. Much of her life was spent in East Africa. She and her husband Craig (now the student pastor at Tidal Creek) were missionaries in Uganda and Tanzania for 10 years. She has a doctorate in nursing and is certified as a family nurse practitioner. They live in Walterboro and have been members of Tidal creek for about a year.

## Tidal Creek

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wept together at the horror of it all.

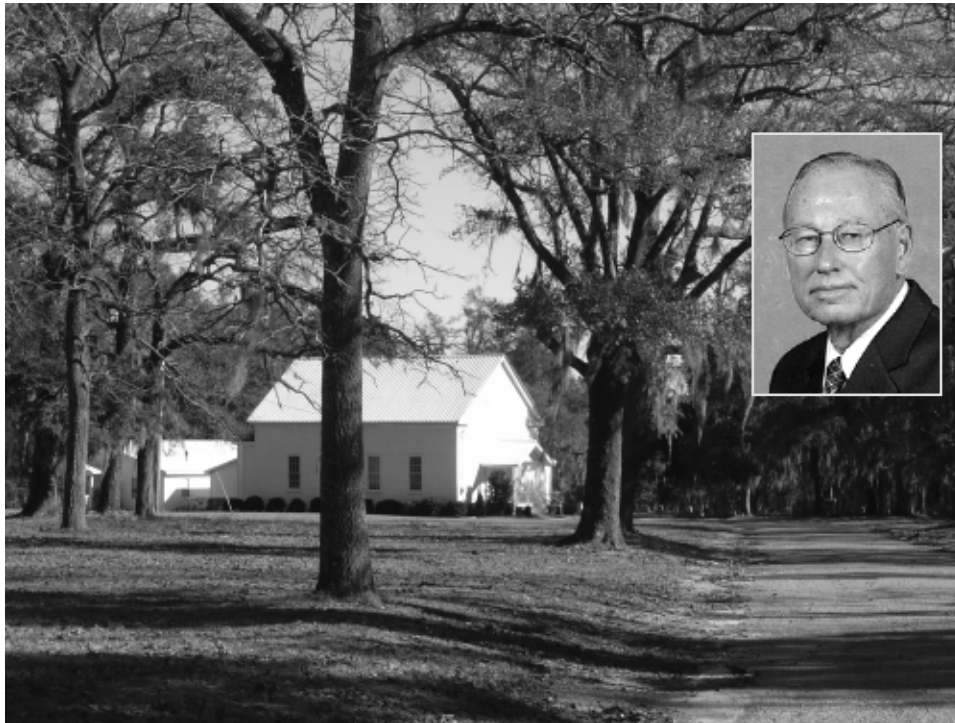
A young woman came telling that her mother and father were dead. She had lost everything and did not know why she was alive. She had acute sinusitis and

clear evidence of anemia, the inner lids of her eyes were pale and white. As she was given antibiotics and vitamins, I shared with her that we had come because we loved her. I asked if might speak of God but she said she was afraid she would lose help from the village leaders if they heard she had spoken about our God. I hugged her and told her again of my love.

One clinic was held in an abandoned house. The family had not wanted to return after the tsunami. On the last day, the Hindu man who owned the house came to meet with us. He stated that

he had lived in this village all of his life and that he had enemies there — enemies who would not enter his home. He had been watching us throughout the week and had seen many of these enemies receive medical care within the walls of his house. He thanked us for the blessings we had brought because of the unity and loving care that had been demonstrated.

The mission of our team was to plant seeds of hope and compassion through healthcare activities and God, in God's goodness, honored our work.



Dean Swamp is occupying its third building. The current one, pictured here, goes back to 1890. The original pews are still being used today (with cushions added). The church was closed for 15 years around the World War II era. Delos Miles, a former professor of evangelism at Midwestern and Southeastern seminaries, is now the church's pastor.

## Dean Swamp

### Miles ready to meet the challenges, enjoy the opportunities, of a small rural church

**D**elos Miles has made quite a change from seminary professor to pastor of a rural church with 90 members. But that's the path he's now on as he became the official pastor of Dean Swamp Baptist Church in Orangeburg County in January.

And deacon Ethel Furtick couldn't be happier. Ethel and her husband Jack have been members at Dean Swamp, established in 1803, for a dozen years. "We lost our last pastor, Dalton Ward, because of health reasons but now we have another wonderful pastor," she said. Delos has previously served the church as interim pastor.

Dean Swamp splits its general and missions gifts between CBF and Southern Baptist Convention causes, Ethel said. The church averages around 40 in attendance on Sundays.

"It's quite a change for me," said Delos, who retired from seminary teaching Jan. 1, 1996, and preached for eight years at a 150-member church in North Carolina. For the past few months, he has served as interim director of pastoral ministries for the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

"It's a great challenge to pastor a small church," he said. "When you're running 30-40 in attendance it makes a big

difference. It's hard to maintain a music program with such a small number, even though we have excellent musicians. And we need enough Sunday School teachers for every age level. Also, we're challenged to grow, to reach some new people, and since we're in a rural setting, I'm not sure how many are there in the immediate community to be reached. In today's world, though, the church field might reach for 50 miles."

Another challenge of a small church is finances, Delos said. "With such a small group of people how do you pay all the bills unless you have a strong stewardship program? Luckily people there give quite liberally," he said.

"We have a strong core of people who are always there," Delos said. "We have a covered dish family night supper every Wednesday followed by prayer meeting and programs for children."

So why accept this responsibility now? "They need me and I need a place of service," Delos said. "This is the place God has given me. I want to stay active as long as my health will permit, and I don't want a big church at this point."

Delos, 71, is a native of Florence County where he grew up in Bethel Baptist Church, which licensed and ordained him.

### Financial report: Oakland was missing

In last month's listing of churches that give to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina, an editing error caused Oakland Baptist Church in Rock Hill to be omitted from the list. Oakland is a strong SC/CBF supporter. In 2004, the church gave \$34,221.35 to SC/CBF; \$5,965.17 to state missions; \$22,814.23 to CBF; and \$6,520.11 to global missions for a total of \$69,520.86.

**2005 State Missions Offering** to support partnership efforts with the Union of Baptists in Belgium; work with internationals at various sites in South Carolina; the partnership with Christ Central Ministries among the poor in Allendale; and Metanoia, our SC/CBF urban ministry in Charleston.

Promotional materials available from the SC/CBF Resource Center.

### Church positions open

Greenlawn Baptist Church in Columbia is looking for a part time minister of education. Call the church for information, 803.776.4074

The Baptist Church of Beaufort is looking for a part-time organist/accompanist/music assistant. Call the church at 843.524.3197 for information.

More details about both of these positions are posted at [www.cbfofsc.org](http://www.cbfofsc.org).



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of South Carolina**

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## With lots of loves — and love — Jeff Hayes begins his ministry as pastor of FBC Blackville

Jeff Hayes loves golf, Furman football, and experimenting in the kitchen. He also loves the thought of delving deeper into his new ministry as pastor of First Baptist Church in Blackville where he began work Jan. 9.

"I am excited about what Blackville has to offer," he said. "The people have been extremely welcoming to me since my arrival. They are a very loving group. We have made some advances in how we conduct our worship services and the folks here are enthusiastic about our future."

"Though the majority of the congregation is older in years, we are creating a focus on our younger members and youth," he said. "Many exciting ministry opportunities have presented themselves, and I look forward to what God has in store."

Jeff grew up in Spartanburg and attended Southside Baptist Church where he was very involved with the youth program and was afforded opportunities to preach. "This established my call to ministry and specifically my call to the pastorate," he said. "My passion is preaching and worship. With the lack of theologically adept preaching that I hear through media outlets,

I take great care in providing our congregation with sound worship that engages them with God's spirit."

Jeff earned a B.A. in religion from Furman University and an M. Div. from Gardner-Webb School of Divinity with a concentration in Pastoral Care and Counseling.

He was ordained by Southside in February of 2001. Following two short stints at churches in Greenville while attending college, Jeff was for four years associate pastor at Cedar Spring Baptist Church in Spartanburg.

He said he discovered CBF between his graduation from Furman and studies at Gardner-Webb. "I found upon returning to my home church that my ministry ideas and theology were not in line with where I grew up," he said. "At the advice of some friends in the ministry I began exploring other options and found a home with CBF. I feel it is a place where I can be myself. I look forward to becoming more involved with CBF in our state."

Oh, and another of Jeff's loves is Brittany Thome of Loganville, GA. Jeff and Brittany will be married April 2.



**Jeff Hayes**



Visit the new website of SC/CBF's  
own ministry in North Charleston,  
Metanoia.

**[www.pushingforward.org](http://www.pushingforward.org)**

Metanoia is a major recipient  
of CBF state missions funds.

### Simpsonville church start

The first meeting of those interested in starting a new CBF church in the Simpsonville area of Greenville County resulted in a decision to meet regularly on Sunday nights. The meetings will be held at 6 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Express (Exit 27 off I-385) in Simpsonville. Steven Smith is heading up the effort. He may be reached at [kemperboy1@juno.com](mailto:kemperboy1@juno.com).