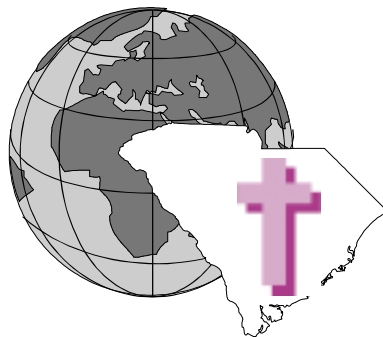


FELLOWSHIP NEWS

COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF SOUTH CAROLINA

JUNE 2002



A new SC/CBF congregation:

Baptists go to the back to worship at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Florence

By Dew James

Member, CBF Coordinating Council

FLORENCE — The parking spaces in the rear of Westminster Presbyterian Church on Second Loop Road in Florence are usually the first to fill up before the 10 a.m. Sunday School hour. This is where the Baptists park, near entrances to a red rectangular structure that is the Westminster fellowship building.

Since the first Sunday in January, this has been the meeting place of the Florence Baptist Fellowship, a fledgling congregation that recently voted to partner formally with the South Carolina Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

And, at a May 5 business meeting, the congregation voted to constitute itself as a church at a special service on June 16. The service will be at 5 p.m. in the sanctuary of Westminster Church.

Waylon Wallace, pastor of Bright Light Baptist Church in Heath Springs, will be guest minister for the service. Other invited guests include South Carolina CBF Coordinator Marion D. Aldridge and members and staffs of CBF-related churches in the Pee Dee area.

The Florence Baptist Fellowship grew out of a series of Sunday morning breakfast meetings last September at a

local restaurant. A steering committee was selected and arrangements were made to use the chapel of a local funeral home for Sunday services.

The group invited the James H. "Jim" Tate Sr. to be interim pastor. Tate, a graduate of Southeastern Seminary and a



Jim Tate, left, is pastor and Jack Ray is minister of music at Florence Baptist Fellowship.

retired pastor, was director of missions in Florence Baptist Association for 14 years, until his retirement in 1991.

Jack R. Ray, minister of music at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Florence for 14 years and now a bi-vocational rehabilitation counselor/music minister, was invited to be minister of music. Billie

Mozingo was asked to be church pianist.

The congregation voted at the May 5 business meeting to call all three as staff members.

Attendance at Sunday worship services runs from 30 to 35. Tate thinks the small congregation is on the brink of substantial growth. "We think our fellowship offers the kind of church home that many theologically moderate traditional Baptists in Florence are looking for," he said. The Florence Baptist Fellowship is the first congregation in Florence to identify itself as a CBF church.

"We have set our sights on growing a mission-minded church that embraces traditional Baptist values and freedoms for both the individual Christian and the church," Tate said.

"We intend to be a church that cherishes our Baptist heritage and history and cultivates such time-tested Baptist precepts as soul competency, the priesthood of the believer, congregational government and local church autonomy, and separation of church and state," Tate said. "I believe there is an abundance of Baptists in Florence who want to be in this kind of church, Baptists who have been disillusioned by the surge of zealous fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention leadership and in many churches."

As was envisioned from the start, the Westminster and Florence Fellowship congregations share more than facilities. During Easter week, the two congregations came together for a Maundy Thursday service conducted jointly by Tate and Westminster pastor Brenda Parker.

On Easter Sunday the two congregations joined for a sunrise service and breakfast fellowship. Westminster readily agreed to make its sanctuary available to local Baptists hosting a visit to Florence by national CBF coordinator Daniel Vestal.

At the May 5 business meeting, the
(continued on page 4)

Florence Baptist Fellowship to be constituted June 16

Inheritors Committee offering assistance for young adults to go to General Assembly

The Inheritor's Committee of SC/CBF will again offer partial scholarships to young adults who wish to attend the national CBF General Assembly in Fort Worth, TX, June 27-29. Applicants must be members of a South Carolina Baptist church and must be attending their first national general assembly. By offering this assistance, SC/CBF hopes to encourage national participation and to develop leadership among young adults.

To apply, please contact the SC/CBF office in Columbia with the following information:

I do not believe everything I was taught in Sunday School and church as a child. I had some very good teachers. But, over the course of my childhood and youth, I was exposed to some people who should never ever have been put in a position of leadership. Some stuff I just seemed to pick up by osmosis. I have heard that our real theology comes from our childhood hymns. Maybe it also comes from what we overhear, as children, in the hallways of our church.

Besides, I was a child, so I learned the Bible as if the characters were from a comic book: David and Goliath, the Lone Ranger and Tonto, Samson and Superman, Esther and Superwoman, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy and Jesus. It was all kinda blurry. What was fiction and what was reality? The Bible says it is okay to think like a child when you are a child, but when you become an adult, you should put away childish fantasies. Some people never grow up in matters of faith.

Also, the culture conspired against us. The Bible was unambiguous that we are to love our neighbor, and Jesus even went further to say we should love our enemy. In my town, we did not love our neighbors. The system of which we were a part treated half of our neighbors as second or third class citizens.

No wonder we sent so much money to missionaries far off in Africa! At some level, not too complicated to figure out, we were trying to make atonement and restitution for our sins. We were guilty! But, we never confessed that our racism was wrong. We still haven't confessed that our sexism is wrong.

Furthermore, we had a very limited world view. Many Baptists

were uneducated (and proud of it). Sunday School classes were the precursors of radio and television talk shows. Teachers or students could say any foolish thing and hardly ever be challenged. Everyone else was as ignorant about scripture as the speaker was.

So, I grew up and discovered that much of what I had been taught in church was wrong. Here are some examples:

1) Dancing is always a sin. You don't get that from the Bible, not if you read Exodus 20: 15, II Samuel 6: 14 or Matthew 11: 17.

2) Americans were good people and Russians were bad. The Bible says that all of us have sinned.

3) Catholics are going to hell. We were told that they all worshipped idols and Mary, and that they believed in salvation by works. My observation, as an adult, is that as many Baptists as Catholics believe in salvation by works! And if you count our buildings and our Bibles, we might have more idols.

4) Anger is not Christian. The Bible says "Be angry and sin not."

5) The "mark of Cain" was God's curse on black people. Fact: The mark of Cain was God's means of protecting Cain. See Genesis 4:15.

6) Everyone who bears the name of Christian is a Christian. I had to go to counseling when I became a pastor to deal with this one. I expected Deacons to act like Christians. I was not prepared for the mean-spiritedness, gossip, and other misbehaviors of people in positions of authority in the church.

7) If Jesus were alive today, we would be nicer to him, and



Coordinator's Column

By Marion Aldrige
Coordinator
of SC/CBF

SC/CBF Calendar

July 2: Region 6. Greenville-Spartanburg-Gaffney areas meet in conjunction with Furman Pastors School. Contact Vic Greene Jr., associate chaplain at Furman. 864.294.2138 or vic.greene@furman.edu.

Aug. 16-17: CBF Missions Training conference. See back page.

Aug. 17: Region 2. Providence Baptist Church in Charleston hosts the Jarvis Family Singers. Contact Boo Sheppard at 843.588.4004. Macboo45@aol.com.

Sept. 28: Region 3. Conway area. Details to come.

Nov. 11: Fall Convocation, Columbia.

Kids' Kamp coming

On Saturday, July 27, SC/CBF will once again partner with Christ Central Ministries to host a one-day Kids' Kamp at the new ministry center in Allendale. Last year's Kamp was attended by 150+ children and families, and helped kick off a Kids' Klub ministry to 30+ children every week.

This year Christ Central has asked SC/CBF to fill several important roles during the Kamp. Individuals and/or groups are needed to help provide a puppet show, crafts, and Bible teaching. Huddle group leaders, who help shepherd a small group of children from activity to activity, are especially needed. If you or your church can help, please contact Deborah Bodamer at 803.333.0037, or the SC/CBF offices at 803.779.1888.

COORDINATING COUNCIL RETREAT

name, address, email, phone, and current church membership. Deadline for application is June 15. Applicants are strongly advised to register online with CBF (www.cbfonline.org) to attend, and to make hotel and travel reservations immediately. For more information, contact Kelly Belcher at kibel@bellsouth.net.

we would not find his message offensive. Ha! Jesus was not and will never be innocuous and inoffensive. Jesus would not last ten weeks as your pastor.

8) Sara, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah were not as important as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Take those four women out of Genesis and see what kind of story you have left.

9) I could be perfectly righteous by the age of 12. Attending church, obeying the Ten Commandments (as I understood them), tithing, having family devotions and making 100% on the 6-point record system was the peak of spiritual success. I couldn't get any better than that. Well, actually, yes, I could.

10) The Great Commission is more important than the Great Commandments. You tell me: What did Jesus say were the most important commandments? Yet, 52 Sunday morning sermons every year were evangelistic (the Great Commission) and almost none dealt with practical ways of loving our God or our neighbors.

Much of what I was taught as a child in church was just plain wrong. I could write another list of a dozen (or maybe a hundred) things I was taught that I am no longer so sure about. But because the teacher had to fill the hour, and the preacher had to preach three sermons a week, there was an excess of words in our Baptist churches. Those words were often spoken with authority, whether or not they were accurate! The less certain a preacher or teacher might be about a point, the more forcefully they might emphasize it.

I am glad I grew up. I am glad I read the Bible for myself now. I pray that more Baptists would grow up and read scripture and move past what they were taught it says. I want you to see for yourself what God really said. It will probably change your life.



The SC/CBF Coordinating Council held a retreat May 10-11 to plan its course of work for the year. New members participated in an orientation session with Coordinator Marion Aldridge. On the left side of the table are Gene Smith of Sumter, Gina Brock of Greenville, John Walker of Anderson, and Marty Canaday of Rock Hill. On the right are Wayne Patterson of Pendleton, Gena Rabon of Camden (not visible), Bob Taylor of Surfside Beach, and David Deming of Brunson.



Tom Guerry, a professor at Charleston Southern University, led the Bible study at the retreat.

Gene Sparks of Conway will head a new SC/CBF committee this year called Baptist Principles. The committee was organized as a result of the Strategic Plan adopted last year by the Coordinating Council.



SC/CBF history published

Subscriptions to Baptists Today available

- E.C. Watson has compiled the history of the first 10 years of CBF of South Carolina. Copies are available from the CBF of SC Resource Center for \$10 each.
- The Membership Committee of the SC/CBF Coordinating Council has set aside \$3500 for 10 churches to be able to provide FREE subscriptions to *Baptists Today* for their church leaders for one year. Contact the CBF of SC Resource Center, 803.779.1888, or Jamie Norris, 803.625.3362, chair of the Membership Committee, to request this for your church.
- Tidal Creek Fellowship, a new church start on

Ladys Island, will have its first official service on Sept. 22. Trial services will be held on June 9 and Aug. 18. This church start is sponsored by SC/CBF and is led by David and Margie Holland.



- Retired bi-vocational pastor Junior Ponds has written an account of life, *This is my Story*. To order, call 843.538.3809.
- The next issue of SC/CBF *Fellowship News* will be a combined July-August issue, to be published in mid-July.

Years ago, as a young teacher, I recall the principal's comment to the student body after the first few days of school sounding somewhat like this: "We have gotten off to the smoothest start ever." As I recall, that comment was generally made each year following the start of a new school year.

I want to borrow that comment, and say that after the General Assembly 2002, we have gotten off to the smoothest start ever. The General Assembly is our annual kick-off for the start of a new year and I feel that we scored from the beginning.



MODERATOR'S MESSAGE
By Mack Jones
Walterboro

The General Assembly program committee is to be congratulated for an outstanding program. A special thank you to the pastor, church staff and the host of dedicated members from Oakland Baptist Church who were always around making sure that our needs were met. The worship services and break-out sessions were most inspiring. Bill Coates was at his best.

Past moderator Cathy Cole was as bright as her color red, and Marion, as always, was the glue that held things together. The music was inspiring and the fellowship reminded us just how Baptist we really are.

Perhaps the highlight of our "kick off" was the commissioning of Evelyn Oliveira and Bill Stanfield as our first full time state missionaries. This mission effort was led by our Mission's Committee and our State Coordinator. The focus of our new mission is to reach the poorest of the

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poor. This is certainly what Jesus did. The CBF of SC projects in Allendale and Charleston should only be a beginning of our mission effort.

Laurie Cox, in the charge to Bill and Evelyn, said it well when she let it be known that we were not hiring them to do our mission work. She stated, "we are to roll up our sleeves and join them."

Possibly each of the state regions might like to consider a mission project for their region. There are needs not only in our pockets of poverty, but likewise, in every region of our state.

For a number of years our state CBF has attempted to define itself. In the early years of Marion's tenure, he sought for us to get to know each other. Certainly these objectives were important and must be continued.

Let us now add another objective. Let us make the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina be identified as Missionary Baptist.

Florence

(continued from page 1)

Florence congregation also approved its constitution and by-laws and voted to earmark 12 percent of tithes and offerings for missions—10 percent to go to South Carolina CBF and 2 percent to local missions.

The group voted to send one-time gifts to South Carolina CBF and to CBF Global Missions and approved recommendations from the steering committee to move toward election of deacons and other church officers.

Members of the steering committee are: Leslie Corey, Betty Jeffords, Jack M. Odom, Zulee T. Peebles, Jerome E. Register, Charles E. Springs and Randy Tate.



Charles and Betty Jeffords have given this oak pulpit to Florence Baptist Fellowship in memory of their son Billy, who died last year. Charles built the pulpit.

LEARN TO USE CBF MISSIONS RESOURCES

Two missions training conferences are scheduled in the state on Aug. 16-17. Kathwood Baptist Church in Columbia will host the conference on Friday, Aug. 16. Pelham Road Baptist Church in Greenville will host on Saturday, Aug. 17. The conferences, led by CBF Atlanta staff, will train church leaders in how to use the CBF missions materials. Contact the SC/CBF office for details.