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Happy 30th Birthday !

In August 1990, after several decades of mounting unhappiness with events in the Southern Baptist Convention, a group of “moderate” Baptist leaders met at the Inforum in Atlanta, Georgia. This gathering took place after years of soul-searching and of exhausting and ultimately frustrated efforts to hold the Southern Baptist Convention together, with room under the so-called “big tent” for all. Previous preliminary meetings and failed efforts at compromise had set the stage for what would transpire at this meeting, as leaders wrestled with the question of “where do we go from here?” As Daniel Vestal said in his opening address to that open group of 3,000 like-minded Baptists, “We’re here to help, not hurt; to heal, not wound; to unify, not divide; to focus on the future, not the past.” The path that led to CBF’s founding was circuitous and complicated.

At that meeting in 1990, concrete ways to cooperate were established, and a 60-member interim steering committee was chosen to create a pathway forward for what was tentatively known as “The Baptist Fellowship.” A year later, in May of 1991, more than 6,000 participants gathered at the Omni Coliseum in Atlanta, the name

“The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship” was adopted, and CBF was born. CBF of Georgia would be established the following year, in 1992.

In commemoration of the 30th birthday of CBF, *Visions* will devote part of each quarterly issue to some aspect of CBF, its history, and its future. In this issue, Dr. John Finley, retired pastor of First Baptist, Savannah, and executive director of the Baptist History and Heritage Society, begins our journey. CBF’s birth came only after decades of struggle. John explores some of the salient events and broad developments that foreshadowed the necessity of what became the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, developments that “set the table,” so to speak, for what inevitably would come.

Other *Visions* issues this year will explore related topics, including the actual founding of CBF in 1991 and its early development, the role of women in CBF life and partnership with Baptist Women in Ministry, and finally, a look at the present and future challenges of CBF. We look forward to hearing from a variety of voices as the year progresses. ■

We’re here to help, not hurt; to heal, not wound; to unify, not divide;
to focus on the future, not the past. —Daniel Vestal



A New Thing

In May 1991, I was a 13-year-old seventh grader at Ballard-Hudson Middle School in Macon and had zero knowledge of or interest in Baptist denominational politics. The small, semi-rural, super-conservative Baptist church of my growing up years certainly did not talk about what had been going on in Southern Baptist life for several decades. In fact, I'm doubting that many folks there even knew something was brewing in SBC circles. Looking back, I feel certain that my obliviousness to the seismic shifts underneath the tectonic plates of the Southern Baptist Convention's identity, ministry, and direction was shared by a great number of folks in most SBC church pews.

In May of 1991, as moderate-minded Baptists from across the Southern Baptist Convention landscape gathered in Atlanta, a new entity was birthed into being. The emergence of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship did not occur instantly or haphazardly. It was the culmination of a more-than-decade long struggle against a strain of politically charged religious fundamentalism that had truly captured the hearts and soul of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Recalling the story and imagery of the exodus, the writer of Isaiah 43 declares that the Lord who was with the Israelites in Egypt is still actively working good into the world today.

*Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.*

*I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not
perceive it?*

*I will make a way in the wilderness
and rivers in the desert.*

(Isaiah 43:18-19)

In delivering the Israelites from the bondage of slavery and oppression at the hands of the Babylonians, God calls the people to remember that God can always make a way out of no way. It was that deep-seated hope that was welling up in the hearts of those present at the Omni in Atlanta in May 1991. Through conversation and prayer, the decision was made to launch a new, different way of being Baptist: one that held tight to the traditional, historic Baptist principles that Walter Shurden would later describe as the "Four Fragile Freedoms" — soul freedom, Bible freedom, church freedom, and religious freedom.

These freedoms exemplified the very best of our people, Baptists, and they still do. Baptists do not need and do not practice a hierarchical church structure. Each congregation calls its own pastors, conducts its own business, engages its own missions, and equips its own saints for ministry in the local community and beyond. Baptists voluntarily cooperate with other churches, individuals, and organizations, like the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia, for ministry and mission in their communities and beyond.

This year, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia will be celebrating and remembering that

pivotal year in the life of moderate Baptists in the (mostly) South. Each issue of *Visions* this year will feature articles written by guests and supporters of CBF/GA as well as lists of resources to help readers explore more about the foundation and beginnings of CBF. In this issue, I am grateful that the Rev. Dr. John Finley, retired pastor of CBF/GA partner congregation, First Baptist Church, Savannah and current Executive Director of the Baptist History and Heritage Society, will be detailing the underlying issues and moments in Southern Baptist life that led to the 1991 meeting that would, by its close, inaugurate the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

As CBF celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, I hope you'll find the articles and resources helpful as we remember and celebrate our beginnings. It's been a good thirty years to be Cooperative Baptists and our future is bright and filled with hope.

Speaking of future, we hope you'll enjoy these issues of *Visions* because next year, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia will celebrate its 30th anniversary as well! It's a great time to be a Cooperative Baptist, and we're glad that you are cooperating alongside us! ■



JODY LONG
Executive Coordinator
CBF/GA
jlong@cbfga.org



CBF/GA Welcomes Megan Turner Doud

CBF/GA is pleased to announce that Megan Turner Doud became the CBF/GA Coordinator of Young Baptist Ministries, effective February 1, 2021. The search committee and Coordinating Council believe that Megan's ministerial acumen, deep-rooted connectedness in CBF life, her engaging personality, and her wholehearted commitment to the Gospel will greatly benefit CBF/GA in this new position. Megan is tasked with developing and leading a CBF/GA-branded collegiate ministry as well connecting other collegiate and young adult congregational ministries with partner congregations in CBF/GA. She will coordinate, resource, and support ministries, ministers, and programming for both youth and children among our state congregational partners as well.

Megan, Brian, and their daughter Caroline will move to Macon this summer from Aiken, South Carolina, where she served as Minister for Students and Missions at First Baptist Church. She previously served as Student Ministry Resident at First Baptist Church, Huntsville, Alabama. Megan has a Master of Divinity degree from McAfee School of Theology and served as Student and Children's Ministry intern at Johns Creek Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Georgia, where she was ordained. She graduated from Carson Newman University and grew up in First Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tennessee. Megan has served on the Coordinating Council for CBF South Carolina, is past president of the CBF Youth Ministry Network, and currently serves on the CBF Ministries Council. ■

"I am so pleased to learn that Megan Doud is joining the leadership of CBF Georgia. She has offered significant leadership in CBF life, serving not only on the Ministries Council but also on the Discovery Team for Toward Bold Faithfulness. Her commitment to ministries for young Baptists is evident not only in her service in congregations but in her leadership in CBF's Youth Ministry Network. She has gifts and experiences that will enable her to serve exceptionally well as CBF Georgia's Coordinator of Young Baptist Ministries."

—Paul Baxley, Executive Coordinator, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

"I have enjoyed getting to know Megan these past few years through serving with her as a fellow officer for the CBF Youth Ministry Network. Megan is a detail-oriented, hard worker, with a vision for ministry. I am excited to think about the possibilities as she begins her role as the Coordinator of Young Baptist Ministries for CBF Georgia. Part of a strong ministry is a strong leadership team. Well done CBF Georgia, and congratulations Megan!"

—David Burroughs, President, Passport, Inc.

"Megan is one of the most gifted ministers I know and a delight to work with. She is a fierce advocate for missions, authentic minister, creative visioner, compassionate pastoral leader, rooted community member, and passionate justice-seeker. Working with Megan as a missions partner, I have had the privilege to witness her joyful leadership and loving spirit in faithfully guiding both her congregation and her students. CBF of Georgia is gaining an inspiring, faithful, talented minister in Megan—what a tremendous gift to the network!"

—Lesley-Ann Hix Tommey, CBF Field Personnel in New York City and CBF/GA Field Personnel Partner

"Megan will be a great support to Georgia CBF churches, ministries, and the work of God with CBF partners. I am particularly excited to see how she will be a lead in ministry for college ministry in central Georgia and a lead in ministry to children and youth. Megan brings a great heart and ability for ministry for these ages and needs. CBF Georgia churches will benefit from having Megan Turner Doud."

—Jamie Mackey, Minister to Students, First Baptist Church, Huntsville, AL

"Megan brings a passion for student ministry that will greatly benefit our children, youth, and college students. CBF Georgia and the collegiate ministry at Mercer are in good hands. This is an exciting new chapter for Baptists in Georgia!"

—John Callaway, Co-Pastor, First Baptist Church, Savannah, GA

"This is great news for CBF of Georgia. Megan brings a spiritual depth and theological awareness needed to reimagine ministry among young Baptists. The strength of her vocational identity as well as her passion for excellence in ministry are inspiring. This is good news for us all!"

—Shaun King, Senior Pastor, Johns Creek Baptist Church, Alpharetta, GA

GIVING REPORT

July 2019 - December 2020

Below and at right please find the CBF/GA individual and church giving reports for July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2020. We have changed from fiscal year to calendar year reporting in 2020, so this report includes givers from the July - December 2019 interim period between these two reporting systems.

These figures include gifts sent directly to CBF/GA or through CBF Global to CBF/GA. This list is NOT a CBF/GA church directory. It is a report of those who

have supported our budget or state missions offering in this time period. These lists include churches and individuals who gave to the CBF/GA budget, to the State Mission Offering, or to the Frank & Susan Broome Endowment from July 1, 2019 - December 31, 2020.

CBF/GA appreciates your missional giving and your support of the work of CBF/GA, and our goal is to provide complete and accurate accounting. If for any reason you believe the data is incorrect or incomplete, please contact us.

Individuals Giving to CBF/GA • July 2019 - December 2020

Jonathan & Amy Alderman	Mark & Cindy Green	William Rhodes
Charles Allen & Rebecca Ash	Barbara S. Haig	John W. Rigdon, Sr.
Jo & Parks Avery	Bettianne Harris	Norma Rushing
Fred Bongiovanni	John Paul & Katee Harris	Kenneth & Kathy Russell
June Branch	Joanne B. Harwell	Hugh Salter, Jr.
Dee Bratcher	Tom & Joan Hill	Katrina J. Salter-Wood
Frank & Susan Broome	Douglas W. Hopkins	Robert Sauls
Bob Brown	Mary Nell Jennings	Catherine H. Sloan
J. G. & Earlene Bryson	Weyman T. Johnson, Jr.	Mary Elizabeth Smith
Nancy & John Bryson	Tommy & Teresa Jordan	Robert E. Smith
Joanne K. Carr	Glenda & Kenneth Kessler	Ronnie Smith
Lin & Barry Carter	Barbara B. Killebrew	Gary Solomon
Jack & Gwen Colwell	Judy & Ronald King	Robert M. Stanley, Jr.
Gwendolyn H. Cottrell	Jana S. Kinnersley	Phil & Rebecca Stovall
Gregory & Jeannette Davis	Melissa & Richard Kremer	Dewey & Ramona Teal
Joe Davis	Cathy Lacy	Norma J. Thompson
Ginny Dempsey	Virginia J. Lam	Edwin & Sarah Timmerman
Leona H. DuVall	Virginia Land	Naomi King Walker
John Ellington	Ruby & William Langford	Alan Williams
Richard & Margaret Epps	Cyrell Lynch	Ashley & Stephen Williams
Evelyn Farr	Carolyn Massey	C. & Ruth Williams
Bertha B. Farrar	Katha D. Massey	C. E., Jr. & Gloria Williams
Robert & Priscilla Faulkner	Brian & Joyce McCartney	Glenda A. Willoughby
Tamlin B. Fortner	Don & Betty McGouirk	David & Ann Wilson
Patricia Ingle Gillis	Clarice Evelyn Mitchell	O. Chappell Wilson, Jr.
Mickey & Carol Goodson	Ann White Morton	Jane F. Wooten
Joseph Minor Gouge	Shirley & Thomas Noles	Esther L. Worthington
Jon & Rachel Greco	Gerald Pope	Karen Zimmerman
Barbara Anne Green	Ryan & Karen Prince	

Donors to the Frank & Susan Broome Endowment • July 2019 - December 2020

Frank and Susan Broome
 Gwendolyn H. Cottrell
 Joe Davis
 Richard A. Epps

Fellowship Baptist Church, Americus
 First Baptist Church, Carrollton GA
 First Baptist Church, Griffin GA
 Brian and Joyce McCartney

John W. Rigdon, Sr.
 Robert E. Smith

Churches Giving to CBF/GA • July 2019 - December 2020

Alpharetta Johns Creek Baptist Church	Hoschton Celebration Church
Americus Fellowship Baptist Church	Ila Ila Baptist Church
Athens First Baptist Church	Jasper First Baptist Church
Athens Milledge Avenue Baptist Church	Jefferson First Baptist Church
Atlanta Church at Ponce and Highland	Lavonia First Baptist Church
Atlanta Northeast Baptist Church	Lyons The Oaks Baptist Church
Atlanta Northside Drive Baptist Church	Macon First Baptist Church of Christ
Atlanta Peachtree Baptist Church	Macon Highland Hills Baptist Church
Atlanta Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church	Macon Mount Zion Baptist Church
Atlanta Wieuca Road Baptist Church	Macon New Heights Baptist Church
Augusta First Baptist Church	Macon Vineville Baptist Church
Cairo Christ Church	Madison Madison Baptist Church
Canton Heritage Fellowship	Manchester First Baptist Church
Carlton Carlton Baptist Church	Marietta First Baptist Church
Carrollton First Baptist Church	Marietta New Life Christian Ministries
Carrollton Tabernacle Baptist Church	Milledgeville Community Baptist Church
Cartersville Heritage Baptist Church	Milledgeville First Baptist Church
Cave Spring Rehoboth Baptist Church	Montezuma First Baptist Church
Claxton First Baptist Church	Monticello Monticello Baptist Church
Columbus First Baptist Church	Morrow First Baptist Church
Commerce First Baptist Church	Moultrie Trinity Baptist Church
Conyers Haven Fellowship Church	Mount Vernon College Hill Baptist Church
Conyers Trinity Baptist Church	Newnan Central Baptist Church
Cornelia First Baptist Church	Plains Maranatha Baptist Church
Covington First Baptist Church	Ringgold First Baptist Church
Dahlonega Dahlonega Baptist Church	Riverdale First Baptist Church
Dalton First Baptist Church	Rome First Baptist Church
Decatur First Baptist Church	Rome Garden Lakes Baptist Church
Decatur Scott Boulevard Baptist Church	Rome North Broad Baptist Church
Duluth Parkway Baptist Church	Rome Second Avenue Baptist Church
Eatonton First Baptist Church	Roswell First Baptist Church
Evans First Baptist Church	Roswell North River Baptist Church
Fitzgerald Fellowship Baptist Church	Royston Royston Baptist Church
Fitzgerald First Baptist Church	Savannah First Baptist Church
Forsyth First Baptist Church	St. Simons Island ... First Baptist Church
Forsyth Rocky Creek Baptist Church	Stone Mountain Smoke Rise Baptist Church
Fort Oglethorpe First Baptist Church	Summerville Horizon Baptist Fellowship
Gainesville First Baptist Church	Tifton First Baptist Church
Garfield Garfield Baptist Church	Tucker First Baptist Church
Grayson Cornerstone Church	Warm Springs Warm Springs First Baptist Church
Griffin First Baptist Church	Warthen Union Baptist Church
Haddock Haddock Baptist Church	West Point First Baptist Church
Harlem Harlem Baptist Church	West Point Union Baptist Church
Hawkinsville First Baptist Church	

A New Way of Being Baptist Is Born

JOHN M. FINLEY

As we approach the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, it is worth remembering some of the reasons CBF came into existence. **This brief article identifies some of the issues and events in the thirty years prior to 1990-91 which gave rise to the formation of CBF.**

Differing Views of the Bible

In 1961, Broadman Press published *The Message of Genesis* by Ralph Elliott, a professor at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Using historical-critical methods, Elliott wrote a “theological interpretation” of Genesis which suggested that the symbolic “message” of the creation stories mattered most.

When K. Owen White, pastor of First Baptist Church Houston, Texas, criticized Elliott’s views in Baptist state papers, an intense debate ensued. The “Elliott Controversy” consumed the 1962 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) meeting. The convention refused to ban Elliott’s book, but it distanced itself from his methods and conclusions. Midwestern trustees asked Elliott to promise not to republish the book, but he refused and was promptly dismissed for “insubordination.”

Similar disagreement surfaced in 1970 in response to the first volume in the new Broadman Bible Commentary series. G. Henton Davies, an English Baptist, had been chosen to write the exposition on Genesis, and his views quickly fell under criticism. Of special concern to many fundamentalists was Davies’ interpretation of Genesis 22:1-19, the story of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac.

Again, fierce debate soon followed in Baptist state newspapers. At the 1970 SBC meeting, messengers asked the Baptist Sunday School Board to withdraw the volume and rewrite it “with due consideration of the conservative viewpoint.” Clyde Francisco, professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, later wrote a revised commentary on Genesis.

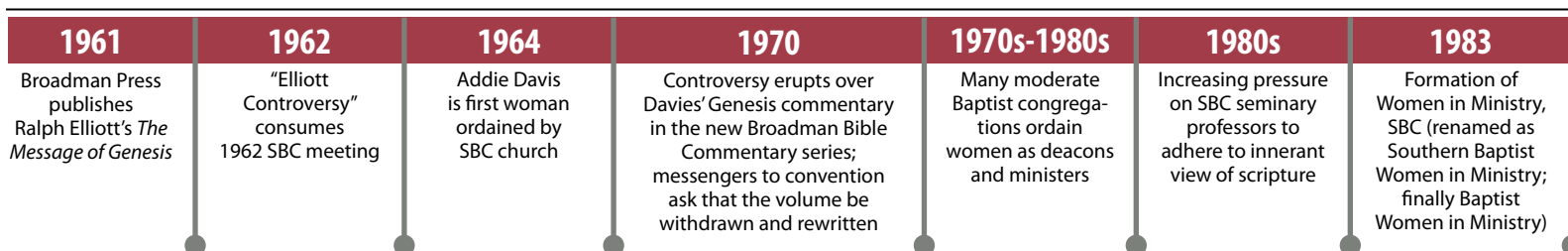
During the 1980s, SBC seminary professors often were quizzed on whether they believed in seven literal days of creation and whether Adam and Eve were real, historical persons. New fundamentalist SBC leadership insisted that professors adhere to the inerrancy of scripture, or the theory that the Bible in its original manuscripts contained no errors, including areas where it speaks of chronology, history, biology, psychology, and so on. Theological education was being redefined in stark new terms, and moderates saw the changes representing a loss of academic freedom and the priesthood of the believer, as well as a preference for the indoctrination of students rather than a free exchange of ideas.

Role of Women

Beginning with the ordination of Addie Davis at Watts Street Baptist Church, Durham, North Carolina in August 1964, Southern Baptists more actively faced the issue of whether women also could be called and ordained to serve as ministers. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, hundreds of moderate Baptist congregations began to ordain women as both deacons and pastoral ministers. They viewed the issue as a matter of individual interpretation of scripture and the autonomy of the local church allowing each congregation the freedom to decide whom to call and ordain as a minister. Fundamentalists, however, saw this development as a violation of scripture restricting these roles to men.

The SBC Resolution on Ordination and the Role of Women in Ministry, which was approved at the 1984 SBC annual meeting, drew upon the narrow argument that Eve was “first in the Edenic fall,” and that women were prevented from serving in pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination. The resolution was derided by moderates.

Moderate voices attempted to broaden the views of Southern Baptists by appealing to the New Testament and Baptist history. *Woman in the World of Jesus* (1978) by Evelyn and Frank Stagg as well as *Women in Baptist Life*



(1979) by H. Leon McBeth suggested ways in which Baptists might rethink the roles of women in Baptist life. Both were enormously popular among moderate audiences, and especially so on seminary campuses at the time.

Church and State

Baptists long have defended the separation of Church and State, believing that a free Church in a free State serves both well. The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs (BJC) incurred the wrath of fundamentalists in standing for this principle and was targeted for funding cuts in the SBC budget six times between the years 1985-90. Longtime BJC executive James Dunn once argued that thirty such conversations also took place among the various Baptist state conventions. The result was that by the 1991 SBC annual meeting, all funding for the BJC was removed.

Loss of Spiritual Democracy

As the struggle for control of the SBC continued throughout the decade of the 1980s, fundamentalist presidents of the SBC wielded their enormous appointive powers by ensuring that only likeminded trustees were named to SBC boards and agencies. Resolutions presented at the annual meeting often tended to represent a singular point of view, particularly on controversial social issues such as capital punishment. Debate on the convention floor was increasingly limited and controlled by fundamentalist SBC leaders. I vividly recall a seminary friend speaking against a proposed resolution during the 1985 SBC meeting in Dallas, when suddenly his microphone went silent, the chair effectively having cut off debate in mid-sentence.

Increasingly, moderate Southern Baptists felt as though their voices were not being heard and their representation in decision-making processes severely limited. Cecil Sherman, CBF's first executive coordinator, often described this as leaving moderate Baptists in the unenviable position of "paying for things they don't believe in" by continuing to finance the new SBC agenda through their Cooperative Program gifts. Other moderates simply likened their situation to being thrown out of the house they had helped to build or banished from the family in which they had grown up.

The defeat of a moderate Baptist candidate for President at the 1990 annual meeting in New Orleans signaled twelve

successive years of fundamentalist domination and control of the SBC. Moderates were ready to invest their time and treasure in something more positive and long-lasting as they prepared for the Consultation of Concerned Southern Baptists called by Daniel Vestal to be held at the Inforum in Atlanta, Georgia on August 23-25, 1990.

Other Factors

Other factors leading to the formation of CBF also could be mentioned, including the growing hostility toward moderate SBC foreign missionaries, the threatened defunding of the International Baptist Theological Seminary at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, the firing of certain SBC seminary professors, the fundamentalist insistence on the authoritarian role of the pastor, and the nature of the Church and the Christian mission.

Some have suggested that the new Fellowship movement was an abrupt break with the past, an innovation which diverged from our Baptist tradition. Other historians, like E. Glenn Hinson, forcefully argue that, to the contrary, moderate Baptists are in "strict continuity with that tradition." Indeed, CBF's emphasis upon the Baptist principles of soul freedom, the priesthood of the believer, the freedom to interpret the Bible under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the autonomy of the local church, and the separation of Church and State is what the CBF movement is all about. ■

John M. Finley is retired senior minister at First Baptist Church, Savannah, Ga., and now serves as the executive director of the Baptist History and Heritage Society.



RESOURCES

Baptist Battles: Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention, Nancy Tatom Ammerman, Rutgers University Press, 1990.

The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms, Walter B. Shurden, Smyth and Helwys, 1993.

The Fundamentalist Takeover in the Southern Baptist Convention: A Brief History, Rob James and Gary Leazer, with James Shoopman, Impact Media, 1999.

Going for the Jugular, A Documentary History of the SBC Holy War, Walter B. Shurden and Randy Shepley, eds., Mercer University Press, 1996.

The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC: Moderate Responses to the Fundamentalist Movement, Walter B. Shurden, ed., Mercer University Press, 1993.

A pamphlet on the *Beginnings of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship* by Pamela R. Durso is available from the Baptist History and Heritage Society for the cost of shipping.

1984

Resolution on ordination and the role of women in ministry approved at SBC annual meeting

1985-1990

Baptist Joint Committee (BJC) funding cut 6 times; funding ended by 1991 SBC meeting

1990

Defeat of moderate presidential candidate marks 12 years of fundamentalist domination of SBC
August, 1990: Consultation of Concerned Southern Baptists held at Inforum, Atlanta; precursor to CBF

Changes and Challenges for CBF/GA and Churches

RON McCLUNG, CBF/GA Moderator, ronmcclung@windstream.com

These are certainly challenging times for all our congregations. As I write this, our church has just decided to go back to virtual services only as COVID-19 cases spike in our area. Hopefully, in a few weeks we will resume in-person services. Still, we recognize it might be months before some return. In most congregations across our land, church certainly looks different these days, but despite rumors to the contrary, most church staff find themselves as engaged as ever in trying to be the presence of Christ to the community where Christ has called them to serve. The pandemic has not closed our churches, but rather it has provided us the opportunity to see how the Church ministers beyond its walls.

In this interim period, we are seeking deliberately to be engaged in ministry that will bring positive long-term consequences. For example, at Haddock Baptist Church, we are making a major investment to improve our audio-visual equipment for worship, including updating our sound system, cameras, video projectors, and computers with updated software. These steps will enhance our online presence as more and more people are connecting with our church through this format. We are also planning to redo our church website, which is long overdue. We are also considering making some significant building renovations during this time when our use of space is limited. Some of these actions may be considered by some to be insignificant, but they will certainly improve our opportunities to reach our community more effectively in the future.

It is important for church leaders always to be considering what we need to do now to improve ministry outreach and opportunities for tomorrow. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia has not sat idle during these months of a global pandemic. Behind the scenes a very

capable search committee has been at work seeking to call a new associate to work in our state. In this edition of *Visions*, you have been introduced to the Rev. Megan Turner Doud, who will serve alongside our capable staff in the position of Coordinator of Young Baptist Ministries. This is a new ministry position with new challenges and responsibilities.



All churches are interested in attracting and ministering to young families and providing quality church ministry for their children and youth. And all churches face the challenge of trying to help bridge the gap in the lives of young adults 18-30 and seeking to keep them engaged and involved in church ministry once they graduate from high school. I assure you, Megan nor any other minister will have all the answers to how to achieve these goals. But our calling of her to serve in this capacity speaks volumes that we as CBF of Georgia are serious about continuing the legacy of CBF of Georgia for the next generation.

If you are a minister with primary responsibilities working with preschoolers, children, youth, or college-aged young adults, let me encourage you to reach out to Megan. She will need your help to succeed in this ministry. I'm sure she would also appreciate knowing where your college students decide to go to school so she might help facilitate this ministry by sharing this vital information with churches located in that region where your student(s) attend.

There's reason to be excited about the future as we add this valuable member to the ministry team of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia – welcome Megan, Brian, and Caroline! ■

CBF/GA ON THE ROAD and ONLINE

November 2020 - January 2021



With this issue of *Visions*, we pick up where we left off before the pandemic curtailed the travels of the CBF/GA staff throughout our state and with our partners in ministry.

Because of COVID-19, some interactions continue to be online rather than in person, and that reality is reflected in these lists.

If you would like for Jody Long or any of our staff to speak, preach, teach, consult, lead, or minister with your congregation, please contact the CBF/GA office.

These are the places we have been **IN PERSON**:

First Baptist Church, Carrollton
First Baptist Church, Fitzgerald
Garden Lakes Baptist Church, Rome
Highland Hills Baptist Church, Macon

These are the places we have been **ONLINE**:

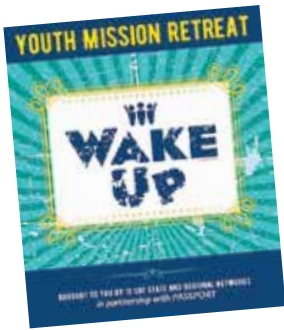
CBF State Coordinators' Retreat
CBF Student.Go debriefing
CBF/GA Church Technology Webinar
CBF/GA Coordinating Council Meetings
CBF/GA Webinars
Together for Hope - Georgia committee meeting
Weekly CBF/GA Pastors/Preaching Group

2021 CBF/GA Event and Program Update

It has been almost exactly a year since our lives were upended by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we had little idea back then how long the uncertainty would last. Safety remains the

foremost concern. Many plans for 2021 are still unclear because of COVID-19, and CBF/GA wants to keep everyone updated on the status of favorite events and programs. Details and plans will be shared through *ReVisions* and through

emails, and in the next issue of *Visions*, as they become available. In the meantime, please contact Jody Long or any CBF/GA staff member with questions or concerns.



March Mission Madness: Contact Jody Long at jlong@cbfga.org or Megan Doud at mdoud@cbfga.org for specific information about this year's MMM plans! PASSPORT has partnered with many state CBFs to produce a FREE online resource entitled "Wake Up!" that can be used as a weekend missions retreat, a one-day missions gathering, or even as curriculum over a longer period of time. The materials should be available for download by mid-February.

Student.Go and Student.Church: Because of COVID-19 restrictions, the plans for summer student programs for 2021 are still in process. Jody Long will share information about these programs with CBF/GA pastors as it becomes available. Please contact him at jlong@cbfga.org with any questions.



Congregational Ministry Grants: Congregational Ministry Grant applications slowed drastically last year because of the pandemic after two very creative and successful years. Many churches may still need time to figure out their next steps in ministry and outreach. We feel it is best to delay the application window for a few months this year while we all work toward getting the pandemic under some control. Look for information about the application period later this summer.

CBF/GA Theological Education Scholarships: We are in the process of reworking the guidelines and application materials for scholarships, with the aim of solidifying connections between scholarship recipients and CBF/GA. Scholarships will still be available for the 2021/2022 academic year. More information will be available this summer from Jody Long.



CBF Global's General Assembly: Plans are uncertain at press time for the annual CBF General Assembly. We will share details in future editions of *ReVisions*, in email announcements, and through social media as they become available.

CBF/GA State Gathering: Mark your calendars for Sunday - Monday, November 7-8! We tentatively plan to meet in person as much as is possible, at First Baptist Church, Gainesville. We hope to be able to gather in as close to normal a fashion as is feasible, and plans are in the works. Watch for details this summer.



CBF/GA Senior Adult activities: Senior adult events will remain on hold until COVID-19 case rates subside and the vaccine is widely administered. The earliest time for a retreat or other gathering will be fall of 2021, and we may need to delay until spring of 2022. Watch for updates as we are able to plan safely!

WEDNESDAY WEBINARS OFFERED MONTHLY by CBF/GA

COVID-19 SPURS US TO CREATE

new ways of communicating and learning, including a series of monthly CBF/GA Wednesday Webinars. Topics and speakers are set through May, and CBF/GA plans to continue these gatherings through 2021. Webinars are free and open to all.

CBF/GA monthly Wednesday Webinars got off to a good start with Harold Tessendorf, who worked with a group of participants on January 13 for over an hour on negotiation and mediation skills. Harold's long experience in leading nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity, along with his lifelong interest in and study of mediation techniques make him an invaluable resource for conflict management in the church.

The second webinar, on February 10, featured a CBF field personnel, Karen _____ (we cannot list her full name or exact location for security reasons), who works in northern Africa. Karen shared updates to her work and offered ways for partners to invest more fully in her work.

Future planned webinars are:

March 17, 10:00 a.m. *Global Missions with Dr. Rob Nash*

Rob Nash, associate dean and Professor of World Religions at McAfee School of Theology, will challenge us to rethink our understanding of missions in a changing world. Rob will discuss his new book, *Moving the Equator*, in which he encourages us to reimagine missions as seeking to find and join in God's presence where that is already at work in our world. Rob also serves as Senior Pastor of Heritage Fellowship in Canton.

★ Register at www.cbfga.org/event/webinar-global-missions/

April 14, 10:00 a.m. *Together for Hope Black Belt Region Update*

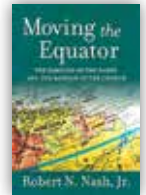
Our attention turns to poverty in our own backyard, as we hear from Anna Anderson, a CBF field personnel who ministers in eastern North Carolina, in partnership with CBF's Together for Hope initiative. Anna will be joined by Rachel Gunter Shapard, Regional Vice-President for Together for Hope, Black Belt Region. They will be helping churches and individuals discover how they can engage more directly and fully in these efforts to alleviate poverty in our own country.

★ Register at www.cbfga.org/event/together-for-hope-black-belt-webinar/

May 5, 10:00 a.m. *Children's and Family Ministry*

Children's ministry will take center stage. Jessica Asbell Oravec, Minister to Children and Families at First Baptist, Roswell, will engage participants on various aspects of children's ministry. She is a prolific children's curriculum writer and is the author of *Where Faith and Family Meet*, a collection of weekly family-centered devotions.

★ Register at www.cbfga.org/event/childrens-and-family-ministry-webinar/



WEBINARS are FREE, but REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. See end of each listing above for registration.

CBF/GA CONVERSATIONS about PREACHING

CBF/GA's Conversations about Preaching continue on Monday mornings at 10 a.m. On particular Mondays each month, special guests are joining us for these conversations. The first two guests were Will Willimon, of Duke Divinity School, and Teresa Fry Brown, from Candler School of Theology.

Upcoming planned conversations are:

MARCH 15, 10 A.M. • David Lose

David Lose will join us from Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. He was previously president of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

APRIL 12, 10 A.M. • Eric Barreto

Eric Barreto of Princeton Seminary and a proud CBF Baptist will lead the conversation.

MAY 3, 10 A.M. • Karoline Lewis

Karoline Lewis, of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, will be our guest. She is also program coordinator for the Festival of Homiletics.



To receive ZOOM log-in information, please contact Jody Long at jlong@cbfga.org

What We're Reading...

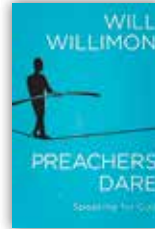
Leave Only Footprints: My Acadia-to-Zion Journey Through Every National Park, by Conor Knighton

Knighton has written beautifully, and at times hilariously, about his year-long journey to visit each of the 60 (now 63) U.S. National Parks. Knighton combines delightful humor with careful attention to each park. He weaves together a heart-warming narrative of journeying towards self-understanding and truly finding his vocation in life. Well-written, entertaining, informative, and touching, *Leave Only Footprints*, is a must-read for any outdoorsperson or for anyone journeying to a place of wholeness. —*Jody Long*



Preachers Dare: Speaking for God, by Will Willimon

Preachers Dare is adapted from Willimon's 2020 Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching at Yale Divinity School. Willimon pushes preachers to abandon the conventional, good-advice, bland common-sense sermons that saturate our pulpits and to reclaim their role as speaking for God. Willimon deftly moves the reader from Deus dixit (God speaks) to preachers dare to speak the speech of God to the church. Preachers who dare to speak for God engage the biblical text and proclaim the Word directly from God, who has spoken to us through Jesus. —*Jody Long*



The Glass Castle, by Jeannette Walls

Walls' memoir describes her maladjusted family's life as drifters, with a seriously alcoholic father and an undependable stargazer mother. Highly intelligent people, her parents believed themselves superior to others but chose to live a hand-to-mouth existence. The scarcity, neglect, and mental torture the children endured is heart-breaking and shows the harmful and disastrous effects of alcoholism and narcissism. Walls stresses that every child's "normal" is just that, until they are can compare their own life to the "normal" lives of others. Jeannette and her siblings manage to develop into successful adults who still love their parents and look back on their childhood with forgiveness and grace. *The Glass Castle* leads me to ask, "How often do I encounter children who are neglected and living in a chaotic, dangerous environment, and what am I willing to do about it?" —*Rachel Greco* ■



Financial Report

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2020

Operating Budget Receipts: \$98,832.53
 Operating Budget Expenses: \$75,987.55
 Gain/(Loss): \$22,844.98

Designated Fund Revenue (includes Endowment earnings): \$115,579.84

YEAR-END REPORT JANUARY - DECEMBER 2020

Operating Budget Gifts: \$431,436.74
 Operating Budget Expenses: \$325,908.60
 Gain/(Loss): \$105,528.14

Designated Fund Revenue (includes Endowment earnings): \$223,389.12

FRANK & SUSAN BROOME ENDOWMENT

4th Quarter 2020 Gifts: \$1,183.83
 Total 2020 Gifts: \$3,732.10

Endowment balance as of December 31, 2020: \$1,285,106.68



COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF GEORGIA

P.O. Box 4343, Macon, GA 31208-4343
 phone 478-742-1191
www.cbfga.org

CBF/GA Staff

EXECUTIVE COORDINATOR
 Jody Long
jlong@cbfga.org

COORDINATOR FOR YOUNG BAPTIST MINISTRIES
 Megan Doud
mdoud@cbfga.org

ASSISTANT TO THE COORDINATOR FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND RESOURCES
 Melissa Kremer
mkremer@cbfga.org

ASSISTANT TO THE COORDINATOR FOR ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAMMING
 Rachel Greco
rgreco@cbfga.org

CBF/GA Coordinating Council

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VISIONS is published four times a year by CBF/GA.

All questions and comments may be directed to Melissa Kremer at the CBF/GA office at 478-742-1191 or mkremer@cbfga.org.

Visions and *i-Visions* graphic design and layout
 Donna Jackson
donnabjackson@gmail.com

Keep up to date with all CBF/GA events at www.cbfga.org

On the Calendar

MARCH 15, 2021

Conversations about Preaching

David Lose, Mount Olivet
Lutheran Church,
Minneapolis, MN
(more on page 10)

MARCH 17, 2021

Wednesday Webinar #3

with Rob Nash,
McAfee School of Theology
(details on page 10)
[https://forms.gle/
kNk2m2VSLXCU5wZx9](https://forms.gle/kNk2m2VSLXCU5wZx9)

APRIL 12, 2021

Conversations about Preaching

Eric Barreto,
Princeton Theological Seminary
(more on page 10)

APRIL 14, 2021

Wednesday Webinar #4

with Anna Anderson and
Rachel Gunter Shapard,
Together for Hope,
Black Belt Region
(details on page 10)
[https://forms.gle/
A1ahp6LL8fdNzmJk8](https://forms.gle/A1ahp6LL8fdNzmJk8)

MAY 3, 2021

Conversations about Preaching

Karoline Lewis,
Luther Seminary,
St. Paul, MN
(more on page 10)

MAY 5, 2021

Wednesday Webinar #5

with Jessica Asbell Oravec,
Children's and Family Ministry,
FBC Roswell
(details on page 10)
<https://forms.gle/qHChskRnh8BXjkXj7>

NOVEMBER 7-8, 2021

CBF/GA State Gathering

FBC Gainesville



CBF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Because of the pandemic, plans, including dates and location, are still being modified. As soon as there are concrete plans we will share them widely through all communication avenues.

Our apologies

for the extremely late delivery of the last *Visions*. Although deadlines were met and *Visions* was delivered to the Post Office on time, actual delivery is beyond our control. This December, we were caught in what can only be described as a “perfect storm” – with postal service COVID-related difficulties and higher than normal levels of holiday package deliveries, along with the massive run-off election-related mailings and absentee ballot returns, other bulk mailings were delayed. We will move up the production schedule for that issue next year, but we do not anticipate facing this combination of problems in the future.

The delay is a great reminder of the opportunity you have to access *iVisions* online, however! This interactive version is uploaded at about the time the print version of *Visions* goes to the Post Office and is thus available in a timely manner regardless of postal service delays. Check it out at www.cbfga.org/newsletter-archive/.

And again, if you would like to receive only the link to *iVisions* and end your print subscription to *Visions*, please let Melissa Kremer know at mkremer@cbfga.org.

