

# FELLOWSHIP NEWS

COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF SOUTH CAROLINA



SEPTEMBER 2002

**Pelham Road Baptist Church** members were busy this summer doing missions. While one group was in New York working with Anne Hitt in a summer camp, another group was in Colorado working with Native Americans at a Pow Wow. Page 3.

Just the sight of Anne Hitt on the streets of the Crown Point neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, stirred the interest of the low-income children who live there, and made them want to hear the Bible stories she told every day.

"Having white people here has really impressed the community," said Anne, who spent five weeks coordinating a summer camp in a neighborhood of crack houses and mostly single-parent black households.

A member of Pelham Road Baptist Church in Greenville, Anne spent a week in each of the previous two summers working in the same community. She volunteered to coordinate the entire summer program this year when she learned of the need.

"I worked with the volunteers, made sure they knew where to go and what to do," she said. "Whatever needs there were, I was there to try to meet them. And I provided a steady presence for the children as the volunteer groups changed each week."

Greater Restoration Baptist Church, a storefront congregation in Crown Point, was the on-site host of the camp, held

## ON THE STREETS OF BROOKLYN

### *Anne Hitt coordinated summer camps*

in a city park a block away. CBF and Metro Baptist Church in Manhattan were the sponsors. Volunteers from five churches, including eight members of

Pelham Road, actually led the camps each week.

"We had no trouble getting groups who wanted to come," she said.



Anne Hitt says the children who came to the summer day camp were starved for love and attention. One of her goals was to make sure each child got a hug every day.

After teaching math at Greenville Technical College for 17 years, Anne went to Southern Seminary where she earned a degree in Christian Education. For three years, she was Minister of Church Ministries at Augusta Road Baptist Church in Greenville.

"Now I enjoy the freedom of not being tied down to a regular job but being able to go where there is a need as opportunities arise," she said.

She has taught courses about missions at a seminary in Romania, teaches math and women's studies part-time at Holmes Bible College in Greenville, and is the chaplain for the Greer Fire Department. She is also the secretary of the Coordinating Council for SC/CBF.

Her husband Tom, an anesthetist for the Greenville Hospital System, joins her on mission trips when he can. "And when he can't," she said, "he is very supportive of what I do."

In Brooklyn, this summer's day camps included an educational focus on helping the children learn the five senses. Bible stories and activities were selected to relate to the sense being studied each week.

**Q**uestion: "What are the differences in all these new Baptist groups?"  
Answer: In the heyday of denominationalism, 30 to 50 years ago, churches felt they could rely on "headquarters" to provide all their needs for missions, literature, programs, and theological education. For reasons having nothing to do with the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention, that began to change. Parachurch organizations were formed for specific purposes. The Gideons gave out Bibles. The Billy Graham Association promoted evangelistic crusades. Young Life evangelized high school kids and Campus Crusade for Christ evangelized college kids. All four of those ministries had an impact on my life.

(By the way, words like "denomination" and "convention" and "association" are not in the Bible.)

Christians and churches began to get help where they could, even outside traditional denominational structures. Nowadays, many organizations with the word "Baptist" in their name are merely focused ministries for a particular constituency: **Baptist Women in Ministry, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, Baptists Today** (a newspaper), **Baptist Center for Ethics, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond**, etc. Everybody can't support everything, so my recommendation is to find one or two "causes" that are close to your heart, and support them. "Independent" Christian institutions that are not supported or minimally supported by a denominational structure will be a part of the future of all churches of all persuasions.

The **Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**, as Daniel Vestal likes to say, is a denomination-like organization that delivers a lot of the services which churches need, from sending missionaries, to providing health insurance, to helping churches find pastors, interim pastors, and other church staff members, to planting churches, to offering continuing education for clergy and laity. We have a \$19 million budget and about 2000 churches that affiliate with us in one manner or another. We are supported by

churches and individuals.

The **Alliance of Baptists** is also a denomination-like organization that rejected the increasingly fundamentalist decisions of the Southern Baptist Convention. More cutting edge than CBF, the Alliance is also smaller. It has always been a possibility for a Baptist congregation to give its money to whomever it chooses, so there are churches which support the SBC, CBF and the Alliance. They may also give money to the American Bible Society and Habitat for Humanity.

There are other Baptist denominations of which you need to be aware: The **American Baptist Churches** (from which Southern Baptists split in 1845) as well as various African-American denominations, for example, **National Baptists** and **Progressive Baptists**. I confess that I am more cautious these days when I speak about *THE Baptist Faith and Message*. There are many different kinds of Baptists.

Two other organizations, **Mainstream Baptists** and **Baptists Committed**, are very different from any of the above. Their stated goal is to be politically active within the Southern Baptist Convention, in the various state Baptist Conventions, and even in Baptist churches. Politics is not a dirty word. I love the freedom I have in Christ and the freedom I have as an American. There are many people who have energy for this task within Baptist life, and I wish them well. Obviously, as a supporter and employee of CBF, I made a decision to invest my energies differently. "Getting out the vote" has little appeal for me at this stage in my life. Because we are all constituted differently, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are so varied, I have nothing negative to say about this process. I was active in Baptists Committed from 1979 until CBF was formed.

Today, however, I rejoice that God has given me the opportunity to be part of an exciting group that is both looking to the future and functioning magnificently in the present! These are good days in CBF. Thanks for your part in this journey!



Coordinator's Column

By Marion Aldrige  
Coordinator of SC/CBF



## South Carolina native is CBF's new communications director

Ben McDade, a former associate in the office of public relations for the South Carolina Baptist Convention, has been named Director of Communications for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. McDade worked previously at Mercer University and Smyth and Helwys Publishing. Since last fall, he has operated his own marketing/communications firm based in Macon, GA.

In a reconfigured role, McDade will develop a communications and marketing program, coordinate CBF media relations, serve as a spokesperson for the organization and provide public relations counsel to staff and elected leadership. A native of Columbia, McDade earned both bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of South Carolina.



### Kids Kamp in Allendale

This year's Kamp, held July 27, was another big hit with about 100 children in Allendale, who were entertained with crafts, puppets and singing. Dave Rothell, above, a member of Augusta Heights Baptist Church in Greenville, was one of the 40 volunteers who helped with the activities. Koinonia, at right, a contemporary singing group from Belgium, also performed.

## They weren't on the warpath but they were at a Pow Wow

By Suzanne Hasty, Member, Pelham Road Baptist Church

A team of 35 youth and chaperones from Pelham Road Baptist Church in Greenville helped host the first Christian Native American Pow Wow in Colorado this summer.

Three days prior to the start of the event, the ministry team gathered at The Ponderosa, a Baptist camp and conference center, for a time of prayer, orientation, and cultural training.

Native Americans are the most evangelized people group in the U.S., although they are among the least converted.

The Pow Wow was an effort to meet them in their environment while establishing a trust so that the Christian message could be heard, understood and applied.

Our work focused on sharing the fruits of the spirit. We planted a lot of seeds by displaying and sharing our love and joy; by showing peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and gentleness; by being faithful and self-controlled.

Many of the Native Americans either don't know Christ, or haven't decided to allow him to be their one true living God. They haven't completely turned loose all the other possible gods, for fear they may have chosen the wrong one.

We were serving Christ with a smile and all the confidence that he is the only true living God.

About 500 Native Americans from across the USA and Canada participated in the Pow Wow.



An important element for a Pow Wow is an authentic teepee. Some of the volunteers from Pelham Road erected this one under the leadership of one of the Native American elders. The poles were 30 feet long and heavy. They were woven together at the top with a heavy-duty rope. Then a tremendous canvas "skin" was used to wrap the structure and create the shelter.

## SC/CBF Calendar

Sept. 22: Tidal Creek Fellowship, a new church start on Ladys Island, will have its first official service. This church start is sponsored by SC/CBF and is led by David and Margie Holland.

Sept. 26: George Pickle, associate coordinator for chaplaincy at the National Resource Center, will meet with chaplains and pastoral counselors for dinner at the Hilltop Restaurant on St. Andrews Road in Columbia, from 6 -8:30 pm. Please call SC/CBF at 803.779.1888 to make reservations.

Sept. 28: Region 3. Conway area. 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. at First Baptist Church Conway. Call Gene Sparks, 843.248.5853, or Bob Taylor, 843.650-9509, for more information.

Nov. 11: Fall Convocation, Kathwood Baptist Church, Columbia. Afternoon and evening sessions.

Jan. 23-26, 2003: Diana Garland, Chair of the Baylor School of Social Work, will be in the state. Locations to be announced.

## COORDINATOR'S Calendar

**Sept. 1:** Memorial Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia, participating in the ordination of CBF missionary Tina Bailey, 11 a.m.

**Sept. 8:** Sans Souci Baptist Church, celebrating Paul Moore's 10th anniversary as pastor. 5:30 p.m.

**Sept. 15:** The Baptist Church of Beaufort, preaching, 8:30 and 11 a.m. worship.

**Sept. 22:** Tidal Creek Fellowship on Lady's Island, for its first official public worship service. 10 a.m.

**Sept. 29:** Rivertown Community Church in Conway, preaching. 11 a.m.

**Oct. 6:** Boulevard Baptist Church in Anderson, preaching, 10:30 a.m.

Call or e-mail coordinator Marion Aldridge if you would like him to attend or participate in an event at your church.

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### Baptist Principles:

## Soul Freedom

David R. Deming  
Pastor, Brunson and Hickory Grove  
Baptist Churches, Brunson, SC

CBF of South Carolina has a new committee: the Baptist Principles Committee. This group has defined its purpose as reminding free and faithful Baptists of the principles by which we have sought to live in relationship with God through faith in Christ. We desire to educate, not indoctrinate. We will be happy to assist you or your church in obtaining resources related to Baptist distinctives.

The one principle about which we agree most fervently is the priesthood of the believer. Walter B. Shurden in his book *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms*, defines *soul freedom* as "the historic Baptist affirmation of the inalienable right and responsibility of every person to deal with God without the imposition of creed, the interference of clergy, or the intervention of civil government" (p. 23). Believers have the

right to read, interpret and apply the Bible to their lives. They have the right to choose how they will be involved in serving the Lord. But they also are responsible for the choices they make as they respond to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

At the recent CBF General Assembly in Fort Worth, I had the privilege of attending a break-out session led by James M. Dunn on the topic of soul freedom. Dr. Dunn described *A Soul Freedom Religion* "as personal rather than propositional, experiential rather than academic, dynamic rather than abstract, active rather than passive, and lively rather than dead-letter." May we as free and faithful Baptist practice such a religion. May we be eager to equip the saints for the work of the ministry as a kingdom of priests who are free to relate directly to God and are personally responsible to Him.

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Evelyn Oliveira is spending a lot of time learning about the needs in Charleston. Here she is meeting with Naadia Bakhit, Director of Community Outreach at the Low Country Food Bank. Evelyn and her husband Bill Stanfield are SC/CBF's missionaries to Charleston.

## Go to the people

*Charleston Initiative gets underway*

by Evelyn Oliveira

Go to the people. Live among them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they know. Build on what they have; but of the best leaders, when their task is done, the people will remark

'We have done it ourselves.' — Chinese Poem

This anonymous Chinese poem has been used to describe a Christian paradigm for working in economically disinvested communities. It also describes how SC/CBF has set up the position where Bill and I are working in Charleston. I would like to use this poem to describe what we are doing in our first year here.

- *Go to the people.* CBF has wisely given us a year to listen to the Charleston community.

- *Live among them.* We are in the process of making North Charleston our home. We are renting for now, but hope to buy a house and invest in the area where we focus our efforts.

- *Learn from them.* We have already begun to learn from experts who live here — city council members, pastors, senior citizens, janitors and

children. It is amazing what we can learn with the time to truly listen.

- *Love them.* Real and deep love for a stranger takes time to develop. We are not seeking superficial love. We are about really loving the full person. This takes time.

- *Start with what they know.* We have learned of dynamic folks who are doing innovative things in the community already. We may never reach their level of understanding. It is humbling to keep this in mind.

- *Build on what they have.* God is and has been in North Charleston long before us. Our job is to learn of the Spirit's movement and to join in. We need this year of listening to learn of all that is already happening. We are not interested in competing with anyone or in duplicating something that is being offered to the community. We want to build on the good things or ideas present in the community.

- *But of the best leaders, when their task is done, the people will remark, "We have done it ourselves."* If we are serious about being servants, we need to be serious about giving up power. This means that in the end, those we work with should feel empowered by what Christ has done **through** them, not by what Bill and Evelyn or SC/CBF did **for** them.

As we all try to follow our Lord's example of service and empowerment, here are concrete ways in which you can help:

- First, we need prayers for discernment, that in this year of listening we will find God's particular call for us and this community; that we might discern in which community we

need to focus. We still do not know what our work here is going to be nor in what specific area.

Secondly, we also need your understanding of what we are doing. Many have already offered to come to help us. We want to get volunteers involved, but it is too early to determine when or how. The best help any of us can offer is to give someone else the tools to do for themselves. We look forward to thinking creatively with volunteers about ways in which we can serve others through empowering them.

Finally, we are looking forward to sharing more of ourselves and our sense of call with anyone who is interested. We are planning on spending just six weekends out of the next year at different churches and groups that would be interested in hearing more about us. We are still free next spring and summer. On other weekends, you will find us worshipping with and learning more about local churches here in North Charleston.

**A**s Evelyn and I send updates your way, we want to be as honest and clear as possible about the journey that we are now on. We do this because we believe that all in SC/CBF are called to be authentic ministers and that means being vulnerable enough to candidly share the joys and burdens of becoming citizens of the Kingdom of God. All this is said as preface, to let you know that at this stage of the journey, I am praying for patience.

Most of you know that SC/CBF has really done its homework in setting up our job description. SC/CBF went to people who know about starting ministries in communities where one has not had a presence before.

As a result of that good work, we have a year of listening at the outset of our ministry here. During this time, nothing particular is expected to happen programmatically, we are simply to get to know the community.

As Evelyn and I have begun work on that job description, we have decided that we will take the first few months to learn about the larger area in broad strokes.

Sometime around December or January we hope to focus on a particular community where we pray three things are true: First, we pray for a local church that is willing and able to work with us. Second, we pray for significant community members who are receptive to us. Third, we pray that we see some

# The discipline of WAITING

by Bill Stanfield

potential for work that fits our own gifts and passions. Once we focus on a community we will begin looking for a home in that community and begin more concrete discussion about how we might serve God in the years to come.

Everyone we talk to is already engaged in making their community a better place despite some difficult odds. Almost everyone has a deep faith that God is on their side in this work and that sharing the Gospel is an essential part of the work. They are inspiring and they have wonderful ideas. With each of these conversations I have new ideas that I am itching to implement tomorrow. Only, there are still more people to visit and more neighborhoods to see. My chomping on the bit looks to continue for some months to come.

If we can wait together, I am convinced that whatever God is growing beneath the surface has far greater significance for the Kingdom than anything you or I can begin tomorrow."

— Bill Stanfield



So why not just get started on one of those jobs tomorrow? I have genuinely struggled with that question and continue to struggle with it now. But in the midst of my struggles, I sense the quiet prompting of the Spirit saying "learning to wait is essential to who I am calling you to be."

If I look at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, I see waiting is important. Jesus did not join up with John the Baptist's dynamic movement the day after he was baptized in the Jordan. Instead, the Spirit drove him into the desert for 40 days – to wait. After waiting for his own ministry to be clarified – the proclamation of the Kingdom of God – Jesus often used analogies from the rural countryside around him. Faith is like a small seed growing under ground long before we ever see the product of its buried roots.

I think of that analogy often, knowing that even the best farmers do all they can to a point, but then have to simply wait for God's grace to push anything above the ground and into the light of day. I can begin my own work tomorrow with no

problem. But if I am to join a work of God that gives life, I need to learn the discipline of waiting. This is hard.

Now for the good news about our little team here in North Charleston. For Evelyn, patience in this area is a no brainer. On those days when I get anxious and want to quit waiting on God's work of creation and start something tomorrow, I go to Evelyn and she reminds me that we have a lifetime to give to ministry, that we might dive into one project too early and miss more significant opportunities. Most of all, she reminds me that waiting is NOT doing nothing. To restate it with proper grammar, waiting is not peripheral, but central to our task as believers.

One final aspect of typical missionary updates is to let you know what you can do to help us, the ministers. But wait, we are all ministers together aren't we?

So maybe the request is not to help us, but to join us. Will you . . . wait . . . with us? Will you trust that God is up to something down underneath the ground of what we can see – and that waiting is an active part of joining God's work here in the Charleston area? Will you practice the discipline of waiting in your own lives and ministries so that we can learn from one another?

If we can wait together, I am convinced that whatever God is growing beneath the surface has far greater significance for the Kingdom than anything you or I can begin tomorrow.