

NURTURING
YOUNG BAPTISTS 14

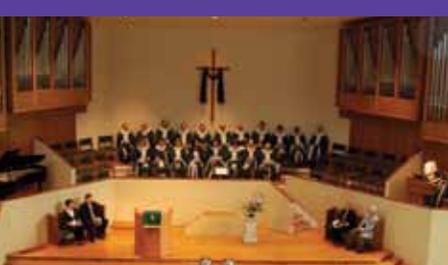


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Embracing Our Work Ahead

Several years ago I volunteered to be the “mystery reader” in my son’s third grade class. I asked my wife - who is an elementary librarian - for recommendations. *Freedom Summer* by Deborah Wiles was one of her recommendations. As I previewed the story my gut began to tense and quiver. Imagining a possible loss of composure in front of my son’s class, I decided against the book. Because I well remember third grade, I reached for a staple, something that would

The teacher revealed the mystery reader with considerable fanfare and I had a great time reading the first two books, keeping it light. As the laughs waned and I began to make my transition toward the door, the kids started asking about the unread book in my grasp. The teacher nodded her approval and this time took a seat with the kids.



“WHY ARE YOU CRYING?,”
ANOTHER INNOCENTLY ASKED.
MY RESPONSE SURPRISED ME
AND THE TEACHER, “BECAUSE
THERE’S STILL WORK TO DO.”

I began confidently, slowly, allowing the kids to take in the illustrations of a mixed-race friendship between two young boys—boys the age of the children I was reading to - during the Civil Rights Era. The tender moment in the story came at the point when the town’s authorities decide to fill in the municipal pool rather than integrate it as demanded by the new law. The town in the story, like many in “real life,” literally paved over the hopes of

guarantee laughter, something active and easy to hear, something that would leave me feeling like a cool dad.

But at the last minute, I grabbed *Freedom Summer*.

SEE “EMBRACING OUR WORK” ON PAGE 17.

Nurturing Young Baptists

Puerto Rico Reflection

TCBF recently sponsored Katie's participation in CBF's PIVOT as part of our commitment to Nurturing Young Baptists

For more information on PIVOT, visit cbf.net/pivot.

Going to Puerto Rico was a phenomenal experience. I am so thankful to the TN CBF and my church for sending me on such an eye-opening trip. During my time in Puerto Rico, I was able to learn about the people and their culture. By learning about the people there, I was able to learn more about effective short-term missions through asset mapping. During our time in Puerto Rico, we looked at all the things that the people there had to offer in order to help themselves after we leave.

While in Puerto Rico, we worked closely with a couple churches with women pastors. This was encouraging for me as a woman who someday wants to go into ministry, because I was able to see women in different leadership roles in a culture where women are not as accepted in leadership roles. I am very thankful for seeing powerful women in leadership roles in the churches in Puerto Rico.

We also did some disaster relief while we were there and helped to clean up the house of a widow. As someone who has no special talents when it comes to fixing up a house, I was amazed at how God was still able to use me to make an impact on this woman's life through assisting others who did know what they were doing.

Overall, this was an amazing trip where God truly worked in and through me in miraculous ways. I was so uplifted and encouraged by the people there, and through my conversations with others. I am grateful to Tennessee CBF for the opportunity to share in this experience.

Thank you, Tennessee CBF, for your commitment to Nurturing Young Baptists in Tennessee! [.TCBF.](#)

A NATIVE OF MURFREESBORO, KATIE IS A SENIOR AT UT STUDYING SPANISH AND LINGUISTICS WITH A MINOR IN TEACHING ESL. SHE CURRENTLY ATTENDS FBC KNOXVILLE.



Young Baptists to Know

TENNESSEE CBF IS PROUD



Wes Fortner

to announce
that Wes Fortner
(member of FBC Gatlinburg)
and Emmaline Rogers
(member of FBC Memphis)
have been selected by the
CBF Global Ministries Council
as two of CBF's
"2018 Young Baptists to Know."



Emmaline Rogers

Partnership Profiles

Walk for Justice: FBC Clinton, TN and The Clinton 12

THE EVENTS

Following a lawsuit filed by citizens of Anderson County TN and on the heels of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, a federal judge ordered an end to desegregation in the county by the fall term of 1956. Over that summer twelve black students registered at Clinton High School. By the next weekend, segregationists traveled to Clinton to rally citizens to protest. On Monday, August 26, 1956, the students—who became the “Clinton Twelve”—walked down Foley Hill to begin the fall term. The students became the first to desegregate a state-supported high school in TN and the first in the South—before the “Little Rock Nine.”

While the first day of classes proceeded without much incident, the climate quickly turned violent as crowds led by outsiders John Kasper and, later, Asa Carter turned to threats, violence, and intimidation. Crowds gathering in protest at the courthouse reached around 1,500—most from outside of the local community and state. The Ku Klux Klan began to invade black neighborhoods, burn crosses, and set off dynamite blasts. Over the Labor Day weekend, violent riots broke out in which cars were overturned, windows and property smashed, and homes bombed. Threatening letters were sent to school administrators and teachers. The town deputized a “home guard” in an effort to hold back the mob and protect those threatened. Later, Tennessee's governor ordered the highway patrol and the National Guard to help keep peace.

The black students, as they described their experiences in *The Clinton 12: A Documentary Film*,



repeatedly used the words scared and fearful. Joann Crozier Allen Boyce said, “Maybe they were not going to accept us like I thought they were.” Home guard members recalled their own fear of the situation. White high schoolers who were initially nice became frightened as well. Kasper was arrested but returned to town in November following his acquittal.

As tensions continued to rise leading up to local elections in early December, the Clinton 12 students and their parents decided to boycott attending the high school. Rev. Paul Turner, pastor of First Baptist Church in Clinton, deacon Sidney Davis, and community member Leo Burnett decided to step in. They walked with a group of the students to the school serving as a human buffer against the violence. After going their separate ways, Rev. Turner was assaulted and badly beaten. The following Sunday, Rev. Turner preached to a packed sanctuary at FBC. He spoke fervently bringing what he hoped was a message of hope and reconciliation: “There are no color lines at the cross.”¹

Following this event and other threatened violence to the students, teachers, and their families, the high school was closed for a week. When interviewed, Turner's widow said that her husband felt a responsibility to help as one of the leaders in the community.²

SEE “WALK FOR JUSTICE” ON PAGE 16.

Thank you for your partnership in the Gospel!

Walk for Justice, cont'd. from p. 15

Horace Wells, Editor of the Clinton Courier News, commented on the changing feelings in the community, “Many of us had stood by, unwilling to stand up for integration and yet also unwilling to violate the law and when Paul Turner was attacked, the feeling of the community was more or less solidified. No mere words could have done it. It took heroic action... to bring us to the point that we were willing to stand up and say... we believe in law and order.”³

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

When asked about the role of the church during the events of 1956-58, Reverend Stan Elliott, current pastor of FBC Clinton mentioned that it was the quiet help of individual Christians in the community who were salt and light during a troubling and violent time. The church did not create a team to address issues of social justice or racial reconciliation, but began to understand and support the actions of Reverend Turner, Sidney Davis, and Leo Burnett.

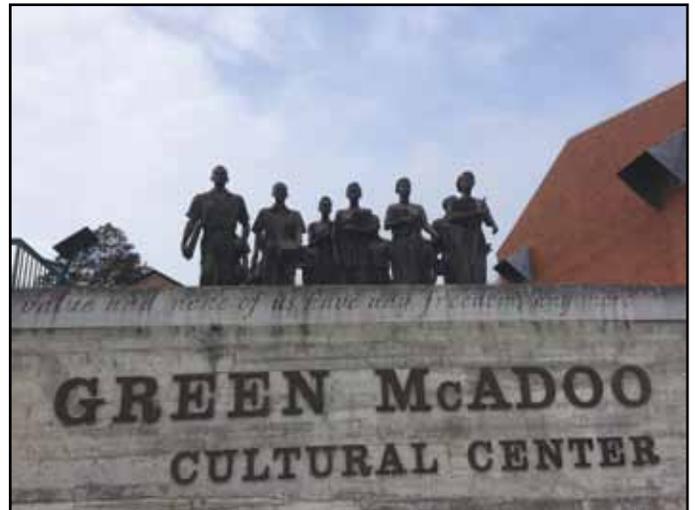


Rev. Paul Turner, pastor
FBC Clinton, TN

Such actions were praised by local ministers and later some of the Clinton 12. Reverend Alan Jones, current pastor of Asbury United Methodist Church says, “Segregation may have won a victory against integration had Rev. Paul Turner not taken the initiative to walk with the African-American students to Clinton High School that particular day.”⁴

Today, we experience similar issues of racial, social, and financial injustice in our communities. Churches must engage these issues using biblical truth. Elliott said that first and foremost, church members can support their ministers in speaking the truth without fear of being driven away. When touring the museum, Elliott was most touched (and

troubled) when reading the letters received by Rev. Turner and the church. Some were supportive and called the pastor a wonderful example of Christ. Others were simply horrifying in their threatening tone.



CONCLUSION

It is our hope that this article will kindle further curiosity regarding the story of the Clinton 12—a story of individual courage of students and community leaders; a story of the violence brought from segregationists; and the story of a small town that ultimately worked together for good. We encourage you to watch the documentary which includes interviews with the students, video footage, and descriptive photographs or visit the websites below for additional information. Listen for the hundreds of sub-stories of black and white students, teachers whose homes and families were threatened, community leaders and lawmakers, and those injured in the violence. Let us learn from the events, as Clinton 12 student Alvah McSwain says, that “helped me to teach my children not to be prejudiced.”⁵ • TCBF •

KAREN HARWELL, A GRADUATE OF THE MCAFEE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY, GREW UP IN TULLAHOMA, TN. SHE CURRENTLY DESIGNS HANDS-ON PRAYER EXPERIENCES, COURSES, AND OTHER SPIRITUAL FORMATION PROGRAMS FOR CHURCHES AND SMALL GROUPS.



SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION AND STUDY

Convene a group in your church to watch the Clinton 12 documentary (or the online YouTube video – *The Beating of Reverend Turner*). Discuss the following questions in small groups:

1. Share one thing that struck you most about the documentary and the events of 1956.
2. Read Galatians 3:28 and Genesis 1:27. How does the acceptance of the fact that we are created in God's image impact our relationship with others?
3. Discuss Rev. Turner's actions and sermon—how do they encourage you (as an individual) to act in your community? Your church?

Take a field trip to the McAdoo Cultural Center in Clinton, TN, to learn more about the civil rights era and the desegregation of Clinton High School.

Ask participants in watching the documentary or visiting the cultural center to write personal short stories regarding their experiences and reaction to the movie or field trip:

1. For senior adults: write about your memories of the civil rights era and the events of the time including your personal spiritual response and your church's response.
2. For median adults: write about your spiritual response to the events.
3. For youth and children: utilize the educational resources of the McAdoo Cultural Center website, adding questions related to the Bible's instructions regarding social justice and racial reconciliation.

Research civil rights in your local town, attempting to learn not only the history of events and current environments of racism and injustice, but also the responses of the Christian community. Invite a diverse panel from your local community to discuss current injustices with which the church can become involved.

- 1 History of FBC Clinton, www.fbclinton.org/about
- 2 The Clinton 12: A Documentary Film
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 History of FBC Clinton, www.fbclinton.org/about
- 5 The Clinton 12: A Documentary Film

Embracing Our Work, cont'd. from p. 13

two boys, friends from opposite sides of the tracks, to one day share Beloved Community in the clear water of a community pool.

As I rushed toward the story's resolution, one of the children asked me to go back; he hadn't fully taken in the illustration, the image of the boys watching the steamroller in dismay, sadness, and confusion. And that's when my composure buckled. Living in the tension of that illustration, watching the faces of twenty Caucasian children and two African-Americans imagine themselves in the story, tears escaped one eye and then the other.

The children tracked the illustration as I raised the book momentarily to veil the flow. But as my long sleeve absorbed a runaway drop, the African-American boy at the head of the crissed-crossed-apple-sauced class exclaimed, "He's crying!" with a considerable degree of shock. One of the Caucasian boys admonished him (or me), "Men don't cry." I lowered the book, wiped my face with my hand and revealed up close the confluence of sadness and hope. I confessed, "Boys, these are real man tears."

"Why are you crying?," another innocently asked. My response surprised me and the teacher, "Because there's still work to do."

I've thought back on that experience a lot while preparing for this year's General Assembly. The insight and transformation this gathering and its timing invites requires a degree of vulnerability, transparency, humility, imagination, and vision. A willingness to hear difficult truths about ourselves and our culture. A willingness to hope, to risk. A commitment to embrace God's dream for our world, to receive - perhaps for the first time - a vision of Beloved Community. •TCBF•

Welcome to General Assembly! I'm glad you decided to make the #pilgrimagetomemphis.

For the work ahead,

Rick

Field Coordinator, Tennessee CBF

Forming Healthy Churches

A Place to Be Me

In a recent conversation, I learned of a promising young minister who had resigned her church and was “pursuing other options.” She had been experiencing significant challenges in her ministry, but a key reason for her decision was lack of a healthy support group in her area.

TCBF Field Coordinator Rick Bennett believes that “healthy clergy make for healthier congregations and a regular Peer Learning Group (PLG) relationship makes for healthier clergy.” This viewpoint has been validated not only from personal experiences but research conducted by several denominations over the past decade.

What is a Peer Learning Group? A PLG is a group of ministers who voluntarily choose to meet on a regular basis to encourage one another, share learning, and process their experiences. The focus of the group is determined by its constituents. Each group has a convener who works with the group to determine the focus of their meetings and/or retreats. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship provides the group with suggested resources related to promoting pastoral excellence and congregational health as well as a small stipend.

One group in Tennessee is made up pastors, retired pastors, and some in transition. Convener Rich Lloyd,

pastor of First Baptist Church, Newport, says, “Our intentional group provides a place of acceptance, learning, fellowship, and encouragement to pastors in the daily routine of leading churches and providing care to our parish.”

A new group of Christian educators meets online with Ircel Harrison as convener. Group member Phil Potratz, minister of Christian formation at First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, reports, “The group provides relational ties to folks I have a lot in common with, which enriches both my personal and professional life in a variety of ways. I learn of new resources, draw on the experience of others in addressing situations, and see that I am not the only one struggling with certain issues.” •TCBF•

Being part of a PLG is a great way to strengthen your own ministry and encourage others. Would you like to volunteer as the convener of a PLG or join a group? Information and resources can be found at cbf.net or contact Rick Bennett for additional information.

IRCEL HARRISON LIVES IN MURFREESBORO AND IS A MEMBER OF FBC. HE SERVED AS COORDINATOR OF TENNESSEE CBF FROM 1998 TO 2008. HIS MINISTRY CONTINUES IN VARIOUS TEACHING AND COACHING CAPACITIES. IRCEL BLOGS AT BARNABAS FILE.



A GLANCE BACK AT TCBF GA 2017 . . .



Save the Dates!

Upcoming State & Global Assemblies

The 2019 Tennessee General Assembly will be held at West Hills Baptist Church in Knoxville, TN.

PLAN NOW



to join us!

Friday and Saturday
April 26-27, 2019



Identity of Tennessee CBF

Tennessee CBF is a network of Christians and churches in Tennessee who share a passion for the Great Commission of Jesus and historic Baptist principles of faith.

Mission

Tennessee CBF exists to serve Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission.

Priorities

- Sustaining the Global Mission
- Resourcing Healthy Congregations
- Nurturing Young Baptists



Cooperative Baptist
Fellowship
—
Forming Together

JUNE 11-15

REGISTER NOW

to attend the

2018 General Assembly

in Dallas, Texas!

www.cbf.net/assembly

WE LIVE IN AN ERA OF A GLOBAL CHURCH, where mission is from everywhere to everyone. Join us as we celebrate the Church, both around the world and down the street, at the 2018 CBF General Assembly.

Through engaging workshops, nightly worship, partner events and a specially redesigned exhibit hall with live podcasts and entertainment, you'll deepen friendships and partnerships, locally and globally.

THURSDAY, JUNE 14

3:00-4:00 p.m.

Tennessee State & Regional Meeting

THANK YOU!

EVENTS LIKE THIS CAN'T HAPPEN WITHOUT A LOT OF HARD WORK.

We are so grateful to the TCBF General Assembly Planning Team for the creativity, passion, and grit that made this weekend a reality. *Thank you* Rick Bennett, Christopher Church, Stephen Cook, Melanie Dover, Daniel Johnson, Linda Marks, and Robin Miller for giving of your time and talents so that we might have another excellent General Assembly.

We are also grateful to Caroline Talbert for planning our worship together. Her creativity and thoughtfulness inspired meaningful liturgy and shaped our worship together. *Thank you, Caroline!*

The Memphis flair in the Fellowship Hall is a result of the creativity of Holly Hatton and Mary Kaylor. Thank you for bringing a taste of Memphis fun to our gathering.

This beautiful book in your hands, along with the other pieces publicizing this event, came from the skillful efforts of Amy Cook. Thank you, Amy, for pulling all the details together in such a beautiful way!

RESOURCE FAIR PARTICIPANTS



Olive Branch Ministries

Connect. Serve. Transform.

