

June 2013

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News and Stories from TN Cooperative Baptist Fellowship



## TCBF General Assembly - Retrospective

The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Tennessee CBF General Assembly took place Saturday, April 13, at FBC-Chattanooga. A welcoming and inclusive spirit pervaded the gathering of Fellowship Baptists from across the state. The staff and members of First Baptist Church did a wonderful job hosting us - going above and beyond to express genuine Christian hospitality to all who gathered.

Here are highlights from our gathering:

• Andy Watts was masterful with the theme interpretation. He challenged us to not only think about areas of our lives where reconciliation is needed but to explore systemic issues contributing to division. We must have courage to engage in the transformative justice needed in our world. The presentation is posted on our website.

- Participants gathered in eight different groups to respond to and reflect upon Dr. Watts' presentation. Small group facilitators - Joan Maples, Phillip Moody, Thomas Quisenberry, Melissa Roysdon, Mike Smith, Ed Sunday-Winters, Kara Wheeler, and Gene Wilder - guided the conversations.
- During the luncheon, a thank you video from Missy Ward was shown. Jim Smith, CBF Interim Missions Coordinator, told moving stories about TCBF-supported field personnel: Missy Ward in Uganda and Bill and Noy Peeler in Cambodia. Elizabeth Richards shared two personal stories about "faces she will remember" from her time in meaningful service as field personnel with "the least of these" in Jordan.
- The assembly approved the following recommendations from the Coordinating Council during the business session:
  - a) Adopted a budget of \$184,700 for 2013-2014, an increase of 5.6%.
  - b) Adopted a goal of \$27,500 for the TCBF state missions offering which includes an increase of \$2,500 for college student ministries.
  - c) Approved a recommendation to change the name of our state missions offering from Tennessee Priorities in Mission to *Elizabeth Richards Missions Offering*. (See article on page 3.)
  - d) Approved several changes to TCBF's personnel policies primarily to bring our guidelines into alignment with CBF policies since we share an employee.
  - e) Approved Melissa Roysdon, Pastor at Providence Baptist Church in Cookeville, as moderator-elect.
  - f) Approved formation of a new organizational structure for TCBF (including new Regional Councils) and an implementation strategy. (See article on page 3.)
  - g) Approved a new three-year agreement between TCBF and CBF related to the field coordinator position.



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## TCBF GA Pictures



## TCBF General Assembly - Continued

- Ircel Harrison awarded the Ircel Harrison Theological Scholarships to Brack Ballard, heading to Divinity School at Gardner-Webb University this fall, and Megan Hurst, student at McAfee School of Theology.
- Two scholarly awards were given to Megan Turner, student at McAfee School of Theology, and Luke Moody, who will attend McAfee School of Theology fall 2013.
- Terry Maples thanked leaders from across the state who are rotating off the Coordinating Council. He also presented Andy Watts with a gavel in gratitude for his service as moderator.
- The Betty Galloway Advocacy for Women in Ministry Award was presented to Dr. Ed Sunday-Winters, pastor of Ball Camp Baptist Church in Knoxville. (See article on next page.)
- Exhibitors attending the General Assembly talked with folks about their ministries.
- TCBF's community mission trailer was for the first time on display at the General Assembly.
- Meaningful closing worship concluded our gathering. We express gratitude to Jeff Parker, minister of music at FBC who planned worship, to the musicians, and to all who helped provide leadership. We collected an offering to benefit the food pantry for the homeless at FBC - Chattanooga.

The 2013 General Assembly is over, but the journey of *getting back to the basics: repair, restore, reconcile* has just begun. We continue the process of awakening and challenging Fellowship Baptists to be a force for the transformative work to which God is calling us!

Free and faithful Baptists from across the state who assembled from across the state were blessed, inspired and challenged! We missed those who were unable to experience the warmth, passion, and spiritual vibrancy of this gathering, and we encourage you to plan *now* to participate next year at Trinity Baptist Church, Cordova.

**NOTE: Dr. Andy Watts' thematic presentation at the General Assembly is posted in written form on the TCBF website. This is an excellent resource to use in your congregations to kick-off or continue the reconciliation conversation.**

## NEW TCBF Organization

The Coordinating Council recommended a new Tennessee CBF organizational structure to the General Assembly on April 13. The recommendation was approved by the assembly. Why did the Coordinating Council perceive the need for these changes?

The old Coordinating Council was large (requiring 21 people from across the state). The new Coordinating Council is smaller and more nimble-enabling more frequent face-to-face time (in person or electronically). The new Council will continue to give general direction to the work of TCBF between annual General Assembly gatherings. Assignments given to teams in the old structure will now be given to the whole Coordinating Council.

A key feature of our new structure is the formation of Regional Councils (four to begin). The primary reasons for establishing Regional Councils are: 1) to create organic community where people can connect naturally; 2) to move responsibility for discerning, planning, collaborating, and evaluating to the unique regions of the state; and 3) to enable more people who are passionate about the work of CBF to provide leadership without the need to travel very far to do so. Each region will determine how best to structure itself to accomplish these main tasks: creating fellowship opportunities for like-minded Baptists and congregations in the region; planning collaborative mission engagement opportunities; and providing leadership development experiences for clergy and lay leaders. Each region will determine its own structure to accomplish Kingdom work. Regional Council leaders will serve on the Coordinating Council to establish direct connection between TCBF and the regions.

The General Assembly also approved a recommendation the Coordinating Council fill the regional leadership positions this first year. Existing Coordinating Council members not rotating off this year comprise the new Coordinating Council.

After the regional council leaders and assistants are enlisted, we must find folks from churches in the region who are passionate about CBF to comprise leadership teams. Please pray about serving on the leadership team in your region!

## What's New with TCBF's State Missions Offering?

The General Assembly approved changes to the TCBF State Missions Offering. First, the goal was raised from \$25,000 this year to **\$27,500** in 2013-2014 (this increase goes to student ministry). Those who give to the State Missions Offering this year will support the following ministries:

Samaritan Ministry in Knoxville	\$5,000
Neverfail Community Church	\$5,000
Mission Grants for Congregations	\$12,000
College Student Ministries	\$5,500

Second, those gathered for the General Assembly approved a recommendation from the Coordinating Council to change the name of our State Missions Offering from "Tennessee Priorities in Mission" to the "**Elizabeth Richards Missions Offering.**" Elizabeth recently retired after serving as a CBF field personnel in Jordan. She resides in Memphis and is a member of Trinity Baptist Church, Cordova. We desire to emulate Elizabeth's compassionate and sacrificial spirit by supporting the ministries funded by this offering.

### 2013 Betty Galloway Award Recipient



Congratulations to Dr. Ed Sunday-Winters, the 2013 recipient of the Betty Galloway Advocacy for Women in Ministry Award. Ed is senior pastor of Ball Camp Baptist Church in Knoxville. He is the first male to receive this award for his support and encouragement of women in ministry.

## Community Mission Trailer - Ready for Use!



The Tennessee CBF community mission trailer is now ready for use! This “ministry tool” is stocked with basic supplies needed for most small building or repair jobs or local community mission projects congregations may undertake. For a complete listing of tools and supplies, go to [tncbf.org](http://tncbf.org).

The trailer wrap was designed by Brittany Jackson, TCBF office manager. The wrap (as seen at the TCBF General Assembly) displays a unique version of the CBF logo, the CBF missions motto, and the words *Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship*. We added the words “be. love. serve.” These words have theological significance for TCBF’s field coordinator, Terry Maples. For him, BE connotes building relationship with God through Jesus Christ (formation); LOVE is the motivation and inspiration for the Christian life; and SERVE is the natural by-product of life in Christ. The back door displays the TCBF logo and web address. As you can see, the colors and design beautifully communicate the TCBF logo and purpose. Thank you, Brittany!

To reserve the community mission trailer, call 615.907.8525. The trailer is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Of course, we hope the trailer will be used by multiple churches while in a specific region of the state so we may be good stewards of our transportation resources.

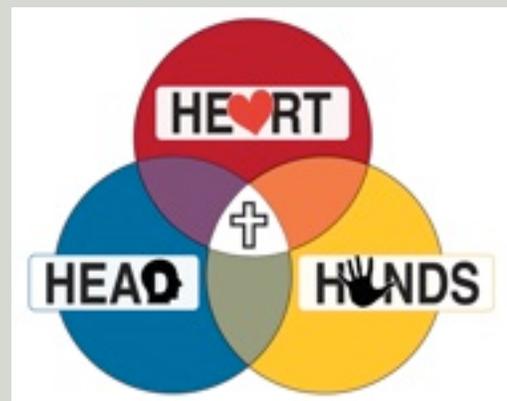
## Faith Formation Blitz

During the week of April 21-26 TCBF sponsored a Faith Formation Blitz with Dr. Steve Booth, Associate for Christian Formation at First Baptist Church in Richmond, VA. In seven locations over a period of six days, Steve and Terry Maples facilitated conversations across the state about lifelong faith formation.

Dr. Booth reinforced what was accomplished during last year’s blitz with Bo Prosser. Steve based his presentation on Robert Mulholland’s definition of faith formation from “Invitation to a Journey” and CBF’s working definition of faith formation: “Spiritual formation is the process of being formed in the image of Christ by the gracious working of God’s Spirit in community for the transformation of the world.” Steve reminded us that “the forming” is done by God.

Steve told about First Baptist Church in Richmond’s journey to find new language to talk about faith formation. Faith formation is much broader than talking about Christian education and includes everything a congregation does to help people become more like Jesus. Steve uses the image below to assist members in going deeper with God. Much of the educational enterprise in our churches has focused on the head or making sure we get the knowledge right. We’ve done a pretty good job at helping people see the need to serve the needy with our hands. It’s time to give greater attention to the “heart” which Steve defined as “being and growing in relationship to God, self, and others.” We must learn to engage in spiritual practices that nurture an intimate relationship with God because the most important gift a “teacher” gives to his/her classroom is his/her own journey of becoming like Jesus.

Go to the faith formation section of TCBF’s website to find Steve’s presentation slides and a sample formation assessment tool.



## CBF General Assembly

Join with other Fellowship Baptists in Greensboro, NC, June 26-28, 2013! Here are a few reasons why we would love to see you at this year's General Assembly:

1. You will enjoy fellowship with like-minded Baptists from across the country.
2. You can participate in a *Pre-Assembly Prayer Retreat* with Marjorie Thompson, author and leading voice in Christian spirituality.
3. You can participate in the *Leadership Institute* and learn more about *Dawnings*, CBF's congregational process focused on finding missional identity through vision, formation, and engagement.
4. You can meet our new Executive Coordinator, Suzii Paynter, at a meet-and-greet on Friday evening following worship.
5. You can learn about changes happening in the life of CBF as a result of implementing the 2012 Task Force recommendations.
6. You can participate in the commissioning of new field personnel and church planters.
7. You can attend the BWIM 30th Anniversary Worship and reception.
8. You can participate in meaningful worship, workshops, and auxiliary events.



On Thursday afternoon at 4:15 p.m., folks from Tennessee will gather in Auditorium 1 for our state meeting. This year we focus on sharing fellowship and hearing stories from churches that received mission grants from TCBF. Join us!

All this and much more awaits you in Greensboro! Register now at <http://www.thefellowship.info/General-Assembly/PreRegistration>.



## Introducing Bill McConnell, from Knoxville New CBF Moderator

Are you aware Bill McConnell, businessman from Knoxville and member of Central Baptist Church of Bearden, becomes National CBF's new moderator in June? Allow us to introduce Bill to you!

Bill is a native of Kingsport, Tennessee. He graduated from Carson-Newman University in 1965 and received his Master's Degree from Wake Forest University in 1973. Bill served in the United States Air Force following completion of his undergraduate degree and before starting graduate studies. Bill works with a manufacturer's agency selling air pollution control equipment and other related mechanical items. He and wife Carolyn have a son and daughter-in-law in Franklin, TN, and a son and daughter-in-law in San Antonio, TX. Bill has been a member of Central Baptist Church of Bearden since 1979. He has served on the

TCBF Coordinating Council as well as the National CBF Coordinating Council. Bill distinguished himself as an effective leader as he guided the work of the Finance Team while serving on the CBF Coordinating Council.

We are excited Bill has agreed to serve CBF during this critical time of transition. As the new Executive Coordinator begins and a new organizational structure is implemented. Bill's gifts, passions and organizational savvy will serve us well. Please pray for Bill throughout this important year of service to and with The Fellowship!

## **Repentance:**

### **We were WRONG**

**By Marion Aldridge (recently retired  
Coordinator of CBF of South Carolina)**

Used with permission.

*EDITOR NOTE: I'm sharing Marion's last article published in the CBF of SC newsletter because I resonate with his faith journey. You may not agree with everything he says or how he says it, but Marion will make you think and examine the belief system you inherited from your family, church family, or culture!*

*-Terry Maples*



As I have matured as a Christian, I have reflected, long, often, and sometimes sadly, even painfully, about much of what I believed as a youngster, and into adulthood. Because my doctrines, my ethics, and my habits have sometimes undergone enormous changes, there may be those who are presumptive enough to wonder if I have lost my faith.

Quite possibly, I lost your faith. I have found my faith. The Bible calls these transformations “repentance.” Here are some of my confessions:

WE WERE WRONG to believe that science and God could be enemies. Truth is truth wherever we find it.

WE WERE WRONG to assume uniformity in thought or action was better than independence or creativity.

WE WERE WRONG to accept what our culture taught us about racial segregation and the supposed inferiority of black people.

WE WERE WRONG to believe that we could somehow obey the Great Commission by paying for and praying for missionaries to go to Africa while ignoring the Great Commandments, disrespecting the African-Americans who lived down the dirt roads from our churches. We were either unaware or didn't care that they often drank polluted water, had leaky roofs, and had no indoor plumbing.

WE WERE WRONG to believe that a glass of wine on Thanksgiving would send someone to hell but that it was okay for the preacher to be 100 pounds

overweight and continue to stuff his face with fried chicken.

WE WERE WRONG to believe that people in other denominations who paid attention to the Christian calendar (Pentecost, Maundy Thursday, Ash Wednesday, for example) were somehow less spiritual than Baptists who built their church calendar around secular holidays (such as Mother's Day, Memorial Day and July 4).

WE WERE WRONG to believe that we could be comfortable and Christian at the same time.

WE WERE WRONG to believe that the primary thing Jesus or the Christian faith cared about was Heaven and Hell.

WE WERE WRONG to believe that somehow America was the Kingdom of God.

WE WERE WRONG to believe the assumptions of our secular society, that bigger is better, that might makes right, that getting is better than giving.

WE WERE WRONG to believe that highlighting a few isolated verses could sum up the Bible, as if God could be contained in a bumper sticker.

WE WERE WRONG to trivialize prayer, as if getting all the things we want is the point.

WE WERE WRONG to believe that God intended to silence the female half of the human race.

WE WERE WRONG to assume that other people could practice our Christian faith on our behalf: pastors, missionaries, youth ministers, social workers. When was the last time you got to know a welfare mother or a drug addict?

WE WERE WRONG to say there is only one biblical way to focus on the family. The family of Abraham looks different than the family of Jesus which looks different than the family of King David which looks different than the family of Mary and Martha which looks different than the family of Esther and Mordecai.

WE WERE WRONG to think that Roberts Rules of Order, rather than the Bible, are the primary guide for working out disagreements in our churches.

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## REPENTANCE: We were wrong!

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WE WERE WRONG to teach (or imply) that talking, telling, preaching, was more important than listening. The great sin of the Old Testament, according to Roy Honeycutt, was “They would not listen.”

WE WERE WRONG to let bullies, blamers, gossips and other spiritually unhealthy people dominate the conversations and the decisions in many of our congregations.

WE WERE WRONG to think that repentance was primarily for non-Christians outside of our churches instead of for those of us on the inside. The more I know about Jesus, the Bible, the Christian faith, and the Holy Spirit, the more I know that I am called to change, to repent.

WE WERE WRONG to believe that any tradition, law, bible, preacher, program, building, doctrine, convention or any other part of creation—even if God made it and blessed it—could possibly be as important as the Creator. This, by the way, is the short list. I could write a book!

For the past 15 years I have been blessed to be employed by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina and I have been allowed to discover and embrace new ways of thinking about God.

I have always been a loyal kind of guy. For decades, I hung in there, as much as possible, with the ecclesiastical world I inherited. I knew racism was wrong, however, and one by one, I began confronting the errors and inadequacies of my childhood experiences. In important ways, the organization of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has been my salvation. I am grateful for the church of my childhood, for my family, for the appropriate lessons from my South Carolina culture. And I am grateful that CBF granted me permission to continue to grow, to get un-stuck from the habits and behaviors and beliefs of my childhood and adolescence. I am pleased that many reading this final column have walked with me on this journey.

I am not sure what is next for CBFSC or for me, but I am sure that people of faith will continue to wrestle with what is good and true and eternal versus what is traditional, and temporary and transitory. May God continue to walk with us together on this journey!



### ***Academy for Spiritual Formation***

#### **“My Journey” by Terry Maples**

Last year the TCBF Coordinating Council provided funds for my participation in the *5-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation* at St. Ignatius House in Atlanta, GA. I felt a strong need for time away to connect with God and others in an intentional Christian community, and I desired a first-hand experience to share with you. The week was everything I anticipated and much more!

Keynote speakers for this Academy were Dr. E. Glenn Hinson and Rev. Jane Vennard. These leaders complimented each other wonderfully. I knew Dr. Hinson from seminary days but had never met Jane. Dr. Hinson led us on a journey to reconnect with our Baptist contemplative roots. I have never heard Dr. Hinson so passionate and convictional - just weeks after heart by-pass surgery! Jane Vennard helped us discover creative hands-on spiritual practices and brought an energetic spark to the week's experiences. She helped us think outside our box to discover new and innovative ways to encounter God in community.

I was privileged to facilitate a small group (see photo above) each evening with a great group of folks (including Brenda Hooper from FBC-Chattanooga). Time alone to read, reflect, and commune with nature were critical parts of my Academy journey. Worship, presentations, and rhythms for each day opened me to God's work in my life.

Are you yearning for a place to nurture your spiritual life? Do you seek a spirituality deeply rooted in the Christian faith and tradition, yet open and free? Then I heartily commend the *Academy for Spiritual Formation*. It will change your life!



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## Missions News

Recently TCBF assisted the ministry of Missy Ward who was appointed as CBF field personnel to Uganda last June and Bill and Noy Peeler who will be appointed in Greensboro as CBF field personnel to Cambodia. Jim Smith, Interim Missions Coordinator for CBF, told moving stories about these committed servants at the TCBF General Assembly in Chattanooga.

On June 9-15, a team from Tennessee will assist with *Extreme Build*, a ministry of Kentucky Baptist Fellowship in McCreary County, KY. A comfortable and functional home will be built for the Barnett family. Please pray for this project and all involved.

Does your church have plans to partner with CBF in mission engagement? Lives will be changed as you work alongside CBF field personnel around the globe. If you don't want to leave the United States, you can partner with CBF's Rural Poverty Initiative and serve in Perry County, Alabama; Helena, Arkansas; Owsley County, Kentucky; or McCreary County, Kentucky. Go to [www.thefellowship.info](http://www.thefellowship.info) for more information about these ministries in the 20 poorest counties in the United States.

The logo for Student.GO features the word "STUDENT" in a purple, serif font, followed by "GO" in a green, sans-serif font. A small red dot is positioned between the "O" and the "G".

## College Student Ministry

This summer TCBF will support two college students participating in Student.GO, CBF's opportunity for students to serve alongside CBF field personnel ministering to the most neglected people in the world. Stay tuned for information about these two students.

TCBF is pleased to support the end-of-summer experience called *SELAHvie* for students who served as congregational interns and Student.Go missionaries to gather, share, and debrief their experiences.

Please pray for college students who will serve this summer through the ministries listed above as well as college students serving on leadership teams with Passport camps!