

**Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
of South Carolina**

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March 2004

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March 21: "Walking Away from Faith" with author Ruth Tucker. Hampton County.
Contact Jamie Norris, 803.625.2871 or David Deming, 803.632.3568.

Pastors so entralled by book, they invited the author to come to speak

Five pastors liked what they read so they invited the author to come speak to them, and to others interested in faith issues.

Ruth Tucker of Grand Rapids, MI, associate professor of missiology at Calvin Theological Seminary, accepted the invitation, and will be in Hampton County on Sunday, March 21. She will preach during morning worship at First Baptist Church, Hampton.

The main event will take place at FBC Hampton in the afternoon and evening. Tucker will give a presentation beginning at 4:00 p.m. with a question and answer time to follow. Light refreshments will be served at 5:30 p.m. A worship service that will include communion will begin at 6 p.m.

Tucker will be talking about her book *Walking Away from Faith: Unraveling the Mystery of Belief and Unbelief*.

She is coming at the invitation of a group of five ministers in Allendale and Hampton counties who meet monthly to discuss a book they have read. "Her book stirred a great deal of discussion," said David Deming, one of the pastors. "She writes about people who were professing Christians and have walked away from faith, as well as believers who are dealing with the subject of doubt."

The event is sponsored by the First churches of Allendale and Hampton, Lawtonville, Sandy Run, and Brunson. SC/CBF is also a sponsor.

"How many people do you know who have walked away from the church?" Deming asked. "How many are struggling with doubts for a variety of reasons? How can the church best reach out to those who have walked out? We hope this event will provide helpful input toward answering these and similar questions."

Tucker is the only female faculty member at Calvin, where she began teaching in 2000. Previously she taught for 17 years at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and has taught part-time at Calvin College, Fuller Theological Seminary, Moffat College of Bible in Kenya, and other schools.

She was raised in Northern Wisconsin in a Christian and Missionary Alliance Church and now holds membership in the Christian Reformed Church. Her graduate degrees from Baylor University (M.A.) and Northern Illinois University (Ph.D.) are in the field of historical studies.

She is the author of 15 books, including her Gold Medallion award-winning *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* and *Private Lives of Pastors' Wives*.



2004 State Mission Offering Goal: \$110,000 • Emphasis Sunday is May 2

FELLOWSHIP News

COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF SOUTH CAROLINA

MARCH 2004



Kelly Dickerson is just one SC Baptist who will get to study at home

Kelly Dickerson, a life-long Baptist, will be getting her seminary education in South Carolina rather than going out-of-state as she had planned, thanks to an agreement signed Feb. 12 between the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina and the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia.

The agreement launched a Baptist Studies Program at the seminary that will be directed by Ginger Barfield, an ordained Baptist pastor who holds a Ph. D. in New Testament studies from Duke University.

"I cannot quite express the deep joy I am feeling right now," Dickerson said. "I'll be able to stay in my home state and get (continued on page 2)"



A delegation of South Carolina CBF Baptists visited missions points in Paris, Romania and Belgium for 10 days in January. The children shown above are students at the Ruth School for Gypsies in Bucharest, Romania. More about the trip from Marion Aldridge in his column, inside.

CoLoRS of HIS LoVE: People in Partnership General Assembly * April 23-24

CBF Coordinator Daniel Vestal will lead worship and popular singer Sara Reese will be guest musician at the 2004 SC/CBF General Assembly April 23-24 at Boulevard Baptist Church in Anderson.

The primary item of business for the assembly will be the signing of a partnership agreement with the Union of Baptists in Belgium on Friday night.

That will be preceded by the Missions Banquet where CBF Urban Minister Ronnie Adams will speak. Adams works with Rauschenbush Ministries in the Hell's Kitchen area of New York City.

Reese will be singing several well-known songs including "Ain't Got Time

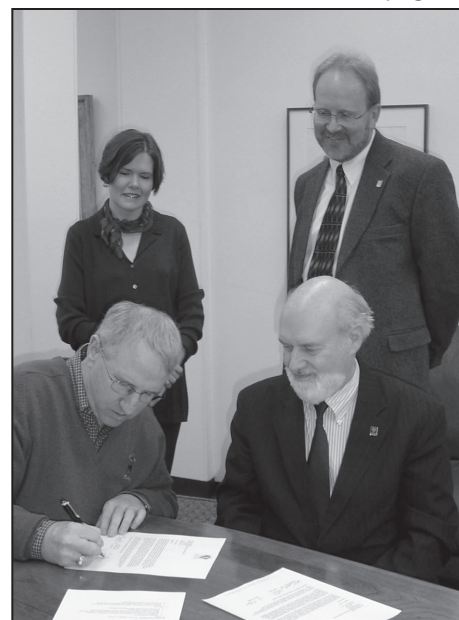
to Die" with the Mass Adult Choir, and "He's Got The Whole World in His Hands."

Other music will be presented by a combined middle school and high school choir, a brass quartet, and a handbell ensemble.

There is no charge to attend the assembly but we do ask that you register in advance. The cost of the Missions Banquet dinner is \$15 and advance reservations are required.

You may register and make dinner reservations online at www.cbfofsc.org or call 803.779.1888.

More information about the General Assembly is inside this issue.



SC/CBF Coordinator Marion Aldridge signs an agreement establishing the Baptist Studies Program at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. Seated by Aldridge is seminary president H. Frederick Reisz Jr. Behind them is Laurie Berry, coordinator of SC/CBF, and Paul Summer, a parish pastor in Daytona Beach, FL, chair of the seminary board.

Agreement with Lutheran Seminary will allow SC students to study at home

(continued from page 1)

the Baptist studies that I need."

"Baptists in South Carolina have historically valued a quality theological education," said SC/CBF Coordinator Marion Aldridge. "This partnership allows us to continue in that tradition of theological excellence."

Barfield began immediately to recruit others students to join Dickerson in the program. The first courses in Baptist history and theology will be taught beginning in the fall 2004 semester. A Baptist polity class and a Baptist worship class will also become part of the curriculum that a Baptist student would follow.

These classes will replace Lutheran-specific classes that other students take. Except for these special classes, Baptist students will follow the curriculum prescribed by the seminary.

Initially, Barfield will teach all of the Baptist classes as well as classes in New Testament and Greek for all students.

The Baptist Studies Program will also offer continuing education classes for church staff and lay leaders.

Barfield said she will begin seeking funding sources for Baptist students to defray some of their tuition costs. She will also be raising funds to pay admin-

istrative costs of the program, including her salary.

Lutheran Seminary officials are pleased with the new arrangement with CBF.

"The seminary is delighted that we can reach out ecumenically in this way to one of the most significant Christian communities in South Carolina," said Michael Root, Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs. "Each of us has things to

"Many people don't realize how important local options are for theological education. Some men and women, Anglo and African-American, need to keep their 'day jobs' while they go to school. Packing their family up and moving hours away just isn't an option."

—SC/CBF Coordinator Marion Aldridge

give and receive from the other. Lutherans and Baptists can remain Lutherans and Baptists, even while challenging each other and cooperating in mission for the good of the wider church."

Root said the mission of the Baptist Studies Program is to provide seminary level educational opportunities to Baptist students, to provide continuing education classes, seminars and retreats for Baptist clergy, and to offer non-degree course work, seminars and other educa-

tional opportunities for Baptist laity.

SC/CBF leaders also value the new relationship. "This program allows us the opportunity to keep our students at home in school in South Carolina," said Laurie Berry of Columbia, moderator of the SC/CBF.

Bryant Fersner, pastor of First Baptist Church in Kershaw, sees two primary benefits for the program. "It will provide an opportunity for those of our Baptist tradition in South Carolina to obtain theological education without leaving the state as well as providing a convenient location in the middle of our state for staff members of churches to begin or complete their theological education on a part-time basis while continuing to serve in their church-related ministry position."

"Now, Baptists in South Carolina do not have to leave the state to get a quality theological education that is sensitive to our roots," Aldridge said. "Greek is Greek, whether you are Lutheran or Baptist, but our histories are different. The Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary is giving us a huge gift by making this Baptist Studies Program an option."

A steering committee will be named to assist in the overall execution of the program.

Barfield will carry the load of the Baptist Studies Program

Ginger Barfield, director of the Baptist Studies Program at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, most recently was Associate Pastor and Minister of Education at Kathwood Baptist Church in Columbia.

Previously, she taught at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC, and at the University of North Carolina. She received a B.S. degree from Winthrop University, a Master of Divinity degree from Southeastern, and her Ph. D. from Duke University.

"For Baptist students to have the opportunity to study in an ecumenical environment will be a tremendous asset," Barfield said. "I look forward to every aspect of this job — recruiting, mentoring and teaching bright students who will contribute to the quality of the religious life of this state as future Baptists ministers."

"Having the opportunity to lead an innovative and cooperative effort of this kind is an extremely exciting venture," she said.



Contact Ginger: g_barfield@bellsouth.net
Seminary website: www.ltss.edu



Building the airplane while we're flying it

In the introduction to his book *A New Kind of Christian*, Brian McLaren draws a picture of paradigm change, the process of gradually becoming cramped within the confines of an old paradigm, then experiencing the creative exhilaration and new possibilities of a new paradigm. But then he notes that we must anticipate a time when the new, liberating paradigm itself becomes confining and old.

The joke among the SC/CBF Coordinating Council in recent years has been that we're "building this airplane while we're flying it." The excitement and energy are contagious as we build infrastructure, explore new partnerships and new ministries, and see God at work in new ways as we seek to carry out the Great Commission in South Carolina and throughout the world.

But if by God's grace this organization continues long enough, the joke may well be on us, as our children in CBF complain about the stifling and hidebound tradition we have

foisted upon them! One day we may well sit on the sidelines in bemusement as our spiritual children take what we give them, reject some of it as clearly culture-bound and unbiblical, and go about the business of recreating new ways of communicating the timeless and ageless gospel of Jesus Christ.

Marion Aldridge once shocked me (and perhaps others) during a Coordinating Council meeting by observing that even if CBF is no longer around a century from now, and even if Baptists disappear from the face of the earth, we can rest assured that the kingdom of God will still be alive and well. We who cherish our Baptist heritage may resist this kind of thinking, but it's true: the gospel of Jesus Christ is bigger than any of our human institutions, even those that have endured faithfully for generations.

And yet, isn't this the only gospel worth handing down to our children's children?

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

By Laurie Berry, Columbia



General Assembly April 23-24 in Anderson

Schedule

Friday, April 23

- 11:45 Registration/Exhibits open
- 1:15 Business Session
- 2:45 Break
- 3:00 Regional Meetings
- 3:45 Break
- 4:00 Breakouts
- 5:00 Break
- 5:30 Missions Banquet
- 7:00 Worship and Signing of Belgium Partnership
- 8:30 Fellowship Celebration

Saturday, April 24

- 8:30 Snack Breakfast
- 9:00 Breakouts
- 10:00 Break
- 10:15 Worship and Lord's Supper
- 11:30 Adjourn

Hotels

- Ramada Inn on North Main: \$49 a night. 864.226.6051
 - Holiday Inn Express, Highway 81 at I-85. \$64 a night. 864.231.0231.
 - Quality Inn on Clemson Boulevard: \$62 a night. 864.226.1000.
- The deadline to get the CBF rate at any of these three hotels is March 23.

Register online at
www.cbfofsc.org

Breakout Sessions

- Developing Conflict and Conversation Skills for Local Congregations** by Keithen Tucker.
- Restorative Justice: Juvenile Arbitration** by Kathryn Barton.
- Church Freedom** by Hardy Clemons.
- Partners on Mission: Union of Baptists in Belgium and CBF of SC** by Harry and Lana Rowland.
- Funding for Theological Education** by Kevin Spears.
- Congregational (Physical) Health: the Parish Nurse Program** by Virginia Reed.
- The Celtic Version of Evangelism** by Marc Burcham.
- Volunteerism in the SC Department of Justice** by the SC/CBF Justice Committee.
- Bible Study** with Eric Bjork.

CALENDAR of upcoming events

March 18-19: A Conference for Clergy Women in North and South Carolina. "In a Woman's Voice: Preaching and Teaching the Gospel," featuring Carolyn Gordon from Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Contact: Michelle McClendon at 864.370.2424 or Christy McMillin-Goodwain at 803.328.3864.

March 21: "Walking Away from Faith"

with author Ruth Tucker. Hampton County. Contact Jamie Norris, 803.625.2871, or David Deming, 803.632.3568.

March 26-28: Fifth Annual Festival by The Sea for Youth Choirs from any interested church.

April 23-24: SC/CBF General Assembly, Boulevard Baptist Church in Anderson.

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For seven months
ending Jan. 31

Receipts: \$187,574
Expenses: \$247,471
Deficit: (\$59,897)



When you bring greetings, you are saying, "We are partners in the gospel; we are connected in Christ." Those simple words are a huge gift. You and your church and your denomination may feel self-sufficient and adequate within yourself, but our friends across the globe desperately desire to be in relationship with you.

"Both/And." In our culture where sports are king and competitive capitalism dominates the landscape, we think mostly in terms of winning and losing. If New England wins the Super Bowl, then the Carolina Panthers must lose. If I buy a car from the Dodge dealer, then Chevy loses the sale. We think "either/or." Sometimes that is inevitable, but far from always.

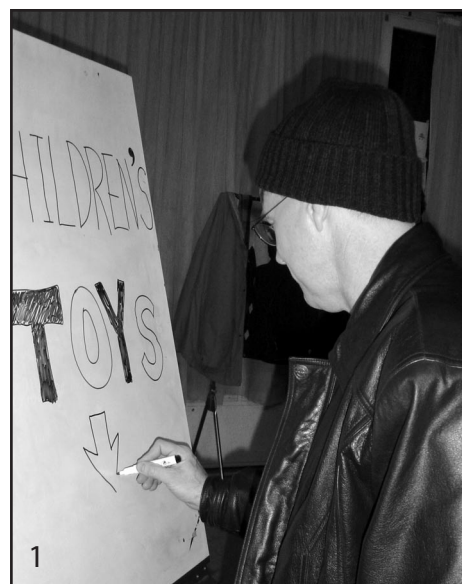
That sickness, and it is a cultural demon, also dictates how we think in church. If she gets her way, I can't get my way. Whatever happened to "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done?" Is compromise such a terrible thing? Why can't a church support both the SBC and CBF? Why can't a church member give both to the local budget and also give to special "over and above" projects, such as the Oasis Center in Brussels, where Butch and Nell Green do a wonderful work on our behalf?

That reminds me of another word we learned on this trip—"ish." We'll leave at 6-ish! Yes, we have running water—ish! But it comes out of a faucet on the street and isn't actually in our house. You have a bed to sleep in—ish! There is flexibility in much of the rest of the world that we do not understand in America. They don't have the luxury of rigid rules. With the entire culture of Western Europe utterly secular (½ of 1% is Christian), such esoteric issues as whether a woman can preach are just plain silly.

"We can't do it all." The task is overwhelming. The needs are great. Whether you are in North Charleston, South Carolina, or in a Congolese congregation in, of all places, Brussels, Belgium, you must realize that you and I have only a small role. That doesn't mean it is an unimportant role.

Tony Hopkins reminded our group that we are called to be salt and light. My older daughter, at age 9, made cookies with a cup of salt instead of a teaspoon of salt. She learned that it doesn't take much salt to make a good cookie. Same is true of light. One candle can make a huge difference.

So, go ahead. Be salt. Be light. The world needs you.



1. David Holland prepares a display for an English club in Paris. 2. Lynn Hutchinson, CBF missionary in Paris, describes some of the work she does with her husband Mike. 3. Jean David Hermann is pastor of the Baptist church in Jemeppe, Belgium. He is shown with his wife Jennifer and two-year-old daughter Marie. 4. Oti and Cami Bunaciu help our volunteers unpack medicines, clothes and toys they brought for use by Project Ruth in Romania.

The SC/CBF group with members of the Belgium Protestant Baptist Church, a congregation begun in 2002 comprised mainly of immigrants from the Belgian Congo. Gertrude and Simeon Madenta are co-pastors.



By Marion Aldridge
SC/CBF Coordinator

A group of seven Cooperative Baptists from South Carolina took a trip recently to see “up close and personal” how CBF does missions.

Here are a few observations, based on direct quotations from different people we met in the ghettos of Paris, in Bucharest, Romania, and in the churches of Belgium:

“It’s a big world we live in.” I am always startled by how huge our world is, especially in contrast to how small our limited Southern American perspective is. In spite of TV that brings the universe into our living rooms, we still don’t understand or believe how amazingly, awesomely vast are the number of ways people work out their existence.

In the ghettos of Paris (which are in the suburbs rather than the inner city!), we were shown a huge boarding house full of North and West African men, built for 400, but housing 1400, because the



1. Mike Hutchinson with a West African in Paris. They are standing across the street from a complex where 1400 mainly Mali refugees live in a building designed for 400. 2. Worship at a Gypsy church in Mizill, Romania. Tony Hopkins preached after the SC/CBF group drove through a snowstorm to get there. 3. Butch Green along with his wife Nell heads up CBF work in Brussels.

The face of missions

An up-close look in France, in Romania, in Belgium

beds are rented in eight-hour shifts, even in the halls. When your time to sleep is up, out you go. These mostly Muslim men have been sent by their families and villages to Europe so they could make money and send it home. Some, however, never land a job.

CBF field personnel Mike and Lynn Hutchinson minister in that environment. Mike “hangs out” at the coffee shop across the street, meeting these men where they live, literally. When he was introduced to one individual, it turns out that Mike’s reputation preceded him: “Oh, you’re the man who sits with ...” and the man named his mentally-ill friend.

Mike’s faithfulness in this desperately impoverished area allows him to introduce the way of Christ to men who would likely never hear the name Jesus otherwise.

That is the story of Jesus. The Word

became flesh and dwelt among us. When you think you understand how the world really is, have some humility and realize you have one very small insight into the Great Scheme of Things.

“I bring you greetings from ...” In other parts of Christendom, that phrase is not a throwaway line by the guest preacher. Baptist Christians are glad to hear that their brothers and sisters in America are aware of them and their sometimes very marginal existence.

Written over the pulpit in two churches I attended in Romania were the words, “One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism.” Our Baptist colleagues are stunned that Southern Baptists would withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance, for example, leaving them even more isolated and marginalized than they already feel in their own cultures, where they are a tiny minority of the population.

The South Carolina group included SC/CBF Coordinator Marion Aldridge, member of Kathwood in Columbia; Shelden Timmerman, minister of music at Oakland in Rock Hill; Tony Hopkins, pastor of FBC Greenwood; David Holland, pastor of Tidal Creek Fellowship near Beaufort; Shirley Luckadoo, pastor of FBC Westgate in Spartanburg; Randy Wright, pastor of Fernwood in Spartanburg; and Sue Poss, SC/CBF editor and member of FBC Greenville. Pat Anderson of the CBF missions office in Atlanta, accompanied the group.