

Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship



A History of the First Twenty Years
1992 – 2012

Compiled and Written by Mary Jayne Allen

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Dedication Page

We dedicate this history in memory of the three Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship coordinators who died the past year. We express gratitude for their lives and their contributions to our ministry.



William "Bill" Junker
Died June 8, 2011



Adiel Moncrief "Monty" Jordan
Died September 29, 2011



Lloyd T. Householder, Jr.

Died January 30, 2012

A History of the First Twenty Years of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Tennessee

ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS

In 1990, following a decade of frustrating denominational politics in the Southern Baptist Convention, a gathering of moderate Baptists in Atlanta, Georgia, led to the formation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) in 1991. Seeking to uphold historic Baptist values and freedoms, the purpose statement that evolved reads “The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is a fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches who share a passion for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and a commitment to Baptist principles of faith and practice. Our mission is to serve Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission.”

On July 24, 1992, two hundred Tennessee Baptists gathered at Woodmont Baptist Church in Nashville to begin charting a corresponding course for “free and faithful” Baptists in Tennessee. In September, a steering committee chose Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (TCBF) as the organization’s name. Work began to determine purpose, by-laws and budget - and to nominate officers. The first state General Assembly was held at First Baptist in Gatlinburg in November. Cecil Sherman, CBF Coordinator, was speaker for the event as articles of incorporation and bylaws were adopted and the first Coordinating Council and moderator were elected.

The next five years were formative for both CBF and TCBF as moderate Baptists sought to establish their identity and lay a financial foundation to assist congregations and support missions. In 1993, TCBF’s Coordinating Council met at least five times. General Assembly meetings were scheduled annually. For several years, a Coordinating Council meeting and a business session were scheduled prior to Tennessee Baptist Convention meetings each November.

While these Fall business sessions were discontinued in 1997 - with such matters handled at General Assembly meetings – gatherings for worship and fellowship were held in 1999 and 2000.

Realizing the need for a leader in addition to a moderator and the Coordinating Council, Lloyd Householder was retained as the first part-time Coordinator, with an office established in Brentwood in September 1994. Bill Junker (January – April 1996) succeeded him, and Monty Jordan served as interim Coordinator (April – December 1996). Lila Boyd was named Administrative Coordinator in January 1997, serving in that position through August 1998.

With the retirement of Cecil Sherman in 1996, Daniel Vestal assumed the reins of the national organization as Coordinator in December. In June 1998, Ircel Harrison was elected as the first full-time Coordinator of TCBF.

FORMATIVE YEARS

Ircel Harrison, a 20 year employee of the Tennessee Baptist Convention (TBC) in the area of collegiate ministries, became increasingly aware that he was no longer “in sync” with the Southern Baptist Convention and that the attitudes of the national body were beginning to affect the work of the TBC. Using vacation time, he attended some of the early meetings of CBF and shared its stated values such as the priesthood of all believers, high regard for scripture, commitment to social ministries, and belief that all believers – both women and men – are called to ministry. TBC policy stated that an employee with twenty years tenure could retire at age 55. Harrison determined that he could find another place of ministry by the time he reached age 55 in August 1998. He reflects, “In God’s wonderful timing, the Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship began looking for a full-time coordinator in January 1998, and I pursued that position.” He began his work in September 1998.

With the expiration of the lease on the office space in Brentwood, one of Ircel’s first steps was to relocate the TCBF office to Murfreesboro – where he lived and near the “geographic center of Tennessee.” Needing an administrator, he hired

Judy Powers Fryer whom he got to know when she asked him to lead a study on women in ministry at First Baptist, Murfreesboro. Married to a minister and with Baptist ministers in her family, Judy had a seminary degree and many creative gifts. Ircel's introduction of Judy was usually, "I turned an artist into a bookkeeper."

In his former position, Harrison developed relationships with leaders and churches across the state. One of his priorities in his first months as TCBF coordinator was connecting and networking with "progressive" pastors and leaders. He found most of them welcoming and supportive of the mission of TCBF. This affirmation and support of TCBF and his leadership was critical as the organization took shape.

Time was spent on administrative tasks: clarifying the status of the organization as "an association of churches" with the State of Tennessee, moving the bank account, securing a post office box, setting up an on-line database and financial records. Eventually a website was created, along with personnel and administrative policies.

Financially, there was a healthy balance in the checking account – invaluable for beginning a full-time operation. The Founding 100 emphasis provided significant financial support. The budget adopted in January 1995 was \$9,326; by 1999 it had increased to \$165,000. While there were several years of financial growth as churches provided support, finances continued to present a challenge.

Several initiatives were begun. A breakout session at the 1998 General Assembly launched Tennessee Baptists Encouraging Women in Ministry. After incorporation, their first meeting was held in connection with the General Assembly in 1999. In 2000, New Church Starts became a focus. A Young Leaders Network was launched. Seminars and conferences were held supporting these initiatives. Tammy Abee Blom was employed as Next Generation Coordinator. At the Coordinating Council meeting in January 2001, Harrison outlined the work of TCBF in three broad areas:

- Helping churches to fulfill the Great Commission.
- Helping to build healthy, growing churches.
- Helping churches reach a new generation for Christ and His church.

In February 2001, indicative of the challenge of the national organization to find its way as an entity (a fellowship, not a denomination), state and regional coordinators approved a plan to clarify relationships among CBF state, regional and national organizations. The key provision was the initiation of a Leadership Team chaired by the CBF coordinator and composed of state and regional coordinators along with coordinators of the various departments at the CBF Resource Center in Atlanta. Quarterly meetings were begun to implement the national 2000 Strategic Plan.

With missions as a priority, the first mission partnership was with Habitat for Humanity. TCBF provided \$19,500 toward the cost of constructing a house in Robbins, Tennessee, as part of the Jimmy Carter Appalachia Blitz in June 1997. At the national General Assembly in 1998, Elizabeth Richards, having served as a two-year missionary, was commissioned a career missionary to Jordan. In 1999, funds supported a summer missionary who led a six-student team to work with CBF field personnel in Vancouver, British Columbia. At the General Assembly in 2001, special guests were Dr. Branko Lovrec, president of the Baptist Union of Croatia and Zeljko Mraz, general secretary of the Union, forging a three-year partnership with TCBF – which actually continued for six years. In 2003, the Tennessee Partners in Missions offering was launched with a goal of \$20,000. Initial recipients were: Christian Women’s Job Corps, Nashville; Samaritan Ministry, Knoxville; Appalachian Outreach, Jefferson City; InterFACE Ministries, Nashville; and a new church start in the Memphis area. That same year, Mike Young, of Tullahoma, was hired as Missions Coordinator, with responsibility for assisting individuals and churches in fulfilling their calling, serving as a catalyst for mission partnerships, and leading in starting and developing new congregations.

Realizing that healthy, growing churches require healthy, growing members and

leaders, TCBF staff provided many opportunities to develop and equip ministers and lay leaders in their roles in their congregations. In February 2000, staff members from five churches met at Fall Creek Falls State Park for the first Church Staff Roundtable. Designed to address key issues and concerns, these helpful gatherings expanded to include staff from other churches and continued for eight years, eventually adding a second site to accommodate leaders from the western part of the state. Topics for conferences included college ministry, Sunday School leadership training, church growth, worship, church planting and church leadership. In 2001 guidelines were approved by the Coordinating Council to provide Leadership Scholarships for theological education, the first one granted in 2002. After months of planning and effort, seminary classes began in 2005 at First Baptist, Murfreesboro, in partnership with Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas.

One of the challenges faced by TCBF in Tennessee is geographical – locating meetings and learning experiences so they are easily accessible to participants. This is difficult in a state that stretches from the Mississippi River on the west to the Smoky Mountains on the east. Efforts to cope with this challenge include securing volunteer regional field representatives, holding the General Assembly in different parts of the state on a rotating basis, and offering regional meetings and conferences. Travel is one of the important and time-consuming activities of the work. From the beginning, a newsletter has been an important means of communication.

TRANSITIONS

While starting new churches was identified as a priority in 2000, several attempts failed to produce the anticipated results. Efforts in Franklin, Chattanooga, Knoxville and Murfreesboro were terminated, in spite of time and energy given by passionate church planters. However, in 2005, a partnership of CBF, TCBF, CBF of Mississippi, and Trinity Baptist of Cordova did result in the formation of Olive Branch Fellowship: a Baptist Faith Community in Olive Branch, Mississippi.

In January 2002, Tennessee Baptists Encouraging Women in Ministry dissolved its incorporation status and transferred responsibility for activities to encourage women in ministry to the Leadership Development Committee under the guidance of Tammy Blom. When she moved out of state in 2007, three Leadership Development Specialists were employed (part-time) to continue peer groups for women in ministry as well as initiating new areas of ministry. In the face of budget challenges, these positions were eliminated in 2010. Encouragement for women in ministry continues through the presentation of The Betty Galloway Advocacy for Women in Ministry Award to individuals or groups. Named in honor of the first woman in Tennessee to be ordained as a deacon (in 1971), the first recipient was First Baptist, Oak Ridge, the congregation that ordained her.

Organizations change – as they must. Staff members were added as needed and staff members moved on to other responsibilities and callings. In April 2008, Ircel Harrison announced he would step down from his position as Coordinator at the end of the year. His ten years of ministry and service were recognized at the General Assembly with a book of letters and cards – and the TCBF scholarship fund was re-named the Ircel Harrison Theological Scholarship Fund in his honor.

Asked to prioritize the accomplishments of his tenure, Ircel Harrison listed these as the top six:

- Developing an organizational culture that valued relationships, respect, and agility.
- Initiation of Tennessee Partners in Missions Offering.
- Providing services to churches – Church Staff Roundtable, leadership conferences, placement, etc.
- Advocacy for women in ministry:
 - 1) Support groups
 - 2) Partnership with TBEWIM and its incorporation into TCBF
 - 3) Support for the Betty Galloway Award

- Emphasis on theological education
 - 1) Launch of Central Baptist Theological Seminary teaching site in Murfreesboro
 - 2) Provision of theological scholarships
- Creating an organizational structure for TCBF – staff, communications, database, and administrative and financial processes.

IRCEL HARRISON - IN HIS OWN WORDS: *My greatest pleasure came in finding good partners across the state – first, pastors who were committed to the CBF movement and led their churches to be supportive; second, churches that embraced their identities as progressive Baptist churches and “got on board” with TCBF; third, lay people and clergy who gave their time and efforts to serve as officers and Coordinating Council members; fourth, partner organizations who identified with us in many ways, including becoming Tennessee Partners in Missions. I loved the opportunity to network, support and equip moderate Baptists in our state. Even in a digital age, judicatory work is a highly relational activity. I continue to value the relationships that I both made and strengthened during the time as coordinator.*

NEW BEGINNNINGS

Two teams were named to assist with this change in leadership. An Interim Search Team developed a position description and selection process for an interim coordinator, and named a person for the position. A Transition Team was charged to assess the work of TCBF, seek input from various constituencies, recommend changes in staff position descriptions, and provide a process for employing a new coordinator. Their yearlong work resulted in a Covenant Team being appointed to work with a representative from CBF to explore filling the position in a unique covenant relationship between CBF and TCBF. With financial support from CBF, the position of CBF Field Coordinator was developed and advertisements for applications were posted in October 2009. Numerous resumes were considered, several interviews were conducted, and in March 2010 the Search Committee presented Terry Maples to the Coordinating Council

for the position of Field Coordinator of CBF in Tennessee. He was introduced at the General Assembly and began his work in June 2010.

Terry came to Tennessee from Huguenot Road Baptist in Richmond, Virginia, where he served as Associate Pastor for Education/Discipleship for twenty years. With skills and experience in administration, passion for faith formation and missions, a strong commitment to CBF, and positive energy, Terry was prepared for the challenges and opportunities awaiting him at CBF in Tennessee.

TERRY MAPLES – IN HIS OWN WORDS: *While reading the posting for the field coordinator role, I was drawn to the requirements and responsibilities of the position. During the interviewing process I was impressed with each person on the search committee and sensed I could collaborate well with these gifted and talented folks. CBF is my home. I wanted to do all I could to help the Fellowship Community thrive. The call to help individuals and congregations strengthen commitment to our historic Baptist values and convictions, to help congregations become more spiritually vibrant and mission-shaped, and to help people across the state of Tennessee embrace a fresh new symbiotic relationship with National CBF, was strong.*

The leadership of TCBF was honest about the challenges facing Fellowship Baptists in Tennessee:

- *Gain clarity about our identity and direction.*
- *Work more seamlessly with National CBF.*
- *Strengthen our financial position.*
- *Invest resources in ministries that support congregations and the clergy who serve them.*

These challenges provided opportunities for the Coordinating Council to dialogue around our identity, to reaffirm our values and convictions, to chart a new course forward, to discern ways to free resources for ministries, and to find meaningful avenues for partnership with National CBF.

In his first meeting with the Coordinating Council, Terry began to set the course

for their work together. A retreat was scheduled for January 2011. With a consultant facilitating the gathering, four priorities emerged as the focus for our energy and resources: faith formation, mission engagement, next generations and networking.

2011 brought several changes for TCBF. In partnership with CBF, e-newsletters were sent twice each month, keeping people aware of both state and national information and opportunities. The printed newsletter, the LINK, was updated and printed in full color as a quarterly mailing. A new logo for TCBF was introduced, and a new website was launched. The name of the offering for *Tennessee Partners in Mission* was changed to *Tennessee Priorities in Mission*, keeping the acronym TPIM while allocating resources for missional grants. Gifts to the fund exceeded the \$25,000 goal by almost \$1,000. Funded by a bequest, a summer intern was employed to work with TCBF and First Baptist, Murfreesboro. The bequest also provided funds for three college students to attend Tampa Sessions and the CBF General Assembly in Tampa, Florida. In September, Mike Young concluded his work as Missions Coordinator and in October, Judy Fryer retired from her position as Associate Coordinator for Communication and Administration.

To free money for stated priorities, changes were made in staff and office space. Brittany Jackson was hired as part-time office manager. The office space in Murfreesboro was vacated, with staff members willing and able to work from their homes.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

TERRY MAPLES – IN HIS OWN WORDS: *We are very excited about Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's 20th Anniversary Celebration! Our theme—TCBF: People of Heritage & Hope—embodies the conviction we are a people of rich heritage whose hope is in Christ Jesus. Building on the strong foundation laid twenty years ago, we anticipate all the ways God will use the Fellowship Community in Tennessee to nurture life-changing faith in Jesus Christ that results*

in meaningful kingdom work.

TCBF is postured to assist congregations as they form faith and connect with God's mission in the world; help clergy and congregations become healthier and more effective; provide meaningful opportunities to engage in mission projects that make a difference; and help individuals and congregations find community in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. We face the future with faith in God and trust in each other. The values and convictions that birthed our movement twenty years ago must be preserved, because our faithful, free, thoughtful, and passionate Baptist witness is needed today more than ever.

As we celebrate the first 20 years of CBF in Tennessee, we anticipate even greater days ahead. The CBF 2012 Task Force has completed a two-year study to guide CBF into its second generation. Findings will be presented at the CBF General Assembly in June. Fellowship Baptists in Tennessee can look forward to continuing the journey with others around the world, sharing Christ's love with a firm commitment to historic Baptist principles of faith and practice.

Tennessee CBF Leaders

Coordinators

November 1994-95	Lloyd T. Householder, Jr.
January-April 1996	C. William Junker
May-December 1996	A. Moncrief Jordan
January 1997-August 1998	Lila Anderson Boyd
September 1998-December 2008	Ircel Harrison, Jr.
January 2009 – November 2009	Donald K. Dixon, interim coordinator
November 2009-May 2010	Vacant
June 2010 to present	Terry L. Maples, field coordinator

Moderators

1992-93	Steve Witt, Chattanooga – Jack Bishop, Signal Mountain
1993-94	Kreis White, Nashville
1994-95	Earl Davis, Memphis – Mike Smith, Memphis
1995-96	Patty Moore, Knoxville

1996-97	Don Dixon, Tullahoma
1997-98	Earl Sears, Memphis
1998-99	Carolyn Blevins, Jefferson City
1999-2000	Jeff Lane, South Pittsburg
2000-2001	Nanette Avery, Signal Mountain
2001-2002	Chris O'Rear, Nashville
2002-2003	Lorri Johnson, Murfreesboro
2003-2004	Joe Livesay, Germantown
2004-2005	Ed Sunday-Winters, Knoxville
2005-2006	Becky Frye, Jefferson City
2006-2007	Joel Emerson, Nashville
2007-2008	Vickie Willis, Murfreesboro
2008-2009	Jerry Mantooth, Maryville
2009-2010	John Rohde, Franklin
2010-2011	Mary Jayne Allen, Chattanooga
2011-2012	Kristina Woods Brown, Murfreesboro
2012-2013	Andy Watts, Nashville

Ircel Harrison Theological Scholarship

2012 Scholarship Recipients

- Megan Turner, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, GA
- Jacob Drake, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC

2011 Scholarship Recipient

- Noelle Spears Owen, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, GA

2010 Scholarship Recipient

- Rebecca Mathis, The University of the South Divinity School, Sewanee, TN

2009 Scholarship Recipients

- Leah Knox, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN
- Rebecca Mathis, The University of the South Divinity School, Sewanee, TN

2008 Scholarship Recipients

- Kara Blankenship, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, GA
- LuAnne Prevost, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Murfreesboro, TN

2007 Scholarship Recipients

- Kara Blankenship, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, GA
- LuAnne Prevost, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Murfreesboro, TN

2006 Scholarship Recipients

- Adam Garner, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, GA
- Julie Keys, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, GA
- Danielle Smith, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, VA

2005 Scholarship Recipients

- Sarah Carver, Wake Forest University Divinity School, Winston-Salem, NC
- Rusty Edwards, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC
- Danielle Smith, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, VA

2004 Scholarship Recipients

- John Ryan Dix, Wake Forest University Divinity School, Winston-Salem, NC
- Elizabeth E. Evans, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC

2003 Scholarship Recipients

- Drew Prince, Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, Atlanta, GA
- Rodney S. Walls, Campbell University Divinity School, Buies Creek, NC

2002 Scholarship Recipient

- Melody Maxwell, Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, AL

Betty Galloway Advocacy for Women in Ministry Award

Recipient of the 2012 Award

Amy Butler, Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.

Recipient of the 2011 Award

Tambi Brown Swiney, Associate Pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Nashville, TN

Recipient of the 2010 Award

Melissa M. Roysdon, Pastor, Providence Baptist Church, Cookeville, TN; teacher, Dekalb County, TN

Recipient of the 2009 Award

Eileen Campbell-Reed, Associate Director of the Learning Pastoral Imagination Project and Research Faculty at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN and resident of Nashville, TN

Recipient of the 2008 Award

Tammy Abee Blom, former Associate Coordinator for Leadership Development,
Tennessee CBF, Murfreesboro, TN

Recipient of the 2007 Award

Nenette Measels, Associate Campus Minister, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City,
TN

Recipient of the 2006 Award

Molly Marshall, President, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, KS

Recipient of the 2005 Award

Carolyn D. Blevins, Associate Professor of Religion, Carson-Newman College,
Jefferson City, TN

Recipients of the 2004 Award

Neverfail Community Church, Sparta, TN
Providence Baptist Church, Cookeville, TN

Recipients of the 2003 Award:

Supporting Women in Ministry (SWIM) – Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, TN
First Baptist Church, Chattanooga, TN