

# FELLOWSHIP NEWS

COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF SOUTH CAROLINA

JANUARY 2004



## Parisview sponsors Job Fair for workers displaced by fire



A fire that destroyed a neighborhood textile mill in November sparked members of Parisview Baptist Church in Greenville to quickly implement aspects of a holistic approach to missions and ministry that it had adopted in September.

"What our church wants to do in missions is minister to the whole person, whether that person is local or somewhere around the world," said Joe Farry, pastor at Parisview since July 2001. The church was already in the process of forming a local missions committee when community tragedy struck. The U. S. Finishing textile plant, located within walking distance of the church, was destroyed by fire, putting 139 people out of work.

Members at Parisview immediately set up a fund at a local bank to help the displaced workers, and lined up to provide Christmas gifts for the children of families now without jobs. But they didn't stop there.

The church on Dec. 4 hosted a Job Resource and Counseling Fair to anyone who had lost his or her job because of the fire. They brought in community representatives who could talk to them about their medical options, job prospects, getting a GED, preparing for a job interview, and about mental health.

"I think this meeting generates hope for them," said associate Parisview pastor David Brown. "They are still living in chaos right now but they are here to see that there are possibilities."

"The church is a non-threatening place for people to come for this kind of information," Brown said. "They recognize that there are people who want to help."

Fewer than a handful of displaced workers are members at Parisview, but at  
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Terry Rumler had worked at U.S. Finishing for 32 years. His church and his company were once both known by the same name, Union Bleachery.

## Rumler finds help from church members, others



Terry Rumler, 56, has a good work record. He missed very few days at his job at U. S. Finishing over the past 32 years. "Problem is," he said, "nobody can see my records because they were burned up. I'm afraid employers will look at my age since they can't look at my record. I have to work. I have children."

Rumler is a member of Parisview Baptist Church, where he has attended all of his life. His grandfather was a founder of the church. He said he has been amazed at the help he has gotten since the fire. "The church has helped me tremendously, and outside the church I've had people give me money who have never seen me before."

A single parent of a nine- and 10-year-old, Rumbler was at first concerned about Christmas. But with the help of the

church and community, Christmas turned out to be the best ever.

Rumler was at the church's Job Fair Dec. 4 to bring himself up-to-date on job skills and to hear about other opportunities. "I learned a good bit at the job fair about things I didn't know," he said, "especially how I can get medical help during this interim period."

He also learned about the various kinds of jobs that are available today and how he should prepare for an interview.

The job fair, he said, "shows that there are good people out there who are willing to help. But none of this would be possible if not for God."

*Volunteers from First Baptist Greenville helped Parisview with the Job Fair. Page 4.*

# PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE STUDY (THAT HAVE CHANGED MY LIFE)

1) Reading the Bible is better than reading *about* the Bible. If you cannot understand it, get a modern translation you can understand. Read it daily. Take it to church. "My word that goes out from my mouth shall not return to me empty." (Isaiah 55: 11)

2) The Bible is a big book! It says a lot of different things. The Bible says (in Ecclesiastes 3) there is a time for war and a time for peace, a time to keep silence and a time to speak, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time for one thing and another time for its polar opposite;

and you can probably find both in the Bible! For almost every rule, there is an exception. Pay attention to the gray areas, not just that which you believe is black and white. Nuances are important.

3) Demonstrate some humility. You are not the first person to read the Bible or to think about what it means. Consider how students of the Bible have interpreted this passage in the past. Understand that Christian people have interpreted texts in different ways. Different is not evil. Besides, they may be right!

4) People have been interpreting the Bible even when you don't realize it. The Bible does not say that Matthew 28: 19-20 is *THE* Great Commission. It is certainly *A* great commission, but so is Matthew 25: 40 ("Whatever you do for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.") If the church of Jesus Christ had called the latter passage The Great Commission and relegated Matthew 28: 19-20 to second-class status, then the recent history of Christendom would have been different. We might be less evangelical but we would be more sensitive to the disenfranchised in the world. However, both verses are God's word to God's church and both need to be obeyed. Our church culture, not the Bible, has taught us that one passage is greater than the other.

5) The Bible is a book of surprises. Just when you think you have figured it out, you will discover something you have never considered before. If you are trying to make everything the

Bible says fit into some organizational system or systematic theology, then you are imposing outside criteria on the Bible rather than letting it speak for itself. In one instance, God's judgment may appear to be the last word. In another, God's mercy is the final word.

6) The Bible is not flat. Everything the Bible says is not equal. Fundamentalists and liberals, and everyone in between, pick and choose. If this is not true, why are the so-called fundamentals more essential than other Biblical matters? "Jashobeam son of Zab-


diel was in charge of the first division in the first month; in his division were twenty-four thousand" (1 Chronicles 27: 2) is not of the same importance as John 3: 16.

7) Major on Majors. What are the underlying principles? Since the Bible is not flat, determine what the Big Stuff is. I would suggest Love and Justice, Life and Death, Jesus!

8) Much of the Bible originated as campfire and kitchen stories, oral before they were written.

Some child said, "Daddy, tell me how the world began," and Daddy told him the inspired story that had been passed on to him, what we now have recorded in Genesis. Another said, "Mommy, tell me about when Miriam helped the Pharaoh's daughter find Moses," and Mommy told her. Eventually that story found its way into print. As campfire and kitchen stories, without the competition of television and the internet, people in other eras heard great hunks of "scripture" at one sitting, rather than the snippets we are accustomed to reading or hearing.

9) Old Testament, New Testament and present day cultures are very different, and when you ignore those differences you will misunderstand the Bible. Tax collectors were more like the Mafia, not the IRS. "Kings" of Israel were probably less like Queen Elizabeth and more like Chief Sitting Bull.

10) A lot of people talk about the Bible who do not know the Bible. Barbara Brown Taylor said, "Most of my students profess to live by the Bible without having read more than 50 pages of it." Immerse yourself in the Bible. Read it. Love it. Cherish it. It is God's Word to the world, and to you. 



By Marion Aldridge  
Coordinator of SC/CBF

## Parisview

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least 50 percent of the church's retired adults once worked at the plant, Brown said. Twenty-eight people took advantage of the resource fair on a cold, rainy morning. Not all were from U.S. Finishing. A couple of people came because they saw the notice of the meeting on the sign outside the church.

The Job Fair fit right into the church's

plan to move toward more local hands-on ministry, Farry said. Other possible ministries the church might undertake include offering ESL classes, partnering with the middle school next door to offer an after-school program one day a week that would include a spiritual component, and organizing a group of volunteers to help the elderly and disabled with repair

needs around their houses.

"We don't have any idea about the funding of these projects right now," Farry said, "but some of them, like the Jobs Fair, don't require much money."

The effort to move toward more hands-on ministry is lay-led, Farry said. "The desire to do this kind of thing has to come from the laity or it won't work," he said. "I'm extremely happy to be here among this congregation right now."



# NEW RELATIONSHIPS

By Bill Stanfield, SC/CBF Urban Minister, North Charleston

Many are aware that our mission statement at Metanoia is “people pushing forward into new relationships with God and one another to create strong communities.” As we look back at 2003 and forward to 2004, it is helpful to use that mission statement as a kind of lens to evaluate our progress and to look forward to the future. Specifically, how have we seen new relationships being created through the work of Metanoia?

Metanoia helped create new relationships between all sorts of people in 2003. We held six luncheons where leaders from our community came together and many of them met for the first time.

At the beginning of 2003, Metanoia consisted of just Evelyn and me. As 2004 begins we have a full Board of Advisors with years of community experience to help us navigate our work in the neighborhood. We also have two new staff members. Shaquanna Matthews and Charmaine Townsend are fantastic additions to the Metanoia team.

Metanoia has also worked to be a bridge to create new relationships between the church where we are housed and our surrounding community. This year we co-sponsored two neighborhood block parties with St. Matthew where people could come

together and, you guessed it, build new relationships.

And then we have the real jewel of our work right now, The Young Leaders Program. YLP is creating new relationships between a whole host of folks. We have new relationships between community organizations like our local elementary school and St. Matthew Baptist Church. Every day we see friendships forming between the leaders, their families, and folks at Metanoia. Weekly mentors come from all over to build new relationships with students that promote their growth.

And what of the most important relationship — the ever-growing relationship that all of us have with God. As we look back over 2003, we see many occasions when God was active in deepening our own faith and the faith of all those somehow connected to Metanoia.

At the Young Leaders Program, the students say daily prayers in their “Imani” circle (“Imani” means faith in Swahili). One day Evelyn heard a student pray “God, I hope you are having a good day.” The freshness of that student’s relationship with God, uncorrupted by years of being told how she should pray, is a

model for the new relationship we pursue with God here at Metanoia.

In January of 2003 the mission statement was just being written, and look at all we have seen happen since then.

And while we cannot fully know how the statement will come true in 2004, we can see some possibilities. We plan to



Charmaine Townsend works with one of the students in the Young Leaders Program.

continue the Young Leaders Program and we look forward to many new relationships being formed along the way. We have begun a campaign to change the current school board plan to close our neigh-

borhood elementary school. The success of that campaign will depend on the new relationships we see develop between the school board, our community, and all of Charleston County’s voters.

Just as last year at this time we were hearing community residents say that we needed a positive program for kids in the neighborhood, now we are hearing many working families talk about the dream of home ownership. Is this a future possible project for Metanoia? If so, it will take all kinds of new relationships.

This January, when our churches are still recognizing the wonderful new relationship that God began with all humanity on Christmas morning, we can see that a Metanoia (a positive change) is well underway in North Charleston.

We look forward to seeing what new relationships will be formed in 2004 that

spread the message of our Savior and establish pockets of his Kingdom in each of our neighborhoods.



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A couple of weeks ago, I celebrated the passage from Thanksgiving to Advent with a special treat: a concert by the sanctuary choir of New Beginnings Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in West Columbia. New Beginnings, which partners with SC/CBF, is a young and growing church pastored by Alfreda Crum, and its sanctuary choir is directed by her daughter, Scheri Eichelberger.

New Beginnings is a small church, three years old, and its choir is on the youthful side, too. But that Sunday, wrapping the hall in the energy of their praise, straining to the direction of their gifted and no-nonsense leader, praising God with body and soul – it was simple, good food for the spirit. In this season of excess and materialism, in this era of the megaministry, it was refreshing to be reminded that small churches can be healthy churches, too.

**MODERATOR'S MESSAGE**  
By Laurie Berry, Columbia



C.J. Young from FBC Greenville addresses a group of 28 at Parisview Baptist Church.

## Committee from FBC Greenville helps Parisview with Job Fair

The 28 people who came to the Job Resource Fair at Parisview Baptist Church on Dec. 4 spent a good portion of their time learning from volunteers from First Baptist Church in Greenville.

Early in 2003, First Baptist organized an Employment and Vocation Support Committee to help its own members who found themselves in career transition. The committee's purpose is to offer support through career transition planning, assessing vocational interest, resume preparation, marketing oneself, interviewing skills, and counseling. The committee also asks that members who have jobs available in their workplace post them at the church for others to see.

So when Parisview needed help with its Job Fair, First Baptist had a group in place with the knowledge at hand. Several members of the FBC committee spoke to the participants at the fair about

preparing resumes, interviewing skills, dressing for interviews, handling stress, and where to look for work.

"Our vocations are very much a part of who we are, a part of being a whole person," said C. J. Young, chair of the FBC committee who spent his career working in human resources. "The people who were at the job fair are not transients, but hard-working people, and we, as the church, need to minister to all of their needs. I am quite excited about this opportunity and want us to try to find more ways to be available to the county."

"This was the first thing we had done outside our own church," said committee member Carolyn Mathis, a trained counselor. "The ones who were there are those who want help, and I think we were very well received. This initiative, I think, will cause us to rethink what our committee should do."

