



\$200,000 Building Initiative Slated for New Orleans Churches in Partnership with Baptist Builders

OUR IDENTITY:

We are 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 VISION:

Being the presence of Christ in the world.

OUR MISSION:

Serving Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission.

July-August, 2006



Volume 13, No. 4

We are now officially entered into partnership with Baptist Builders International out of Baton Rouge and with CBF Arkansas for a new effort in New Orleans, reports John Daugherty, CBF-LA Coordinator. "We have identified five African-American congregations in New Orleans with whom we will work to restore their churches for use and then respond to needs in their surrounding communities."

While CBF-LA will be receiving additional funding from our national CBF Disaster Response Funds for this partnership, it will not be enough to complete all the work we know will need to be done. We are trusting God to continue to provide for the needs of the volunteers and the residents as we work to rebuild homes and lives and families. We are praying for mercy in the new storm season."

Baptist Builders (baptistbuilders.org) is a coalition of Progressive National Baptists, American Baptists, CBF, the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and the Alliance of Baptists. Approximately 5 million U.S. Baptists are represented through this partnership. Daniel Vestal (National CBF Coordinator) was instrumental in forming this coalition in an historic meeting last September which established partnerships with predominantly and historically African-American Baptist denominations.

The \$200K is to underwrite the cost of building materials in this project. Reid Doster's (CBF-LA Disaster Response Coordinator) financial support through the end of the calendar year is secured and the administrative costs of Baptist Builders is underwritten with other funds.



Baptist Builders
Rebuilding churches.
Rebuilding families.
Rebuilding lives.



The New Orleans initiative came as a result of this historic meeting in September of Baptist pastors and leaders crossing cultural lines.

Reid Issues Urgent Call for Volunteers



Reid Doster

In our New Orleans initiative to assist African American churches, their pastors and communities, funds for materials are in place. We now need volunteers as soon as possible. Are you willing to share a week of your life to help some Christian friends who are, in turn, trying to help their communities?

Clean, secure, spacious housing has been made available to us by the Desire Street Ministries (desirestreet.org). After Katrina, their recently constructed, modern school building stood in more than seven feet of water for days. The building has been power washed and disinfected for mold inside and out. The three restored air conditioning units run 24 hours a day. There are separate sleeping rooms, showers and toilets for men and women. Basic kitchen facilities are operable. This impressive facility, with its creative programs, had been ministering 24/7 to the surrounding neighborhoods. The Desire Street neighborhood is now uninhabited.

To help cover housing expenses and utilities \$5 per person per day is requested by Desire Street Ministries. Also required by CBF is a very reasonable 75 cent per day insurance fee. Food is provided by the local congregations being assisted, who will also be hosting and otherwise assisting groups. Police and National Guard troops will increase their surveillance of Desire Street's property while our volunteers are being housed there. Actually, there have been no incidents of break-ins or theft on this property since Katrina, probably due to their stellar reputation in the community and the bleak fact that no one is currently residing in the neighborhood. Reid spent several hours there, inspecting the building and driving around, and saw not even a dog or cat, much less any residents.

Most tools are already on sight or nearby. Reid will coordinate with volunteers additional information on what to bring and how to organize groups. "All systems are in place to accommodate volunteers," he states. "Now we just need help getting the word out. This is going to be an exceptionally heart-warming experience for all who participate." Contact Reid Doster, Disaster Response Coordinator at (985) 222-6900 or reid_doster@hotmail.com.

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IT'S TIME

John Daugherty
CBF-LA
Coordinator

Daniel Vestal, National Coordinator of CBF, has written a great and challenging book entitled *It's Time*. Along with the book is a wonderful guide for groups to study the principles of being a missionary Christian. The book challenges believers to think "missionally," which means to make the mission and calling of Christ a part of every aspect of our lives. The writer of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes wrote in chapter 3 "there is a time for everything."

This idea of "it's time" has been resonating in me for some time, pardon the pun. I believe it is time for folks who believe in the principles of freedom and equality, who believe we are called to be the presence of Christ, and who stand for unity in the family of faith to express without apology these much needed foundations of our faith. It is time to make a commitment to our Cooperative Baptist Fellowship both here in Louisiana and nationally. It is time!

It is time for courageous leadership from among our pastors and from among our church members. Some pastors are afraid, or perhaps weary, yet need to take a stand for what they say they believe. They need to hear from their pews the kind of support that says we are Fellowship kind of people. We believe in the Identity, Vision, and Mission of this great Fellowship. We will support you in leading our church to take a stand and declare our commitment to be Christ's presence and go where others might prefer to avoid. It is time!

It is time we become more sensitive to the gifting and calling of God in the lives of our young people. When was the last time your church called out one of your young people and commissioned him or her to the ministry of the Gospel? This idea of calling is one that often perplexes us. However, the New Testament church was not shy about recognizing giftedness and calling and approaching the gifted one encouraging that person to be faithful to what God was clearly doing in their lives. My own calling was very much a process of affirmation

from folks who knew me and loved me and saw in me God's call on my life. It is time we take that role more seriously by being sensitive and affirming. We need committed women and men who will obediently acknowledge God's gifts and respond by serving as ministers and missionaries. It is time!

It is time we as Fellowship people and churches take on the mentality of church planting. The way to grow the Fellowship is to establish new communities of faith built on the foundations of the Identity, Vision, and Mission of our Fellowship. And, we must reach out across historical divides to invite other congregations with similar commitments of freedom and fellowship to be a part of this great movement. We have a wonderful message, a story of grace and fellowship, a tremendous challenge to be the presence of Christ to a world without borders – we have a mission and a hope the world desperately needs. It is time we declare the clear differences we have to offer and joyfully invite our neighbors to celebrate our Fellowship with us. It is time!

I believe our neighbors and our world are in greater need of the grace, freedom, mission, justice and reconciliation, and opportunities to serve than ever before. Clearly folks are growing weary of top-down authority demanding fealty to some set of narrowly defined doctrine and want to be loved and loving. Clearly folks no longer choose churches by denominational label, rather they look for a fellowship where they can be free, where they can grow, where they can express their own giftedness and calling, where they can make a difference in another person's life, where they will be welcomed and embraced and encouraged and sent out to be Christ's presence. These are the very foundation stones of our Fellowship. It is time we openly declare and openly invite and gladly serve as Fellowship people.

We are people of the Great Commission. We have been ordered by our Lord to make disciples. We make disciples by being the presence of Christ, by obediently loving our neighbors, even our enemies. We make disciples by inviting others to be Great Commission people who, in turn, become the presence of Christ loving their neighbors. Isn't it time we live our commission openly and gladly? It is time!

Disaster Response Volunteer Baptized After Life-changing Experience in Louisiana

by Carla Wynn

Canadian Don Savoie traveled to Lacombe, to find a place to help Hurricane Katrina victims, but he also found something else – spiritual renewal. In the experience of helping others, he found a new hope.

For five weeks last fall, Savoie worked as a disaster relief volunteer with CBF-LA. Like many people, Savoie watched media coverage of Katrina's destruction and felt the need to do something. Savoie had never heard of CBF or CBM (Canadian Baptist Ministries). His wife's cousin, a Baptist minister, connected him with CBM. With a useful skill set from his career in the Canadian Armed Forces, Savoie was sent to Louisiana, where he lived and worked with Christian volunteers from across the country.

"It woke something up inside of me," he said. "You can't live with Christians and people who are dedicated to Christ day in and day out and not get a sense of something."

The volunteers made a difference for Savoie. He was impressed by his fellow Canadian volunteers, who gave up two weeks in order to travel a great distance for the purpose of helping others. Volunteers from First Baptist in Asheville, N.C., also made a faith

impression as they did the initial clean out for a flooded home filled with debris, mildew, mud and the smell of soured food.

"I could barely go in without gagging, and here they were going in again and again," Savoie said. "You could see that they were discouraged, but they would come back out and pray, then go back in. They had to have God's help to go in there because a normal person would have been so sickened."

The life-changing experience in Lacombe resulted in a profes-



Don Savoie at left orients disaster response volunteers.

sion of faith for Savoie. He and his wife, Christina, were baptized Easter Sunday and became members of New Minas Baptist Church, in New Minas, Nova Scotia, where they are both enjoying new involvement in a spiritual community.

While Savoie was undergoing spiritual renewal in

Lacombe, his wife was experiencing something similar at home in Nova Scotia.

"She was here, and I was there, but somehow she was getting the same feeling at the same time. It was just a beautiful thing," he said.

In more ways than one, Savoie is thankful for Fellowship volunteers he worked with and

See LIFE-CHANGING, page 8

Listen to me in silence... Isaiah 41:1

Prayer is one of the great mysteries of the Christian faith, full of paradox: God commands us to pray, but we cannot pray until the Spirit empowers us. God knows and controls the future, but he wants us to ask him to do what he's already planning to do.

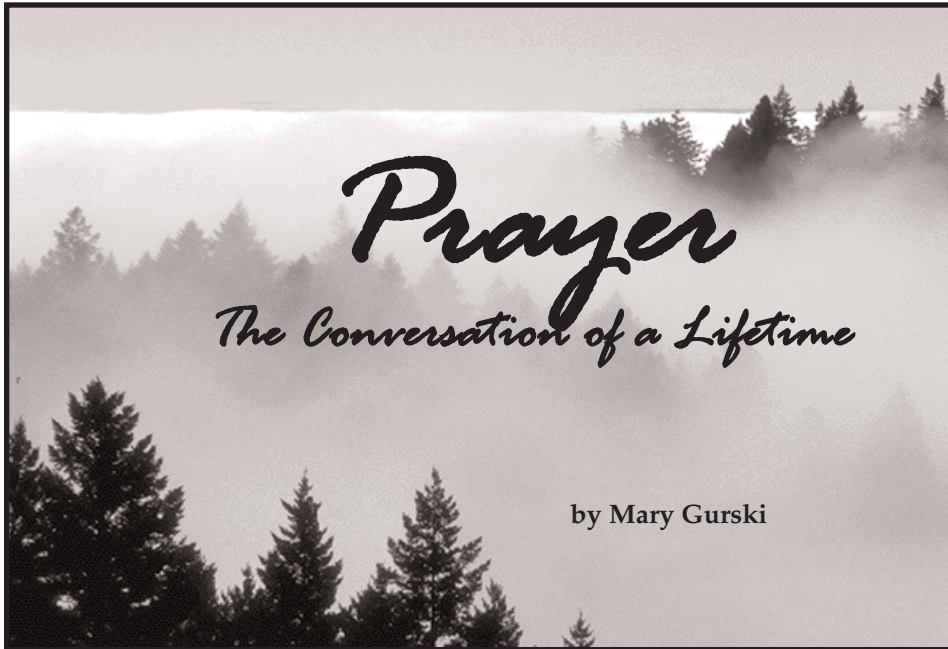
Prayer seems to me, as slippery as that fish that symbolized the early church. We want to understand it, define it—ultimately control it. (Isn't that our goal for almost every thing and every one?) In our naiveté, we utilize the Scientific Method to design studies attempting to quantify the effects of prayer upon heart surgery patients: Yes! Prayer does help people recover...No—wait! It actually seems to increase the rate of complications...But not to a statistically significant extent...

The fish has squirmed free from our grasp once more.

The prayer most of us learn on, is the prayer of intercession. I remember my earliest bedtime prayers. When I had finished "Now I lay me...", I would remind God to take care of my family ("God bless Mama and Daddy and Sissy and...") I don't think it ever occurred to me that he would not bless them, but I was somehow doing my part by remembering them each night. Church prayer ministries usually involve praying for others. It's a work we never outgrow. An intellectual friend of mine once downplayed the value of intercessory prayer. "There's so much more to prayer than just praying for Aunt Sadie's health," he said. I agreed that, yes, we do need to pray for issues larger than the health of our loved ones, and our prayer lives do need to be

larger than a list of people with problems. Then I suggested that praying for someone else doesn't just affect that person. Over time, it also affects me. It takes me out of my own concerns and into those of others. It can make my heart tender and compassionate. It gives me the opportunity to enter into the suffering of others. And it can teach me about patience and perseverance and seeking God's will.

For four years now I have been involved in centering prayer. Centering prayer is wordless prayer. We who center say we are resting in God. The goal is to prepare ourselves to live moment by moment in an awareness of God's loving



by Mary Gurski

presence. We center to quiet those interminable conversations inside our heads. We center for liberation from the need to constantly judge ourselves and others. We center to find peace and freedom from the tyranny of consumerism, busyness, and self, self, self.

Twice a day for twenty minutes my intent is to relinquish everything to God: my desires, my thoughts, my grip on people and activities, my anxieties, even my notion of who I

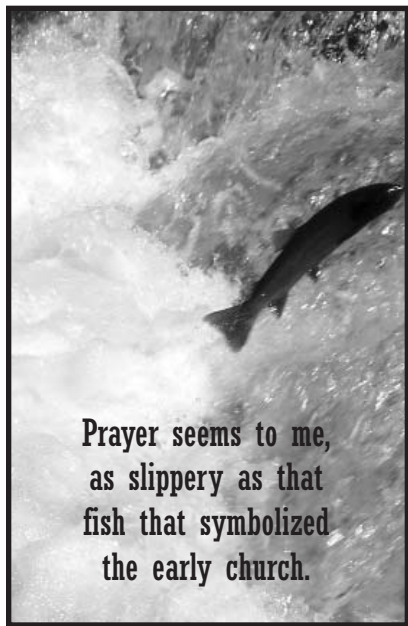
should be. My intent is to place all this in God's care. And just be in his presence. I tell him that this little scrap of a wisp of time (How does the Lord of Eternity even measure twenty minutes?) is my gift to him, to do with as he pleases.

In the normal course of events, nothing earth-shattering seems to happen during any period of centering. I feel refreshed, but usually that is all. Yet, those who center faithfully over the long haul report being transformed by the process. Friends and acquaintances tell them they have changed, have become calmer, gentler, more loving and patient. Slowly, over time, the fruit of the Spirit become more evident in the life of the pray-er.

Perhaps it is the very act of giving up a little of our precious time each day, with no expectation of receiving anything back in return, that opens us up to the possibility of transformation. Perhaps it is the attempt to surrender to God all control over the process. Probably all this and more.

Centering prayer isn't the only type of prayer that works these changes. (Maybe, as expressions of a faithful desire to be with God, over time they all do.) And not everyone is called to contemplative prayer. But I do believe that, as essential as intercession is to the community of believers, it is also essential that each believer find some practice that gives God a chance to be heard. It could be conversational prayer, with its periods of silence and waiting for the Spirit to pray through us. It could be *lectio divina*, with its deliberate immersion in a passage of scripture and its rhythm of reading, meditating, and waiting to hear from the Spirit. These are only two out of many ways to pray (see Richard Foster's *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*). Just as God created each of us to be unique, so he calls each of us to find the prayer practice that "fits" us and our relationship with him.

All of these practices take time. All except intercession require time spent listening, attending, waiting...doing "nothing." Waiting on the Spirit to show up is how most of us tend to think of it. More accurately, waiting on ourselves to quiet down so we can realize the Spirit has been waiting on us our whole lives.



Prayer seems to me, as slippery as that fish that symbolized the early church.

Mary Gurski serves as Pastor's Secretary at First Baptist Shreveport



Learn about centering prayer at contemplativeoutreach.org

CBF National Assembly

The big family gathers

- * \$17 million ministry and missions budget
- * \$32,800 given to Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter offering for religious liberty and human rights, 1/2 to go to the Baptist World Alliance
- * Nineteen people commissioned for missions service
- * Constitutional Preamble approved proclaiming who we are (see back cover)
- * Baptist Evangelicals break silence regarding HIV
- * Over 100 ministry and mission workshops
- * Worship, laughter, tears



Assembly photos - Mark Sandlin

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." Al Staggs portrays Dietrich Bonhoeffer, leader of small German resistance church who was executed by the Nazi.



Trevor Hudson, pastor from South Africa known for his passion for the gospel, discipleship and justice spoke to the large gathering and in discipleship workshops. He gave the challenge to break out of our "bubbles" and follow Jesus in responding to the world's groans.

Download addresses of major speakers, order recordings of workshops and learn more about the CBF HIV network at the-fellowship.info.



CBF national officers: Joy Yee, past moderator; Emmanuel McCall, moderator; Harriet Harral, moderator elect; Hal Bass, recorder.



Touching Lepers With Jesus

In Jesus day, no taboo was greater than the religious rules, the "purity code" that declared lepers unclean. They were so impure that to touch them was to become contaminated and unacceptable to God. Jesus squarely attacked this code by showing compassion and publicly touching and healing lepers.

Medical advances make HIV in the US (for those who have medications and remain compliant with their therapies) often a manageable chronic condition. Yet the taboo and frequent lack of support is deafening. No where has the silence been as eerie as the Evangelical church where polls indicate some of the lowest empathy for victims of AIDS.

In a moving testimony, one woman spoke of contracting HIV from her husband unaware he was infected and saw it passed on to her children. Continuing taboo suggested she not make her name public, but she did joyfully publicize the support of her friends, family and church who have embraced her. Tears flowed from the 400 participants in hearing her story of faith and overcoming of fear.

Noting a milestone year for the pandemic, Rev. David Beckman stated, "We know it may have taken some time to break the silence, but God has not been waiting 25 years. God is in the midst of this...God is not put off by the sexual character of this disease. There are more important things at stake than that."

A pandemic that has changed the world claims 40 million worldwide who live with AIDS and HIV. Though in the US, the disease has often been associated with the homosexual community, globally it is largely a heterosexual illness with its victims overwhelmingly women, children and the very poor.

There is cause for hope as world leaders (spurred on by Bono) and now churches may be waking up. Some progress has been made. Daniel Vestal briefly addressed the summit encouraging us all to actively involve ourselves in this work doing three things. One, enter into the rest of God amidst the hurt. Two, engage the principalities and powers--the evil in systems and structures and name the demonic. Third, embrace human suffering, just as Jesus was moved to touch the lepers.

David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, underscores the connection between poverty and the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.



Members of the "Louisiana Delegation" gather above, including three who share their gift of animation for our photographer. Bo Prosser, at far left, speaker for our gathering, finds this amusing and wonders if Cajuns always act this way. LA photos - Charlene Kelley

THE BOOK BAG PEOPLE AND MORE

Beaming Faces

When John Daugherty travels in Tensas and East Carroll, Louisiana's two focal parishes for our rural poverty initiative, he sometimes gets quizzical looks when he mentions

C B F, folks may scratch their heads.

But when he says, "We're the book bag people," faces light up with

broad smiles. The good word has gotten around.

For the third year now, churches and individuals throughout Louisiana have joined TFH in a book bag and school supply drive for those with limited incomes. Each year, we have been able to add new grades and more students who benefit. What may seem as a small thing for the donor has multiplied effects: to a single parent with 5 children overwhelmed with expenses; to a young student able to start the year prepared and with the right materials; or to a teacher who will not have to pull from her own pocket personal funds to cover essential student needs.

Local administrators help with the distribution and determining eligibility. At one delivery sight TFH is teaming with a local clinic to ensure children's free screenings and immunizations are up to date. It is an effort, notes state moderator Jay Hogewood, which is a "no brainer" in terms of benefits and rewards.

Joining the campaign for the first time is a new flock. "This past Sunday, the Bridgewater congregation set a goal of providing 75 'Hope Bags' for the children of Tensas and East Carroll Parishes. We are well on our way and I believe we will reach our goal," reports Reid Doster.

Delivery is set for early August. If you or your congregation would prefer to send money, some supplies can be bought from local vendors thus supporting the parish economies. John Daugherty can be reached at contact information given on back cover.

Prayer and Preparation

Together for Hope is a thoughtful, respectful process. We support existing efforts, seek to empower and build on strengths. Prayer for discernment is requested for two exciting developments. One is with MissionsConnect, a partner group that brings together mission and congregational groups from around the country for special projects to multiply efforts. Other partnerships also continue to grow.

A second development involves an anonymous donor who is interested in funding a permanent presence in the parishes. John Daugherty

I found those 2000 verses on the poor. How did I miss that? I went to Bible college, two seminaries, and I got a doctorate. How did I miss God's compassion for the poor? – Rick Warren, author of Purpose Driven Life

states we are looking to find a person of faith with knowledge and commitment to community and economic development that would live in East Carroll. "This person would be an extension of my efforts provid-

ing ongoing contact, local knowledge and relationships, eyes and ears sensing areas where we could effectively partner, and provide follow-up and oversight of ongoing projects." Various options are being explored including use of a Global Missions Affiliate, perhaps a retired couple, or a contract arrangement. "In either option, we would be able to have feet on the ground establishing important relationships, exploring partnering opportunities and input as well as insight to strategic ways TFH can address the effects of poverty in East Carroll and Tensas Parishes."

Putting Your Pencil Where Your Mouth Is

Nationally, Together for Hope is expanding to include leadership for the initiative's public policy efforts. Jeremy Lewis, formally with CBF Global Missions, has been added as a TFH program manager. "We're getting a person who has a heart and passion for those who struggle with poverty, and this person has demonstrated the discipline of careful study and active participation on public policy," stated Tom Prevost TFH coordinator.

Lewis, a graduate of University of Georgia and Emory University's Candler School of Theology, will serve as the initiative's public policy adviser, researching how the Fellowship can best advocate on behalf of residents in TFH's 20 focal counties. "Public policy is an important way for Fellowship churches and individuals to allow their faith to affect change in the communities where they live and in the communities where Together for Hope is relating," Lewis said.

Involvement from individual and church volunteers has continued to grow, and Prevost urged deeper commitment. "We need volunteers who keep going back, who don't go to do for but to do with," he said. "We need volunteers to be advocates."

Jon Singletary, an assistant professor at Baylor and director of the Center for Family and Community Ministries, believes that advocacy for social justice issues – at home and abroad – should be part of every Christian's discipleship. In a workshop at the National Assembly, he stated, "In reading the gospel anew, I saw how social justice was central to Jesus' teaching."

The most effective Christian advocacy group for poor people for decades now has been CBF partner Bread for the World. www.bread.org. Each year, Bread for the World chooses a very specific goal to work toward. It targets both domestic and foreign

hunger and poverty issues, and does so in a non-partisan way. (For example, among BFW's most ardent supporters have been Republican Bob Dole and Democrat Leon Panetta.) BFW provides concise analysis and coordinates "Offerings of Letters" by faith groups.

Singletary said he does not believe separation of church and state concerns should keep Baptists from writing their representatives about hunger and poverty issues. "We can't engage in partisan activities, and we cross the line when we say our churches have to be involved," he said. "But it is certainly appropriate to say to our leaders that our government should support programs that help alleviate hunger and poverty." Singletary said CBF should encourage people to participate in the letter-writing campaign as an additional way to support Fellowship field personnel working in developing countries. "It is vital in support of our field personnel to build connections not only by sending our offerings and staff, but we should ask our nation's leaders to work toward alleviating poverty that will affect areas where our people serve."

Parts of this story were drawn from reports by Sue Poss and Carla Wynn.



Started in 2001, "Together for Hope" is a 20-year initiative of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to come alongside and learn from the relationships formed in rural communities in the 20 poorest counties across the nation in a long-term effort to address domestic poverty. For more information on Together for Hope, visit www.ruralpoverty.net.

Iraq, Immigration, Incompetence... It's Time

by Daniel Vestal
National Coordinator



Iraq

In April 2003, I wrote an article which said, "The war in Iraq has been a sobering and disturbing experience for me. I have found it difficult to concentrate on the work at hand and stay focused on regular routine and daily responsibilities. Although Atlanta is far removed from the places where bombs have been dropped and soldiers have been engaged in conflict, I have felt close to this war. It has caused me to renew my own commitments to Christ and pray for peace with greater fervency."

That lament is more poignant today than three years ago, knowing now what we didn't know then. There were no weapons of mass destruction; there were no connections between the attacks of 9/11 and Saddam Hussein's regime. There was little planning for the potential of insurgency and possible civil war. There has been deception with the American people.

My wife and I talk almost daily about this war with a heaviness of heart. We grieve with the American families who have lost loved ones. We also grieve for Iraqi families who have lost loved ones. We pray for leaders who make decisions that there might be divine intervention, for peace. But most of all we lament.

Immigration

One of the reasons I am proud to be an American is because we are a nation of immigrants. We are a rich mixture of racial, ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. The freedoms guaranteed in our Constitution assure equality before the law and protect the rights of all. To be sure, we have very dark segments in our national history (genocide of Native Americans and the institution of slavery), but we also have remarkable segments. One of the most remarkable is the way we as a nation have incorporated people groups from all over the world.

The U.S. is a mosaic of humanity, and for that we should be proud. I personally believe we need a new commitment to secure our borders against illegal immigration, the creation of a guest worker program for those who want to work in the U.S., and a way for undocumented immigrants to gain citizenship. But most important, I believe we need a new respect for the dignity of every human being within our borders. This respect will result in less divisive rhetoric and kindness for "the other," regardless of the language they speak or their legal, social, or economic status.

Incompetence

As I see it, there is a major leadership crisis in this country. The Bush Administration has shown ineptness in response to disasters and indifference to the growing disparity between rich and poor. Congress seems incapable of accomplishing anything. Neither Democrats nor Republicans cast a compelling vision for the broad middle of the American population. They cater to their core constituents and create greater division among us. Business and corporate leaders seem to care only for their profits and offer little hope for the social fabric that holds us together. There are, of course, exceptions to this analysis. But the exceptions only make the leadership vacuum more obvious.

I yearn for competent political leaders who seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God. I yearn for competent business leaders who lead by serving and sacrificing. I yearn for competent leaders in all areas of our society that believe in the common good more than they believe in their own agendas.

It's Time...

Early in my life I heard someone say that "man's extremity becomes God's opportunity." When circumstances are the most dire and when life is most difficult, we can and should have hope for God to work. And it has been my experience that God works through people.

"It's Time" for urgency.

Christian discipleship means that we live out of faith not fear, out of love not anger, out of generosity not greed. Christian discipleship means we become activists and advocates on behalf of those in need.

"It's Time" for us to find our voice and use it.

Words may seem inadequate but

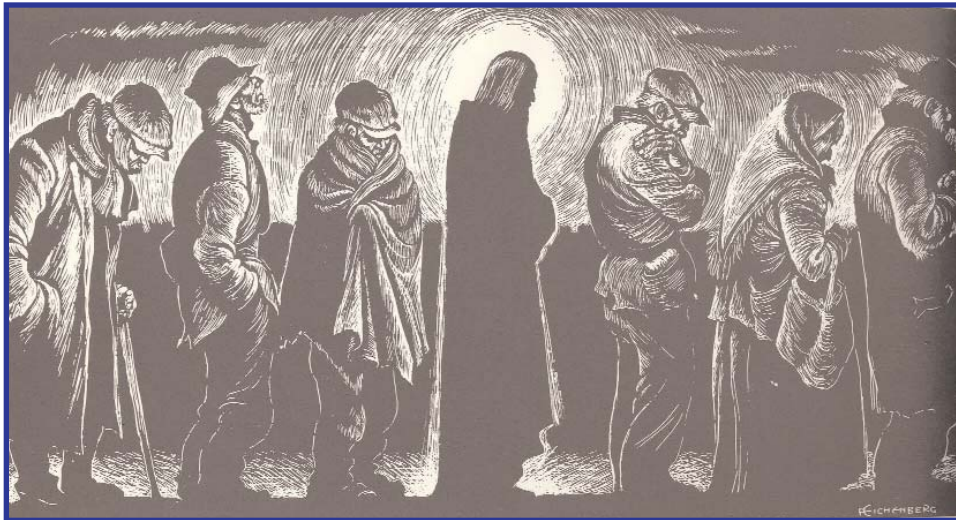
silence in the face of injustice is sin. When you hear a statement of bigotry, greed or anger, speak up. Perhaps you can say, "With all due

respect, I beg to differ." If each of us would use our own voice and speak truth in love, changes would take place.

"It's Time" for us to be unafraid. I confess that even in writing this article, I feared what people might think or how they might respond. I had to face my fear and name it, and I had to let it not paralyze me or keep me from doing what I felt was important. Some of us are afraid of involvement. Others of us are afraid of rejection or conflict or the unknown or pain. Jesus said, "Be not afraid."

"It's Time" for us to pray. Christian spirituality and formation do not isolate us from the real world. If they do, they are a false spirituality and formation. The more we listen to the Spirit, the more we will hear groanings which cannot be uttered. The more we offer ourselves to God, the more we will see the needs around us.

"It's Time..."



Christ of the Breadlines
-Fritz Eichenberg

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, their work includes translation of Scripture and other Christian media, support for Pastors and Evangelists, and micro-economic development for impoverished families.

Past Sunflower Fields

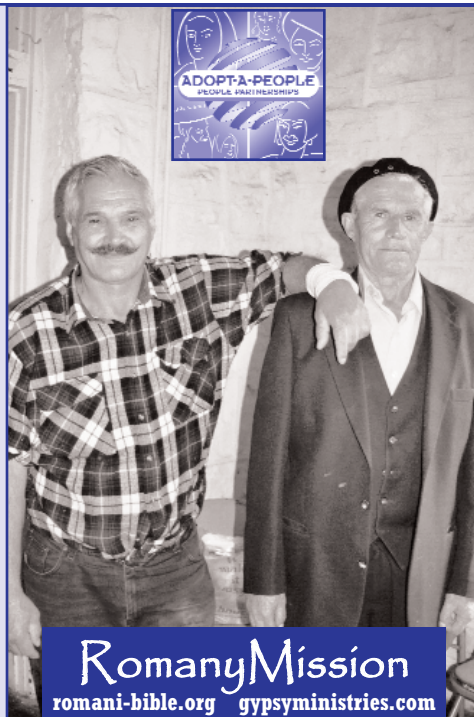
In our last prayer letter, we visited a Sinti tent meeting. This time, come with us to Bethlehem Baptist Church in Vulcanesti, Moldova. A long, bumpy ride leads from the capital, Chisenau, through broad hills covered with sunflower fields, orchards, garden plots, and solitary figures watching over herds of cattle or sheep that graze along the road or in between the trees. At last we near this mostly Romany village near the Romanian border.

First we see a few grand, half-finished houses of non-believers who are probably off begging in Poland or Russia. They earn enough that way to construct these two-story stone-and-stucco edifices.

Then we see the church, right at the entrance to the village, boldly lifting its cross and steeple for all to see. The building would be a strong witness in this traditionally Orthodox area-if it were not also half-finished and surrounded by weed-strewn rubble.

The actual church, a group of about fifty believers, meets in the long hall of one of its members. The core of the group consists of elders converted during Communist times and young adults disciplined during Boris Caraion's two-year ministry in the village. Due to a church-centered economic development program, one member now earns the princely sum of \$500 per month. The rest are poorer.

But they have hope. Faith gives them hope, even when richer relatives encourage them to go back to the old, quasi-legal life style. The example of their own entrepreneurs gives them hope. After years of floundering, capable leadership in the form of a full-time pastor, Ion Mateev, gives them hope. And



music gives them hope. Their own distinctively Romany singing group has created Christian songs. They hope local sales of their recently recorded CD will provide for instruments, sound equipment, and furniture in their new building.

However, without divine intervention they have no hope of ever finishing that building. Costs continue to rise. Their incomes, at less than \$500 per month, do not. Search your hearts. Is God asking you to help turn this building from a symbol of hopelessness into a positive witness of faith?

Ways you can help:

- *Volunteer at home to market this CD of distinctively Romany Christian music in America.
- *Volunteer (3-5 men) to assist in construction, August 28-September 10.
- *Volunteer (3-5 men or women) to assist with vacation Bible school, Aug. 28-Sept. 10.
- *Instead of volunteering to go, send the funds you would have spent (estimated at \$2,000 per person) to Bethlehem Baptist Church Building, CBF project #80820. The expenses of a volunteer construction team would cover the costs of insulating and finishing the exterior walls.
- *Pray for God's will to be done in this church.



Partners in Prayer Calendar

Some missionary names omitted due to sensitive nature of work.

JULY

- 17 ____, 1996, son, unevang. people gr., Asia
- 17 ____, unevang people groups, SE Asia
- 19 Anne Burton, international students, CA
- 19 Jason Pittman, urban work, Miami, FL
- 20 Max Hutchinson, 1987, son, Lynn & Mike Hutchinson, France
- 21 ____, daug., unevang. people grp, Middle East
- 22 Dorothy Potts, Emeritus
- 23 Butch Green, internationals, Belgium
- 23 Jesse Loper, Global Service Corps, NY
- 26 Rick Sample, internationals, San Francisco
- 27 Sarah Morrow, 1988, daughter, Frank & Karen Morrow, Germany
- 28 ____, 2000, daughter, scripture trans., Asia
- 29 Christina Houser, 1997, daughter, Ana Marie & Scott Houser, Southern Africa
- 29 Karen Morrow, unevang. group, Germany
- 30 James Francovich, Banjara Gypsies, India

AUGUST

- 3 Mina Podgaiskaya, Kiev, Ukraine
- 4 ____, 1999, daug., unevang. people grp, Asia
- 5 ____, unevangelized people group, Asia
- 7 Merrie Harding, Transform. Develpt, FL
- 8 Janée Angel, Global Serv. Corps, Belgium
- 8 Ellen Holmes, 1992, daughter, Keith Holmes & Mary Van Rheenen, Europe
- 8 Jon Wyatt, 1995, son, Kim & Marc, Canada
- 9 Beth Sample, 1998, daug. Lita & Rick, CA
- 10 Elliott Sample, 2004, son, Lita & Rick, CA
- 15 Nick Skipper, Affiliate, Tennessee
- 16 ____, son, unevan. people gr., Middle East
- 16 Don McNeely, Emeritus
- 17 Anna Sample, 2001, daug., Lita & Rick, CA
- 19 Amy Armstrong, Glob. Service Corps, CA
- 19 ____, 1998, daug., unevang. peopl. gr., Asia
- 20 Joyce Cleary, Emeritus
- 22 Ana Podgaiskaya, 2001, daughter, Gennady & Mina Podgaisky, Ukraine
- 23 ____, unevang. people gr., M.East/N. Africa
- 23 Marc Wyatt, internationals, Toronto, Can.
- 25 Arville Earl, Albanian/Balkans, Macedonia
- 25 Danielle McAtee, 2005, daughter, Brian & Claire McAtee, Massachusetts
- 26 Corwin Harrell, 1991, son, Melody & Sam Harrell, Kenya
- 26 ____, unevangelized people group, Asia
- 27 ____, unevangelized people group, M. East/N. Africa
- 29 ____, unevangelized people group, Asia
- 30 ____, son, unevang. people grp, N. Africa
- 31 Karr La Dickens, Mission Teams, Texas

SEPTEMBER

- 1 Ralph Stocks, Romany people, Hungary
- 5 Eddie Aldape, Banjara Gypsies, India
- 5 David D'Amico, UN Public Policy/Partnerships & Team Volunteers, Cary, NC
- 5 ____, work with internationals, North Africa
- 5 Amy Stocks, 1987, daughter, Ralph & Tammy Stocks, Hungary
- 6 ____, 1992, son, unevang. people group, Asia
- 7 Lita Sample, internationals, San Francisco, CA
- 12 ____, Global Service Corps, Middle East
- 12 Jay Whisnand, 1983, son, Diann & Phil, CA
- 13 Alyssa Aldape, 1987, daughter, Eddie & Macarena Aldape, India
- 15 Rebecca Holmes, 1994, daughter, Keith Holmes & Mary Van Rheenen, Europe

KEITH WILL BE IN THE U.S. FROM NOV 22-DEC 17 with Armin Peter, Wycliffe Bible translator, and Rudi Walter, Sinti evangelist/head of Roma & Sinti Christian Training Center. To have them speak at your gathering, contact: kh@worldmail.com.

It's Book Bag Time



"together for hope -- bags of hope"

Book bags and school supplies are being collected now for students in need in Tensas and East Carroll.

Delivery set for early August. Cash donations will be used to buy from local vendors.

Contact John Daugherty at: 318-229-3738



Make a note!

The Stagg-Tolbert Forum for Biblical Studies will be held October 7 at University Baptist in Baton Rouge.

CBF Constitutional Preamble

Unanimously adopted at National Assembly in Atlanta

"As a fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches, we celebrate our faith in the One Triune God. We gladly declare our allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and to His gospel as we seek to be the continuing presence of Christ in this world. Our passion is to obey the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) of our Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to uphold Baptist principles of faith and practice as we partner with one another and other Christians."



Expanding Partnership With Romany Mission: John Daugherty plans an October trip to Holland to strategize with missionaries Keith Holmes and Mary van Rheenens ways to partner more directly in their Gypsy ministries. Pastors and mission leaders are invited. Contact John.

LIFE-CHANGING, from page 2 befriended while in Lacombe. "God has used them not just with myself," he said. "In so many ways, they made a difference. I thank God for them and their kind souls."

A retired member of the Canadian Armed Forces, Savoie hopes to continue a lifestyle of service. In May, with members of his new church, Savoie made a one-week volunteer trip to Lacombe, where he and his crew renovated one of the original homes Savoie assessed in the fall. Even though Lacombe will always hold a special place for Savoie, he recognizes that other disasters will occur and that there are other needs in the world where he could be used by God. But for now they are listening to God and growing in their renewed faith.

"We're like children now – asking a lot of questions and having faith," he said. "We're still learning, and everyday is a new day. We're kind of hoping that never ends." The Savoies recently sold their bookstore business and are hoping to engage in more missions opportunities in the future.

CBF-LA Receipts	May/June	Fiscal Year
		3/01/06-2/28/07
Current financial data is not available due to our treasure, Kenny Crump, being on an extended mission trip to China. This is the 10th trip for Kenny and Shirley. Please keep them in your prayers.		
TOTAL		

Louisiana Fellowship People
 Sent to you free for the asking.

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