

*Louisiana*  
COOPERATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP  
*News & Views*



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Black and White *Together ...*  
We Shall Overcome



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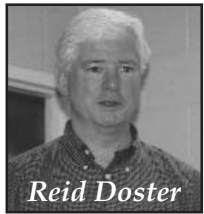
# Bridgewater Church Offers A Fresh Start After Katrina

bridgewaterchurch.info

Like a bridge over troubled water, the newly formed Bridgewater Church is extending the love of Jesus Christ to people in west St. Tammany Parish who are struggling to adjust to their post-Katrina world. Bridgewater's **first worship service is scheduled for February 12th**, at The Maritime Museum, Madisonville.

Bridgewater's church field is generally defined as that area bordered by Lake Ponchartrain to the South, the Tchefuncta River to the East, Interstate 12 to the North and the Tangipahoa Parish line to the West.

## **new church start**



Reid Doster

Within that heavily wooded rectangle, twenty-seven new subdivisions are under construction, with more on the drawing board. Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the already impressive rate of population growth between Madisonville and Hammond has understandably intensified. It is becoming increasingly apparent that Bridgewater will have more of a regional appeal, drawing from neighborhoods beyond the "church field" parameters.

Reid Doster has accepted the call to serve as pastor of Bridgewater Church. He explains: "Many families moving into our community have been displaced.

Others who did not lose their homes nevertheless face an uncertain future in their jobs." Bridgewater Church will provide a sense of family and community, something they can count on at a time when everything that was nailed down seems to have come loose."

"We tried to launch a new CBF church about twelve years ago and it struggled along in homes for over four years. We did minister to people in many significant and non-traditional ways, and it was rewarding. Back in the mid-90's, however, we did not have the support from CBF's organizational structure to under gird a new church start. Now, the timing seems right for CBF, and no one could have planned what has happened in St. Tammany Parish since Katrina."

"If Romans 8:28 tells us anything, it's that the Lord can redeem tragedy and suffering and bring out of it something beautiful. When people are scared and hurting and wonder what's going to happen to their community and their livelihood, the Gospel of Jesus Christ offers new hope through caring relationships."

"I recall a prophetic illustration in Christianity Today. It's a shipwreck scene, with bodies strewn among the rocks at the base of a darkened lighthouse. Someone is questioning the lighthouse keeper, who explains: 'The bugs got so bad that I decided to

**See NEW CHURCH, page 4**



Worship Site  
Bridgewater Church

Of all the experiences CBF Louisiana is enjoying as we assist others with disaster relief, certainly one of the most heartwarming and gratifying has been with friends in African American churches.

Our mission statement is: "To cross racial, religious and socio-cultural lines, extending the unconditional love of Jesus Christ, to the most needy, neglected and forgotten, without any expectation of return."



Zion UMC Church, Slidell, and Starlight Missionary Baptist Church, Slidell.

Within each story is another story that confirms the providence of God in helping us carry out His plan.

Each opportunity to help developed in a uniquely personal way. It was not like a blitz. There was no blanket strategy. The doors opened because of relationships that fostered trust.

In disaster relief, everything --- the availability of volunteers and accommodations, the accessibility to materials and delivery vehicles,

## *Heart To God, Hand To Our Brothers and Sisters* **African American Partners**

by Reid Doster

even something as simple as telecommunications remains fluid. It might be there. It might not.

What we experienced was a movement of the Holy Spirit. A friend from way back, once reminded me: "God's trains always run on time." I now consider that to be more than a sweet thought. I believe it with everything in me.

It is true that we extended Christ's love without any expectation of return. However, the pastor and deacons of one church we helped have entered into a serious dialogue with John Daugherty, CBFL Coordinator, about affiliating with The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. There is no question that we have made lots of new friends.

I grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. One day, in the early 1950's, I was walking across the street with my mom, after a visit to "Woolworth's Five and Dime" (if anyone remembers that store). I had just seen a sign above a water fountain that read: "No Colored People."

Describing to Mom that sign, as I walked with her across the street, I said: "Momma, I don't understand that." Without looking down to me, she responded sadly: "Son, I don't understand it either." Well, one thing I have come to understand is that unconditional love, or love with no hooks in it, goes a long way in restoring trust.

If you would like to volunteer for disaster relief, call Reid at (852) 222-6900.



Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked. They couldn't believe he was talking with that kind of a woman. No one said what they were all thinking, but their faces showed it. John 4:27 The Message

John Harris, then pastor at Grace Baptist and years later

# Following Jesus AGAINST The Grain

Following Jesus can get you in trouble. Never impressed with man-made religious rules or societal barriers, Jesus was often in trouble with the powers of the day. He was party to plucking grain on the Sabbath and he healed on the Sabbath. He threw out the religious profiteers in

by Kyle Kelley

the Temple. Though his disciples were typically clueless, they really dropped their jaws the day Jesus jumped three barriers at once. He talked in public to: 1) a woman, 2) a Samaritan woman, and 3) a particularly "impure" Samaritan woman. Thirteen white Baptist ministers in Baton Rouge learned about barriers and trouble when they followed Jesus in May of 1961.

Though educated in Baptist colleges and seminaries, these thirteen were for the most part, still "country preachers" at heart. Did they simply not know any better than to take Jesus literally when he said God loves everybody and requires followers to do the same? Through their leadership, a larger interfaith group joined them in issuing a call, published in the Baton Rouge paper, to ease racial tensions—a statement of principles, reminding the community of God's values given in Scripture. (This statement can be found on page 6.)

Charles McCullin was then pastor at Brookstown Baptist. He would later work many years for the Home Mission Board. Like the others, he felt the statement was mild. "Just love," he states in his nearly octogenarian southern drawl. With a drawn out inflection on the word 'love' for emphasis, he continues, "but l-o-o-o-o-v-e is radical." Soon the FBI showed up at his pastor's study at church asking if he were a Communist. The FBI? Communist? You mean the preacher boy from Grand Cane, the basketball player at Louisiana College? What causes such hysteria, such fear, such anger? If a visit from the FBI was the worst thing the thirteen would face, celebration would have been in order. Rather, what came after the statement signing reads like one of the apostle Paul's listings of his ordeals: crosses burned on front yards and church yards; obscenities and threats often coming in the middle of the night, through the mail or plastered on their cars; phone lines tapped; service refused in various establishments; numerous wild accusations of all matter of wrong doing; ministers being trailed even when going out of state; harassing drive-bys at night while husbands were away; (some of these acts carried out by church members) — not a picture of Southern hospitality.

Irvin Cheney, then pastor at Broadmoor states, "The truth is, our Baton Rouge group was mostly people who were scared to death to be caught between the social and political forces of the day, and our inner convictions of what was right. Most of us (all, so far as I know) wished the issue would go away, but it wouldn't and we had no choice but to follow our conscience. In other words, we did not set out to be heroes, or crusaders. We did not want to be in the vanguard of any social movement. We were caught in a time when we either had to sell our souls or risk losing our security and/or popularity."

at Pineville Park, sets the context. "The state legislature had five special sessions at 1 million dollars each trying to find a way to circumvent the Supreme Court ruling that separate but equal was not equal ...and that schools must be integrated...The idea was to sell the school system to private enterprise and the courts would have no jurisdiction over private schools. That effort failed and integration had to begin." As the situation began to heat up and fearing the violence that occurred in other cities, Cheney remembers the statement was issued in hopes of "encouraging support of the public schools, affirming that love was better than hate, and urging parents not to infuse their negative biases in their children." Within two months Cheney would leave Broadmoor.

Not every minister suffered equally, though all experienced tension and conflict in their church. Harris states, "As I remember, only six of the fifty-three [total # leaders across faith groups]...who signed moved without being asked to leave. I was one of the six and had a case of survivor's guilt over it, wondering why so many had to suffer and I did not." Cheney relates one of the worst moments. "One day, walking down Third Street in downtown Baton Rouge, I was greeted with, 'I hear you and your wife had an argument about ---- last night.' This was chilling, as the discussion had occurred in our home after we were in bed." Another low moment came to Bruce Evans, then pastor at University Baptist and later Fellowship, when his wife was fired from her teaching job. A school board member called for executive session regarding Ann Evans "since it appears that a few people who advocate integration have infiltrated our school system." At that time, state law forbade teachers belonging to any organization that advocated integration, which included the National Education Association. Ann Evans did not belong to any such group and had never publicly voiced an opinion. She was nevertheless let go, and at a time when there was no other certified teacher to take her position. Informants told the Baton Rouge paper the precipitating factor was her husband's signing of the statement and a sermon he preached which stated, "every man has the responsibility to hold up the rights of all." After Evans left University, he started Fellowship Church, a non-traditional church which was integrated from the outset. Fellowship was later refused entry into the Baptist association.

J. W. "Bill" Trimble was pastor at Stephendale Baptist. Surprised by the intensity of the anger of his members, he states "these were gracious people, friends of mine who had helped me start the church," but were now irate. One member began bringing a baseball bat to church in case any blacks wanted to attend. Trimble had already received an appointment with the then Foreign Mission Board as the crisis erupted. He thinks that may have blunted some of the criticism from his members. Perhaps in a small way it prepared him and his wife, for their 30+ years of service in strife torn Beirut, Lebanon. Later on furlough, he was warmly invited back to the church which eventually reversed its decisions, but there were no apologies and no discussions about race.

J.C. Clement, then pastor at Emmanuel, had a long history of involvement in racial issues. His children, three of whom are now ministers (one a missionary doctor) remained in public schools as integration began.

Clement frequently spoke to black congregations and had pulpit exchanges with black churches even before the civil rights movement began. As times became more tense, he states some of the black ministers withdrew from the pulpit exchanges drawing heat from their members about being "Uncle Toms" for participating. Following the publication of the statement, Clement recalls masses of people "gathered at churches, street corners, wherever they could... denouncing this declaration, demanding that these pastors be dismissed from their pulpits, waving dollar bills in their hands stating that all the churches had to do was withdraw THIS from the preachers and they would be gone." An apologetic preacher, who had asked Clement to preach a revival in his church, "called and said, 'I saw the spirit that crucified Christ in a mob spirit before my church demanding that I cancel your coming.'" Of his own church Clement says, "my dear people sustained me...some of my dearest friends, good men, had a blind spot on this issue...and God gave them the grace to love me in spite of my position." Clement later presided at the business meeting at FBC-BR that opened the doors to all after 100 years. He also worked on integrating Lakeshore in Shreveport, an effort that failed during his tenure. He proudly notes he and his wife were the first white members of the New Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shreveport.

Bruce Lowe, then at North Highlands and later Bible professor at Louisiana College, is now 90. His church was composed of mostly working class laborers and farmers. "Now they were the best people in the world, big-hearted, religious-minded country folk. But they had definite convictions about the place of the Negro." His church also developed an unofficial baseball bat patrol. Finally in 1965, his church had a "no confidence" vote based largely on the race issue with the result being 140 for him to leave and 143 to stay. With the church so divided, he soon resigned. Lowe remembers, "Through all of my time at North Highlands, I had many who were most loyal. I do think that as some people distanced themselves from me, many others drew closer. I had beautiful support from many of the people. I felt for so many of them who wanted to do the right thing but had to live and work with deeply prejudiced people. I remember one deacon saying to me, 'You make it mighty hard for me at work.'" Livelihoods became issues for ministers and lay people. Charles McCullin remembers telling his wife that his church might let him go at any minute, and if so, likely no other church in Louisiana would consider him, so she went back to school to get her teaching degree. Lowe states that many pastors wanted to sign, but were fearful. Others "did not because they knew it would split the church. But I could not get away from the belief that if an institution is to be saved by deserting basic Christian principles, the institution is not worth saving."



Rosa Parks finger printed, with her jail mug shot, and honored later in life is well known for her troubles, but why were 13 "white Baptist preacher boys" in hot water in Baton Rouge?

See GRAIN, page 6



Charles Blackman

Irvin Cheney

J.C. Clement

Bruce Evans

John Harris

Bruce Lowe

Charles McCullin

Lee Porter

Bill Trimble

Zeno Wells



"Inside" Rhonda's house after Katrina

# Christmas In The Bayou

by Reid Doster

**R**honda is twenty-seven. She has two children. Her home was destroyed when Katrina's floodwaters raced up Bayou Lacombe from Lake Ponchartrain and swept away everything she possessed.

Rhonda now lives in a mobile home with seventeen other people. Every weekday morning, she waits with her children for the Head Start van, then goes to work at a local fast food restaurant. When we first met Rhonda, she seemed lost and confused. Her look was one of controlled fear.

We helped Rhonda complete an application for replacement housing through Habitat For Humanity's house-in-a-box program.

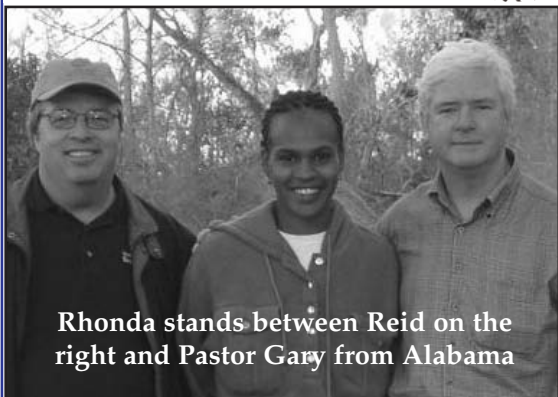
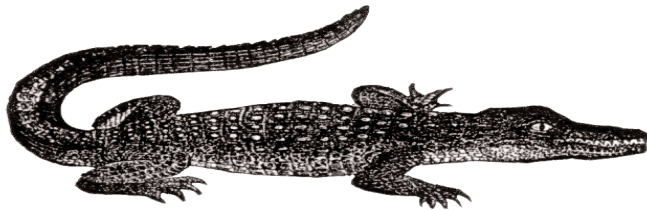
An anonymous donor gave \$2000 to assist Rhonda's two children. Volunteer Mary Beth Thomas delivered the gift. It was a private moment. Rhonda was speechless. Tears welled up.

A few days later, we stopped by with a new bike for each child. Rhonda hid the gifts in an old trailer someone had dragged in that, frankly, looked barely better than the house that had been destroyed. She later put the bikes around the tree.

At about this same time, more blessings arrived. Christopher Ingram, a visionary volunteer with Cooperative Baptists of North Carolina, delivered on his promise of "Christmas in the Bayou." Dozens of North Carolina Baptist churches organized themselves to collect kitchenware and bedroom linens, wrapped beautifully and accompanied by sweet notes of encouragement.

Christopher sent down a twenty-four foot Ryder truck, packed to the ceiling with these very practical gifts. Within two days, all of the packages were hand-delivered to some of the most needy, neglected and forgotten. Rhonda and her two children were among them.

For Rhonda, these personalized and beautifully wrapped packages were the extra special touch that made Christmas in her bayou a hope-filled event and reinforced the message of God's unconditional love.



Rhonda stands between Reid on the right and Pastor Gary from Alabama

*If you would like to volunteer in any way in disaster relief, call Reid at (985) 222-6900.*



**NEW CHURCH, from page 2** turn off the light." "In contrast, CBF Louisiana is firing up the lighthouse right here in St. Tammany, just a few miles from Ground Zero. We are small but it doesn't take much light to help people find their way. As Jesus said: 'Your spirit, not your size makes the difference (Luke 9:48, The Message).'"

"We are especially grateful to John Goodwin of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, for his commitment to the multiplying of CBF churches, and for personally encouraging me to try again. Other strong proponents include Pam Williams, Sue Tweedy, Greg Hunt, Larry Taylor, Steve Meriwether, George Haile, Roger Sullivan, Lynn Hawkins, John Daugherty and many more who have

prayed with us."

"Through CBF Louisiana, we now have the support to lay a firm foundation. People are stepping forward to offer their time and spiritual gifts. For example, my wife and I are having lunch today with a friend whose home, business and vehicles were destroyed by flooding. She and her husband are living with their daughter, while they look for another home. She has training and experience in composing songs and leading praise and worship. They will become part of our ministry here. She has also invited a friend. Even in adversity, people have a need to give back as they begin again."

*Keep up with our new church start at [www.bridgewaterchurch.info](http://www.bridgewaterchurch.info).*



**John Daugherty**  
CBF-LA Coordinator

## On Looking Ahead

2005 is passed and 2006 has dawned. First, allow me to express a word of thanks to those of you who made possible the efforts and ministries of CBF Louisiana in 2005. We ended the year in the black, even with some major transitions and major challenges. Transitioning to a full-time coordinator is both a challenge and, hopefully, a blessing. The privilege of ministering in the midst of devastation and loss is both humbling and fulfilling. You have handled both well.

But lest we rest on our laurels, there are tremendous challenges before us. The efforts of response to the devastation of Katrina in St. Tammany Parish continue and will do so

through the end of June. Bridgewater Community Church is officially underway; the first worship is scheduled for Sunday, February 12, and we still need to secure about \$10,000 per year of support for three years. Tremendous need continues in "Together for Hope – Louisiana" in East Carroll and Tensas Parishes. More new churches need to be started. We need to get the word out that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Louisiana has much to offer our state in terms of worship, ministry, service, and place of being a part of God's family. There is the coordinating of resources and people with opportunity and need not only here in Louisiana but as we partner with others in our nation and around the world. There are meetings to hold and to attend and partnerships to maintain and develop. We need your continued, and even expanded, support in order to faithfully be the presence of Christ in our communities and our state.

If your church has not included CBF Louisiana in its mission budget encourage your

pastor. Pastor encourage your deacons. Deacons encourage your missions committee. Make missions and ministry in this state and around the world through the Fellowship a priority. If you've only given periodically or on occasion, consider making the commitment to regular, ongoing support. In addition to giving of money and other resources, pray for this Fellowship, for me and for the officers and coordinating council. Pray for our missions personnel and for those who support their work administratively. Plan to participate in at least one mission/ministry project directly with your own physical presence and efforts. Make 2006 the year we become more than mission supporters, but we become "missional" people. Make the mission of Christ a part of your very being everyday.

As a Pastor, I was once asked by an old fellow, "Are we ever going to get this 'tithe' paid off?" The answer, of course, is "No." We aren't paying off a debt, rather we are investing in the building of God's kingdom. What greater investment is there?

## From John Daugherty: We have a new name!

You might remember, because of copyright difficulties, the Rural Poverty Initiative had to change its trademarked name. The Initiative is now "**Together For Hope.**" We join TOGETHER in partnerships for ministry and fellowship. Our purpose and reason is HOPE; the hope that we have in Christ propels us to spread hope to all our neighbors, and especially among the "least" in terms of resources, not in terms of value or position.

In addition to a new name, we have much to celebrate. Let me share some statistics which will be included in the national report on the Fellowship's initiative for 2005. In Louisiana over 432 volunteer units, persons who served in some capacity of ministry, were involved in East Carroll or Tensas Parishes. There were 9 teams of folks who contributed time either directly in the parishes or on behalf of ministries in those parishes. 4,192 people received or benefited directly from the efforts of those individuals and teams. Primarily through the prison ministry in Tensas Parish there were 208 people who professed Christ for the first time of which 148 were baptized in the name of Christ. Seventeen of our CBF Louisiana partner churches participated in one form or another along with 8 other partners other than churches.

I can only begin to dream and imagine what 2006 has in store for those of you who will choose to serve and minister among our neighbors in East Carroll and Tensas Parishes. We are pleased to continue our partnership with **Bill Hoffman** and the efforts he has initiated among the prison population in Tensas Parish. We are working along side others in Tensas and East Carroll as we follow through with commitments made in 2005 and as we discover new projects for 2006. Among those projects will be the establishment of community gardens in both parishes using grants from the **Heifer Foundation** – money has been earmarked for Louisiana in 2006. We are waiting for drawings of landscaping ideas as we work alongside folks in Lake Providence on their new walking track. We are partnering with **Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church** as they

expand their facilities in order to reach more folks for the Kingdom. And we need to begin soon planning for the annual distribution of book bags of school supplies to be shared among students in both parishes. Other dreams and plans are taking shape, so watch for more details to come in future reports.

## From Bill Hoffman: No "donor fatigue" here!

Thank you for your incredible response during the holidays and end of the year. You have lovingly embraced those in East Louisiana that are often forgotten altogether. Once again individuals, S.S. classes, prayer groups, mission organizations and churches all across Louisiana provided tangible reminders of a caring Father by their generous giving. Because of your recent giving we were able to:

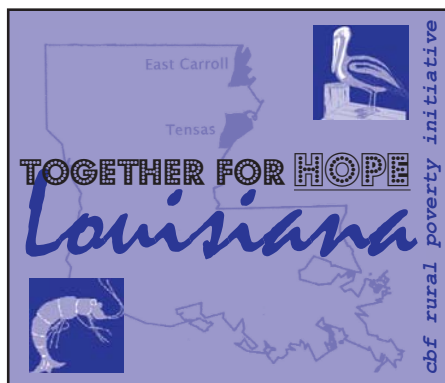
- \* Exceed our goal of providing 1000 "bags of blessing" for Tensas inmates.
- \* Share over 650 Christmas gifts with under privileged children and their families.
- \* Purchase and deliver two pickup loads of quality staple food items.
- \* Provide over 200 language Bibles and 12 worship music CD's.

Most importantly, we were able to express God's love during a critical time in their lives. During 2005, through your praying, giving, going, and encouragement, you had a part in helping to provide a meaningful presentation of the Gospel to many marginalized people. This past year, over 200 men in Tensas Correctional facilities responded to the "Good News" by accepting Christ as Saviour! Over 140 of these men were baptized. Discipleship is ongoing weekly. Please keep us and the work in your prayers. I pray that God will richly bless you for investing in His work.



**Bill Hoffman**

*Bill Hoffman continues to volunteer in restorative justice ministry in Tensas.*



GRAIN, from page 3

**Lee Porter** was pastor of Winbourne Ave. Baptist. He later worked for the Christian Life Commission, the Sunday School Board, served a term as Vice President of the SBC, and 25 consecutive years as election secretary for the SBC. He chaired the process of organizing and editing the statement. In that role he was called upon to meet with community and business leaders. When the first day of integration arrived, the chief of police came to pick up Porter to ride a 15 hour shift with him to try to quell any trouble. Porter chuckles, "as if I would know what to do." Porter notes Baton Rouge integrated the same day as Birmingham, and though there were hecklers and bad behavior, there was no major violence reported as in Birmingham which dominated national coverage that day. At his church there was no baseball bat brigade, his ushers carried pistols. For the year following the statement, it was a community on egg shells. Frequent phone calls came from unidentified persons hinting his house or church would be blown up, or they would simply engage in five minutes of obscenities. Porter's knowledge of profanity grew exponentially. Cross burnings happened to more than a few of the ministers. Porter recalls feeling sorry for his neighbors who by the accident of proximity were also placed in danger. He remembers feeling paranoid for his two young sons' safety, becoming obsessive about locks and home security. Total strangers would approach him and his wife in public places to make derogatory comments or simply stare. More than once he muses, he was caught off guard by their glaring gazes and would check to make sure his fly was closed.

**Bullard Jones** was pastor at Lanier Baptist and later served at Parkview. At publication deadline, this writer had been unsuccessful in attempts to contact him.

Four of the signers are now deceased. **Charles Blackman** was at Goodwood Baptist, then after a stay in New Orleans pastored again in N. Carolina, before returning to the state to shepherd a mission near Bunkie. He once told this writer that one of the most prejudiced men in his church stood up for him, because of the bond that had developed when Charlie spent the night with the man in a hospital at the bedside of a loved one. Charlie's wife, Hope Blackman, known for her feisty personality, did not take threatening phone calls at midnight lying down. When callers used the intimidating tactic of silence on their end, she would respond, "Well you woke me up, are you too scared to say anything?" **Zeno Wells** was at Douglas Ave. Baptist Church. He went on to pastor in Alabama and Mississippi. Wells became Director of Missions in Jackson County, MS until his retirement. He preached his last sermon at age 87. **John Hurt** was the head chaplain at Baton Rouge General at the time he signed the statement, losing his job as a result. He moved to Florida and became an executive in another denomina-

tion. Hurt wrote *Sharks in the Baptistry*, which he finished four days before he died. A book of humor, it also has stories of his civil rights experiences. **Bob Taylor**, also deceased, was at Southside. No other information of his ministry has yet been uncovered by this writer.

Is there any redemption here? Most of the surviving signers feel their efforts yielded very limited immediate results on their church fields. Harris remembered a small victory the first time two black LSU students came to his church. "The chair of ushers came to my study, after the two African Americans...[arrived], to ask what to do. I suggested he seat them as he would any other person. He responded, 'I don't think I can do that. I will just go home.' His wife reported to me later that her husband had sat in his easy chair all that Sunday afternoon with his Bible in his hands. At the end of the day, he said to her, 'It is just not in here. I cannot find it anywhere.' She asked, 'What is not in there?' His response was beautiful, 'I cannot find in my Bible anywhere that we should not allow black people to enter our church.'"

Are there any lessons? This writer was three years old when these events took place and has no special credentials to judge, but will not let that prevent charging ahead anyway with the proverbial three points.

First, just rewards do not necessarily come in this life, but God does care about justice. Doing the right thing can bring ridicule. Sacrifice may not be immediately recognized, if ever, in this world. The unfairness of suffering is a frequent theme in the Old Testament. This theme becomes transformed in the New Testament. Jesus and Paul speak of taking on suffering. Where nothing is redeemed by the exercise of violence, redemption can come through those willing to embrace suffering. The early Christians knew that. They learned it from Jesus. From Jesus and the prophets we also see God's concern for the outcast and the oppressed, whose mistreatment brings judgment even for (and especially for) the Christian. Paul warns Christians, who know better, who never grow up, who build houses on self-centeredness and injustice, that they will have their structures tested by fire. "If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames." 1 Cor 3:15 NIV. God does the sorting out. None of us can judge, for without grace none of us have a prayer. But this scripture suggests one day some Christians will be running from fire in their birthday suits to get a seat way in the back of the bus.

Second, our witness is important. Someone carried the flame to these thirteen – a parent, a mentor or a pastor. Several mentioned seminary professors T. B. Maston and Frank Stagg as influences who helped them move past their culture to see God's love for all. No one can know the full impact of their stand. None of them see

themselves as heroic, but they did show courage. Some hearts were softened. Could they have had a role in serping as lightning rods, in showing a principled Christian stand that helped reduce violence? We may never know, but we do have a witness for future generations.

Lastly, God's spirit moves within our time, yet also transcends our time. Baton Rouge 1961 was a problem of tribalism and not accepting the "other." It was not a new issue. God wanted Israel to be a light to all nations, not a



Martin Luther King's Letter From Birmingham Jail can be viewed at [ethicsdaily.com](http://ethicsdaily.com), click 'Baptist History'

job they wanted. Two books, *Jonah* (where a mission to Gentiles is resisted) and *Ruth* (in which the heroine is a Gentile and the great grandmother of David) were meant as correctives for a too exclusive faith community. Frank Stagg points out in his still timely commentary on Acts that Paul became the necessary 13th apostle because the other disciples were content in taking the gospel to Jews only. Peter was slow to get it and had to be confronted by Paul. Even James, the brother of Jesus (and leader of the Jerusalem church) stumbled. He was conspicuously absent to defend Paul in his return to Jerusalem when fellow Jews wanted Paul's life for his "Gentile policy."

God's spirit was moving in both the black and white communities of 50 years ago. Through the white faith community came the message to love, to look to faith, not fear, in letting go of old ways under judgment. For Rosa Parks and others in the black community, the Spirit inspired message was to step out, take a risk, in faith, in non-violence, to seek justice. Martin Luther King's *Letter From Birmingham Jail* reflects that moving, and, according to Wake Forest Religion Professor G. McLeod Bryan, "is a document that ranks alongside the Declaration of Independence and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address." Reading that letter today beside the Baton Rouge statement prompts interesting reflection. Two ethnic communities are on two different paths, but being pushed and wooed by the same Spirit of God.

In the Greek, Acts ends with an adverb translated "unhinderedly." Some scholars have thought it awkward wondering if the rest of the book was lost or was never completed. Stagg sees Luke deliberately using this word. He had used a variation of this word seven times in Acts, often at the point when a barrier is crossed. One example concerns the Ethiopian eunuch, whose condition would make him "impure" according to the Law. The eunuch asks, "What hinders me from being baptized?" Thus Luke ends his story in joy proclaiming the Kingdom is spreading without hindrance, crossing all barriers. The implication is that followers in all times will do the same. It's our turn. Are we ready to jump?



In view of the continuing tensions in our community, we, as ministers of God, cannot be silent about our convictions. We believe that without delay, we must face these issues openly and voluntarily in order to reduce prejudice, hatred, suffering and injustice. We are convinced that our problems must be faced in the spirit of the love of God.

We are convinced that these problems cannot be solved apart from God's teachings.

We affirm that the following relevant teachings from the Bible are the basis for any solutions:

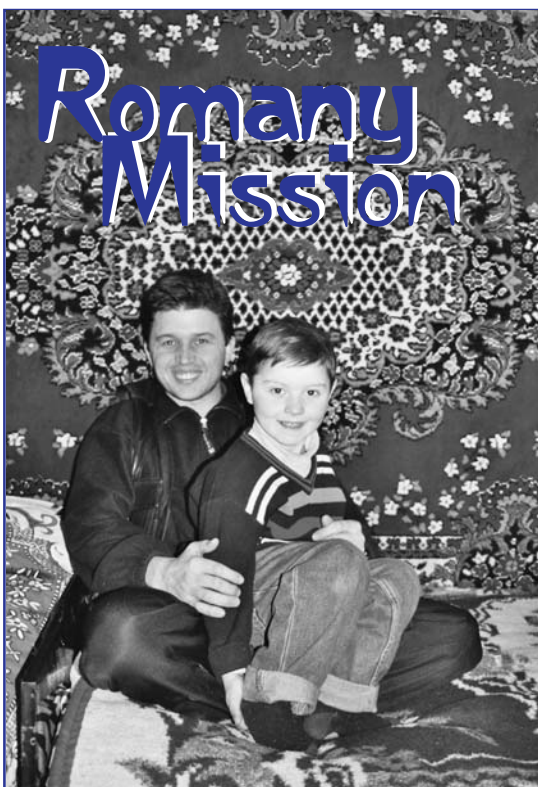
1. That God the Father created all men in his own image with equal dignity and worth, giving no superiority to any one race or group of people, but ordaining that they should live as brothers, with justice, decency, and humility.
2. That God offers the same promise of redemption equally to all men, all classes, all races, and all nations.
3. That because of His infinite goodness, God condemns all acts of injustice, all hatred, all abuse, all persecution of men.
4. That God's redemptive power enables men to overcome prejudice, hatred, discrimination, and exploitation of others.
5. That God, who is Love, seeks to create justice and true brotherhood. That since God calls men to serve Him by serving one another, it is impossible to love God without loving one's fellow man.

In the light of these basic principles, we affirm the following:

1. That we uphold freedom of speech and freedom of assembly for all persons, without fear of threat or intimidation, and that these freedoms must at all costs be preserved.
2. That each citizen must realize his moral responsibility to God for his actions affecting his neighbor. That he should continually strive to conquer all prejudice, and to eliminate from his speech terms of contempt and from his conduct actions of ill will.
3. That we encourage individuals in both private life and public office to refuse to participate in physical or verbal threats, violence and character assassination.
4. That parents and all who influence children must be on guard neither to pass on to them the sins of prejudice, nor to lead them in racial discrimination.
5. That every person has the right to fully develop his divinely given capacities and to share justly in the measure of the blessings of our Father's world.
6. That we should commit ourselves individually and corporately to do something about improving the relationships among the races, since we recognize that such action is a part of God's will.

Therefore: No. 1 The public school system of our State must be maintained.  
No. 2 Every citizen of the State possesses equal rights and responsibilities under law.  
No. 3 Discrimination on account of race or religion is a violation of the divine law of Love.

Baton Rouge - May, 8, 1961 Thirteen white Baptist ministers signed as part of 53 member interfaith group; none fully anticipated the consequences.



Keith Holmes & Mary van Rheenen  
romani-bible.org  
gypsministries.com



Holmes-Van Rheenen Family

CBF-LA has adopted the mission to the Romany people (gypsies). We receive regular updates and prayer requests from Louisiana native CBF missionary Keith Holmes and his wife and missionary partner Mary Van Rheenen. Based in the Netherlands, where the family Christmas picture was taken, their ministry to gypsies stretches across Europe.

Dutch Romany typically no longer migrate from place to place, but live in *woon-wagon-kamps* (trailer camps). Extended families stay next to one another, and the wheels under the houses preserve a feeling of freedom.

Gypsies were slaves in the Ottoman Empire and in Europe as late as 1865. They were frequently deported. As many as 80% of some tribes were exterminated by the Nazis. Few groups have been persecuted as much as the Romany. Discrimination still runs deep in Europe against this people group who have come to be known as a "scapegoat minority." With this background, Mary shares the story below.

*"I wouldn't have gone in there if you hadn't been with me," Keith's buddy Arthur told him. Arthur and Keith were in the neighborhood of a woon-wagon-kamp where several of our Sinti Romany friends live. So Keith suggested they drop by. One turns into the camp off a dirt road. About twenty house caravans (house trailers) line the one street down the middle of the camp. Although the first caravan is the richest looking one--wrought-iron fence, ceramic gnomes in the lawn—one tends to focus instead on the heap of rusting junk in the middle of the street. That, and the reputation of Gypsies in the Netherlands, and the cluster of dark-eyed men who usually congregate somewhere along the street and stare pointedly at "foreign" cars, probably put Arthur off.*

*But Arthur did go in. He followed Keith out of the car and up the steps of a "double-wide" where the head man of this camp lives. The head woman, mother of nine and grandmother of untold numbers, welcomed Keith and his gadjo (non-Gypsy) friend warmly. She insisted on feeding them something. She urged Arthur to come back sometime, for the worship service and another visit, and to bring his wife. And Arthur fully intends to--because Christ makes brothers and sisters of us all.*

**PRAYER REQUESTS**

- \* For a Sinti Romany church that hopes to replace the leaky portable building they have been using with a more substantial church building.
- \* For dubbing of Campus Crusade's Jesus video into the Western Kalderash dialect of Romani. Keith will be in England off and on throughout January and February working on this project.
- \* For the future of Sinti and Roma Christian Training Center, started this fall in Germany with 8 students; necessary for training pastors and other church leaders.
- \* For Armin and Ursula, Wycliffe Bible Translators in the Sinti Romany language.



**Partners in Prayer Calendar**  
*Some missionary names omitted due to sensitive nature of work.*

**JANUARY**

- 16 Fran Graham, Affiliate, Asheville, NC
- 16 \_\_\_\_\_, 1996, daughter, unevangelized people group, Asia
- 16 Merrie Grace Harding, 1995, daughter, David & Merrie Harding, Florida
- 17 Latha Bandela, unevangelized people groups of N. India, Georgia
- 17 \_\_\_\_\_, daughter, unevangelized people group, M. East/N. Africa
- 21 Laura Barton, Affiliate, China
- 21 Jack Snell, Associate Coordinator for Field Ministries, Georgia
- 25 Scott Houser, urban work, S. Africa
- 25 \_\_\_\_\_, Affiliate, Middle East
- 25 \_\_\_\_\_, unevangelized people group
- 30 Jonnie Hill, representative to China
- 31 Penny Mann, Global Service Corps, Pecs, Hungary

**FEBRUARY**

- 3 Phil Whisnand, urban work, Los Angeles
- 11 Donald Barnes, Affiliate, China
- 11 Rick Shaw, work with Albanian/Balkan peoples, Macedonia
- 12 Louisa Houser, 2004, daughter, Ana Marie & Scott Houser, Southern Africa
- 17 Nancy James, Affiliate, Haiti
- 20 Amy D. Butler, Affiliate, Washington, DC
- 21 William Hutchinson, 1990, son, Lynn & Mike Hutchinson, France
- 27 Lori Myrick, work with Bedouin people, Jordan

**MARCH**

- 3 Emmanuel Aldape, 1990, son, Eddie & Macarena Aldape, India
- 4 Jane Martin, Emeritus
- 6 Ronnie Adams, urban work, New York
- 8 Benjamin Burnette, 1993, son, Ellen & Rick Burnette, Thailand
- 8 Isaac Pittman, 1999, son, Angel & Jason Pittman, Florida
- 10 Joshua Ballew, 1992, son, Larry & Sarah Ballew, China
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_, unevangelized people group, Asia
- 12 Jim Rich, Partners in Hope Field Coordinator, Rio Grande Valley
- 15 Matthew Myrick, 1991, son, Lori & Tim Myrick, Jordan
- 15 \_\_\_\_\_, unevangelized people group, Asia
- 15 **Mary Van Rheenen**, work with Romany people, Europe
- 17 Wes Browning, Global Service Corps, Birmingham, AL
- 19 Kristin Smith, 1983, daughter, Becky & Jim Smith, Germany
- 25 Jade Acker, urban work, West Africa
- 27 \_\_\_\_\_, unevang. people group, Asia

## CBF-LA 'BRIEFS'



### COMING EVENTS

**Disaster Response Forum**, Jackson, MS Jan.30-Feb. 1.  
 Reid Doster, Mary Beth Thomas, Ruby Peak, and  
 John Daugherty will be attending.

Molly Marshall will lead a prayer renewal weekend at **First-Shreveport** March 10-12.  
**Discovering New Directions for the Traditional Church**, a regional conference for pas-  
 tors, pastoral team ministers, and lay leaders, May 15-16, Second Baptist Church,  
 Little Rock, Ark. Led by: **Michael Tutterow, Dave Odum, Bill Bruster**; contact: 501-  
 223-8586

**CBF National Assembly**, June 22-23, Omni Hotel, Atlanta, GA; extra events June 21 & 24.  
 Register NOW at: [thefellowship.info](http://thefellowship.info) or 800-352-8741.

**PASSPORT Summer Youth Camp**, July 17-22, LSU-Baton Rouge. Contact: [passportcamps.org](http://passportcamps.org), 800-769-0210



**Welcome to Zachary Community Church**  
 which recently took the step of formally affiliating with CBF-LA. The Zachary congregation is pastored by **Tommy Jackson** pictured here to the left of CBF-LA Coordinator **John Daugherty**.

**Congratulations to Iglesia Bautista Ebenezer, Shreveport**, Spanish mission first of **Highland**, then **First Baptist**, which celebrated its Constitution Service 1-15-06 signifying its organization as a fully self-supporting congregation. **Bill Hoffman**, who had supervised the work of the mission in earlier days was scheduled to preach the service and was present, but due to oral surgery, not speaking too smoothly. **Greg Hunt**, FBC pastor, gave the message instead, noting the joy and pride of the new congregation who in eagerness repainted the entire church for the occasion, only finishing the morning of the celebration (though the building is less than two years old.) Ebenezer is pastored by the able **Reginaldo De Leon**. Reggie's daughter, **Clara Lopez**, led in worship through music.



**Thanks!** The **Rotary Foundation** of Rotary International has awarded a \$50,000 grant to aid in CBF-LA disaster relief. Earmarked to restore at least five houses in Lacombe, the grant was submitted by **Rotary Club 99** from Little Rock, Ark. Pictured at left center is **Sam Chaffin** of Rotary Club 99 presenting to Reid and John the title of a new cargo trailer donated by the club.

## CBF-LA SPRING ASSEMBLY

*God is Doing a New Thing*



Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand new. It's bursting out. Don't you see it? Isaiah 43:19

The Message

**March 17-18**

**Emmanuel Baptist - Alexandria**

*Begins with Friday 7pm Dinner  
 Concludes 1:30pm on Saturday*

**Speakers:** Reid Doster, John Daugherty, Steven Meriwether, Tom Prevost, Todd Harrington

**Register at:** [cbfla@cox.net](mailto:cbfla@cox.net) or 318-640-5782  
**Meal cost:** \$7 each, deadline March 3

CBF-LA Receipts	Nov/Dec	Fiscal Year 3/01/05-2/28/06
Undesignated	\$12,345.18	\$52,529.40
Together in Hope	\$2,215.01	\$21,768.46
Stagg-Tolbert Forum	\$25.00	\$50.00
New Church Start	\$450.00	\$2,521.55
Disaster Relief	\$110,765.00	\$158,540.00
Misc. Designated Funds	\$50.00	\$550.00
Credits	\$0	\$1,598.17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$126,018.78</b>	<b>\$238,502.94</b>

### News and Views

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**Jay Hogewood, Vice Moderator**

**Pam Williams, Past Moderator**

**Greg Hunt, Representative to National CBF**

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