

Florida Fellowship

NEWS

Photo by Allan Mitchell

CBF Florida to Celebrate 400 Years of Baptist History at Spring Assembly

Florida's Cooperative Baptists will gather for their annual meeting and celebration on Friday, April 24 at the South Venice Baptist Church, located at 3167 Englewood Road in Venice, Florida. The meeting, which will run until noon on Saturday, April 25, will focus on the theme "Celebrate God!" as a part of the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the Baptist movement.

The two-day gathering will feature a variety of services, workshops, exhibits, speakers, and even a community-wide ministry opportunity. Attendees will be able to participate in group activities of worship and workshops, but they will also find plenty of free, individual time in which to promote one of the main objectives of the Cooperative Baptist movement: namely, Fellowship.

In fact, efforts have been made this year to invite and involve entire families in the many opportunities of the weekend. Volunteers from South Venice Baptist Church will provide child care for families who want to enjoy a weekend together at one of Florida's great beaches. (Venice beach is one of the best places in the world to find fossilized sharks' teeth!) "We want families to feel like they can make a weekend of the Celebration," noted Jan Moore, CBF Florida's new moderator and a member of South Venice. "So, the church has volunteers who will provide child care at no cost during the Celebration, and we want to invite families to stay over through Sunday to worship with us at our church."

Not only will child care be offered at no cost, but other efforts have been made to keep expenses lower this year. Ray Johnson, CBF Florida's coordinator, commented that, "Everyone in the planning process felt like the costs of registration needed to be kept lower this year because of the economy. Also, because of the generosity of the host church, CBF Florida itself has been able to keep costs low. I believe it's a win-win for all of us."

In addition to child care and the attractions of Venice itself, families should enjoy Friday evening's bar-b-que supper, and, following Friday night's worship experience, everyone is invited to a huge birthday celebration honoring the 400th birthday of Baptists.

One of the highlights of spring assemblies has always been worship. This year's services will be no different.

Noted Baptist historian, Dr. Walter B. Shurden will be the featured speaker at each of the weekend's three worship services. Dr. Shurden, Minister at Large for Mercer University as well as the founder and first director of the Center for Baptist Studies at Mercer, is uniquely able to lead Florida Cooperative Baptists in a celebration of their heritage and future.

Dr. Shurden's messages will be complemented by the worship planning and leadership of Rev. Lance Brown, currently the Pastor of Worship and Administration at Riverside Baptist Church in Miami, Florida. Brown, who serves on



Walter Shurden will be the speaker at each of three worship services during the Spring Celebration.



CBF field personnel, Glenn Michaels, works with internationals in southern California.

Lance Brown, worship pastor at Riverside in Miami, will lead worship and music during the Celebration.

(Continued on page 3) Photo by Allan Mitchell

Photo by Allan Mitchell

2009 Clergy Conference Convenes “Beside Still Waters”

When you're constantly drinking water out of a fire hydrant, you probably could use some *still* waters. That's what the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida is intending to offer to clergy throughout the state during its upcoming annual Clergy Conference . . . a chance to rest beside some still waters.

This year CBF Florida along with the South Venice Baptist Church will host the Clergy Conference in Venice, Florida, April 23 - 24. The conference will begin on the campus of the South Venice Baptist Church at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 23 and conclude with lunch at noon on Friday, April 24.

Intended for all clergy — whether senior pastors, local chaplains, music ministers, new church planters, or part-time, bi-vocational youth ministers — this conference is designed to refresh the minister's soul.

Fitz Hill, who currently serves as the President of Arkansas Baptist College (ABC), the only black Baptist higher education institution west of the Mississippi, will lead this year's conference. Dr. Hill began his tenure as ABC's 13th president in February 2006, after spending more than 16 years as a college football coach.

He is an extraordinary churchman, and an inspiring, visionary communicator. His life's pilgrimage has taken him from Ouachita Baptist University (where he was an All-American wide receiver), to the first Gulf War in Iraq where he earned the Bronze Star, to being an assistant head football coach at the University of Arkansas, to San Jose State University where he was one of a few African-American head football coaches, and eventually to Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock.

When he arrived on the campus of ABC, Dr. Hill discovered that the college was “on life support,” with 175 students and an annual budget of \$1.5 million. In just two years, he increased enrollment to 650 students and the budget has grown to \$10 million.

Dr. Hill has a vision and a passion to “make a difference in the lives of those who need it the most.” After two days with Fitz Hill, clergy should feel re-invigorated to face the challenges of ministry in the 21st century.

The conference schedule is relaxed enough to offer participants plenty of time to deepen their relationships with long-time friends, to make new friends with other pastors and clergy, or simply to relax by the beach.

In addition to Dr. Hill, Mark Price, a Christian educator, free-lance writer, and former editor at Abingdon Press, will guide conversations during the retreat in an effort to “stir the still waters.” Price has served in local churches as a Minister of Education as well as the Senior Editor of Abingdon's *Disciple Bible Studies*.

Thursday evening, ministers will be able to relax and fellowship at *Sharky's on the Pier*, Venice Beach's well-known restaurant situated beachside at the end of the pier. The sunsets on Florida's west coast are themselves medicine for the soul.

Ministers can register for the Clergy Conference in one of three ways: (1) complete and mail in the form in this issue of the newsletter, (2) download, fill out and mail in the form from CBF Florida's website (www.floridacbf.org), or (3) call the CBF Florida office at 863-682-6802 and register over the phone.



Dr. Fitz Hill, president of Arkansas Baptist College, will lead the 2009 Clergy Conference



Mark Price, a Christian educator and writer, will help guide the conference

Financial Report - January 31, 2009

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Year -to-Date</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Budget	\$26,046.07	\$36,329.92
Designated	\$38,962.19	<u>Non-Budget</u>
Total Receipts	\$65,008.26	
<u>Expenditures</u>		
Budget Items	\$32,012.25	\$39,373.24
** Designated	\$43,902.29	<u>Non-Budget</u>
Total Expenditures	\$75,914.54 **	

** Designated forwarded from previous periods

(Continued from page 1)

CBF Florida's Representative Assembly, is a passionate worship leader who was musically trained in his home country of Jamaica.

On Friday afternoon, participants will be able to attend different workshops that focus on a number of topics ranging from "Ministering to Internationals in Your Neighborhood" to "Baptists Responses to Immigration," from ministry in Miami to ministry in the Middle East. At least a half dozen presenters, including several CBF field personnel, will guide the exploration of these different topics.



Angel and Jason Pittman, CBF field personnel at Touching Miami with Love, will help you connect to ministry in Miami.

Glenn Michaels, who works primarily with Hindu internationals in Southern California, will help participants answer the question, "When the world knocks on my door, what's the best

way to answer?" He and his wife, who live and work in one of America's most culturally diverse cities have a unique vantage point from which to challenge Floridians.

Chauouki Boulos, a CBF field personnel who, along with his wife Maha, lives in Lebanon and ministers to the Arab-speaking world in a number of Middle eastern countries, will surprise anyone who attends his workshop with the unbelievable ways in which God is working through Baptists to make inroads in the Middle East.



Chauouki Boulos, CBF field personnel from the Middle East, will lead two workshops on working with Arab speaking peoples.

Locally, CBF Floridians will recognize the presenters from the state's two south Florida ministry centers: Jason and Angel Pittman from *Touching Miami with Love*, and Wanda Ashworth and Leah Crowley from *Open House Ministry Center* in Homestead. Both ministry teams will offer presentations on ways in which CBF is helping to change the world by first changing neighborhoods.

Then, when participants need to renew old friendships and kindle new ones, they can visit over a cup of coffee in the exhibit hall at the church to find resources

about CBF missions, spiritual formation, Baptist history. Or, they can buy gifts from Open House's micro-enterprise, "Tropical Treasures." Others may simply want to visit the traveling photography exhibit of Baptist work with Albanian exiles in Athens, Greece.

Saturday's events will include additional workshops and a final time of worship. In a new initiative this year, one of the morning workshops will cover the topic of "servant evangelism. Steve Sjogren, well-known author of *Conspiracy of Kindness*, will lead a Saturday morning breakout to explore simple but profound ways to "do good" as followers of Jesus. Then, after the conclusion of worship on Saturday morning, participants can assist South Venice Baptist Church members in acts of kindness around the church's neighborhood.

The Celebration will conclude Saturday with a final hour of worship. Plans and prayers are for worship to include a creative, moving experience of the Lord's Supper. The gathering will also have the opportunity in worship to express gratitude and to pray for CBF of Florida's past and present leadership.

In 1609, after leaving England because of religious persecution, a small band of religious exiles, led by John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, held their group's first baptism service in Amsterdam, Holland. That first group was baptized by Smyth, who first had to baptize himself, because no one among the group had been baptized except as an infant. So began the first Baptist meeting in the city on the shores of the Amstel river. Four hundred years later, Cooperative Baptists in Florida, inheritors of the "free and faithful" tradition of those first Baptists, will meet on the shores of Venice . . . Venice, Florida, that is.



Friends from Open House Ministry in Homestead will be attending the Spring Celebration.



Noted author Steve Sjogren will lead a discussion on how to do good in your world

Photo by Allan Mitchell

COORDINATOR'S COLUMN

By Ray Johnson



As I sit down to write this particular column, I can't seem to settle on a single theme. I prefer that – settling on a single theme, that is. In this column, though, my mind has been skipping around. I thought I would call it a “potpourri” column, and then it occurred to me that I didn't know why that little sachet of flower and seeds and petals was called “potpourri.” So, I chased that one down. “Potpourri” means a mixture of incongruous items. (Yeah, I know, you almost have to look that up, too.)

Anyway, here are three things, incongruous perhaps, that are on my mind as I work to get this newsletter to press.

First, I am very excited about this year's Spring Celebration and Clergy Conference. In years past, we have referred to our annual meeting as the “Gathering.” The team that worked on this year's event, however, wanted to capture the spirit of a birthday party, since we are going to celebrate the 400th birthday of Baptists. Hence, the team settled on calling this meeting the “Spring Celebration.” In fact, its theme statement is “Celebrate God!” I especially like the theme verse from Philippians 4:4, “Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean *revel* in Him.” (That comes from Eugene Peterson's translation, *The Message*.) We have an excellent staff of speakers and leaders, not the least of which is Dr. Walter Shurden, for the weekend. The host church for the weekend, South Venice Baptist Church, has been so gracious and accommodating. I just know we are going to have a great time.


The Clergy Conference. Look, if you are a clergy-type person, you really must come to this conference. If you are not a clergy-type person, then get ordained and come to the conference! Fitz Hill, the speaker for the event, is currently the president of Arkansas Baptist College in Little Rock, Arkansas. I met Fitz about a year or so ago, and I must tell you that he is one of the most extraordinary human beings I have ever met. He has an ability to express his vision that is unmatched. He is a man of deep, deep faith and a real passion to change lives. My goal when I set out to plan this year's Clergy Conference was to provide a couple of days in which clergy from around the state could be re-energized and re-created. Venice Beach is a great setting for that kind of renewal. Fitz Hill is a great person to ignite that kind of renewal. So, make sure your minister friends (whether they are pastors, chaplains, retired, minister wannabes, male or female – it doesn't matter) register for this event.

Second, I want to express my gratitude for the missionary servants of CBF Florida. During our February Representative Assembly meeting at the First Baptist Church of DeLand, we heard reports from four different “missionaries.” We heard from Karen who is serving in medical missions in Asia. What an unbelievable child of God. Wanda Ashworth reminded us of the life-changing work that is happening everyday in Homestead. Christy Craddock shared how her love for the youth of Overtown is transforming her life and theirs. Carlos Peralta spoke with deep passion about the ministry that is moving forward so rapidly with our Hispanic neighbors and friends. It was an inspiring two days.


Third, I've got to mention the economic condition of CBF Florida and CBF in general. You can read how the national office has cut spending by twenty percent. It has affected our missionaries here in Florida. We in CBF Florida have had to make cuts, and, if things continue along the current trend, we will have to make more cuts, and more painful cuts. I'm sure we are all together on this thing. I think we all have apprehensions, uncertainties, and perhaps even fear. I know I do. Yet, I sit here and in my mind I can see Karen, and Wanda, and Christy, and Carlos, and Leah, and Jason, and Angel, and Keri, and the list goes on and on. CBF and CBF Florida are doing great, great things.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS


Nominations for the Findley and Louvenia Edge Awards Now Being Accepted

 Nominations for the Dr. Findley and Louvenia Edge Christian Education Leadership Award are now being accepted. The Edge Award, which includes a \$500 cash award, is given to a person within CBF life who has contributed significantly to “innovative faith formation leadership.” Please submit your nomination(s) for this award, marked “Attention Edge Award” to the CBF Florida office in Lakeland, or email your nominations to Tommy at tdeal@floridacbf.org.

Representative Assembly Alumni Reunion

 The CBF Foundation of Florida is hosting a reunion for all those who have served in leadership roles in the Florida Fellowship. The reunion will be held during the Florida Spring Celebration at South Venice Baptist Church, Venice, on April 24. Our special guests will be those who served since 2000. If you can join us, please be sure to register for the annual meeting and send an email to Carolyn at carolyn2anderson@gmail.com. Registration forms for the Spring Celebration are found on page 7 of this issue of the newsletter, below the fold.

Reserve Hotel Rooms Now for Spring Meeting

 If you will be attending the 2009 CBF Florida Spring Celebration (April 24-25) and/or the Clergy Conference (April 23-24), make your reservations now at the Holiday Inn Express in Venice, located at 380 Commercial Court. Mention the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida when you make your reservations in order to receive the group discounted rate. You can make your reservations by calling 1-941-584-6800.

Thank You 2008 Donors

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida is grateful to all of our donors, some of whom do not wish to be known. We are grateful to each of the individuals, churches, and organizations that contributed to CBF Florida's ministries and missions during 2008.

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Ida Averett
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Scott and Marty Bennett
Ann Bewley
Bluewater Baptist Church
George and Sybil Borders
James and Carolyn Bradford
Bradfordville First Baptist Church
Craig Brannon
Sue Carrier
Central Baptist Church (Daytona Beach)
Orlando and Milivan Colas
College Park Baptist Church
Compass Community Church
Lionel and Dot Cornell
William and Mary Cotton
Ned and Margaret Couey
Janis and Russell Courson
Bonnie Crowell
Richard and Ruth L. Davies
Haywood and Gail Day
Tommy and Susan Deal
Deermeadows Baptist Church
Everett DeHanas
Betty Donahue
Merrill Dulin
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Ebenezer Baptist Church
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May Those Who Come Behind Us Find Us Faithful

By Patrick Anderson

CBF of Florida has responded through the years to the needs of lost and hurting people in Florida and in various places around the world. In Miami and Homestead we have staked out a mission that carries the love of Jesus into the lives of people who live in poverty and hardship, persons who have been on the margins of society. With the help of many volunteers, CBF field personnel work each day on behalf of the Gospel. We have been faithful to respond to the needs as the Spirit has led us to them.

One reason we established the CBF of Florida Foundation several years ago was to assure the continued ministry in South Florida, and elsewhere, into the future after those of us who helped begin the work have passed on. We were faithful to our calling as we understood it during the past two decades to establish Open House Ministries and Touching Miami with Love. We have also had our hands in a variety of other ministries.

Now more than any other time in our recent history, we understand how precarious financial markets are, how tenuous commitments can be in the face of widespread financial uncertainties. We see how important it is to have a secure safety net in place to carry on ministries when the CBF itself is struggling due to financial stress.

It is time for us to be faithful once again to our calling, to make sure the work of CBF of Florida continues into the future. We can do this through our estate planning, by making generous gifts of property or stock or money, by remembering CBF in the title of our legacy.

May those who come behind us find us faithful....

Orlando Site of Faith in 3 D

By Tommy Deal

Orlando and Walt Disney World was the location of the second triennial of "Faith in 3 D." Faith in 3 D is a youth retreat sponsored by Passport Camps involving three denominations—Episcopal, Presbyterian and Baptist. Twenty four hundred (2,400) youth and adult leaders converged on Coronado Springs Resort at Walt Disney World during MLK weekend from as far away as the state of Washington to explore common faith in Jesus Christ through worship, education, community building and play.

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida, a partner with Passport Camps, Inc. from its beginning, wanted to encourage as many youth from its churches to attend as possible. It was decided to invest in these young Baptists by offering scholarship grants to churches that planned to attend. These funds from the budget line "Youth Event" (formerly "Kindle Retreat")



First Baptist Gainesville youth and adults at Faith in 3 D

helped CBF of Florida surpass its goal of twenty youth from its churches attending. In fact, three Florida CBF churches took thirty-eight (38) youth. Here are a couple of reflections from participants.

David from Riverside Baptist Church in Jacksonville said, "It was a very enlightening and fulfilling experience being with the two other denominations. The worship services were very well done. Tony Campolo was the best! He is such an energized and passionate speaker. Many of the kids in our group really heard what he had to say. That in itself speaks

volumes."

Chris, an eighth grader from **First Baptist Church in Gainesville** reflected, "Faith in 3D was a neat experience. The cool thing about Faith in 3D is that you learned about other

people's way of learning about Christ and the way they worship Him. Worship was one heck of an experience.

There were around 2,400

people there just singing and praising God, it was amazing. We had small groups and that was where we had different people from all over the nation there in our group. On our last whole day in Disney we got to go to Epcot. The first thing we did when we got there was to get into our small groups and go to "Faith Around the World." We got to "go" to several different countries and learn about their culture. My group got to go to China, Mexico and Italy. We learned how these cultures were different. Our Bible study leaders then taught us about religion in those countries. We learned that many do accept each other through Christ. Christ is the answer to all of our problems. You can ask Christ anything and He will come through for you in some way."

The "Baptist" worship service had as its theme "Living Water." A choir of youth from all over joined the youth choir from **College Park Baptist in Orlando** singing and visualizing Jesus' message that He is the "living water to a thirsty world." After hearing harsh truths of villages in Africa without safe water, worshipers contributed almost \$12,000 in an offering to help *Watering Malawi* build wells in Malawi, AFRICA. Any doubts about today's youth and their ability to be our leaders of tomorrow were all taken away as these youth of differing faiths and from every corner of the country represented their faith gloriously at *Mickey's* favorite place!



College Park Baptist friends at Faith in 3 D

Bulletin Board

The Staff at Touching Miami with Love (TML) has begun taking deposits for their 2009 Summer Missions. The ministry will host 6 weeks of teams from Saturday, June 20, through Saturday, August 1, 2009. Information concerning TML's summer missions program (including links to the new contract, deposit information, and a basic guidebook) can be found under "Summer Mission Teams" in the "Volunteer Opportunities" section of TML's website www.touchingmiamiwithlove.org. The cost of per week of ministry at TML has been reduced to \$200 per person.

Touching Miami with Love (TML) is seeking a part-time Youth Program Coordinator to work 20 hours per week, Monday thru Thursday, from 2:00pm to 7:00pm. The Coordinator will be responsible for planning, preparing, and helping to lead activities in TML's after-school program for youth. To read the job description in more detail, go to www.touchingmiamiwithlove.org. Resumes should be sent electronically to Christy Craddock at christy@touchingmiamiwithlove.org. *Touching Miami with Love* is a ministry of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida.

Open House Ministries (OHM) also continues to accept registrations for 2009 summer camp ministry teams. To register at OHM in Homestead, contact Leah Crowley at (305) 242-1418.

Special Gifts to CBF of Florida

- **An anonymous gift to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida**, in memory of Joyce Page's sister, Dorothy Tomlinson.
- **Serendipity Sunday School class at Central Baptist Church in Daytona Beach**, a gift to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida, Open House Ministries, in memory of Joyce Page's sister, Dorothy Tomlinson.
- **Justine and Jerry Chance**, a gift to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida, in thanksgiving for their children and their family.
- **Dan and Chris Faircloth**, a gift to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida, in memory of E. Randy and Eleene Anderson.



Photo by Allan Mitchell

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Beside Still Waters - 2009 Clergy Conference - **April 23 - 24, 2009**

See Page 7 for **REGISTRATION FORM** for both events

"Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean revel in him!"
Philippians 4:4, The Message

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Mission:

To motivate and equip believers to be the presence of Christ for the glory of God

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