

# Louisiana Fellowship People

Volume 15, No. 4



cbfla.org  
October-November, 2008

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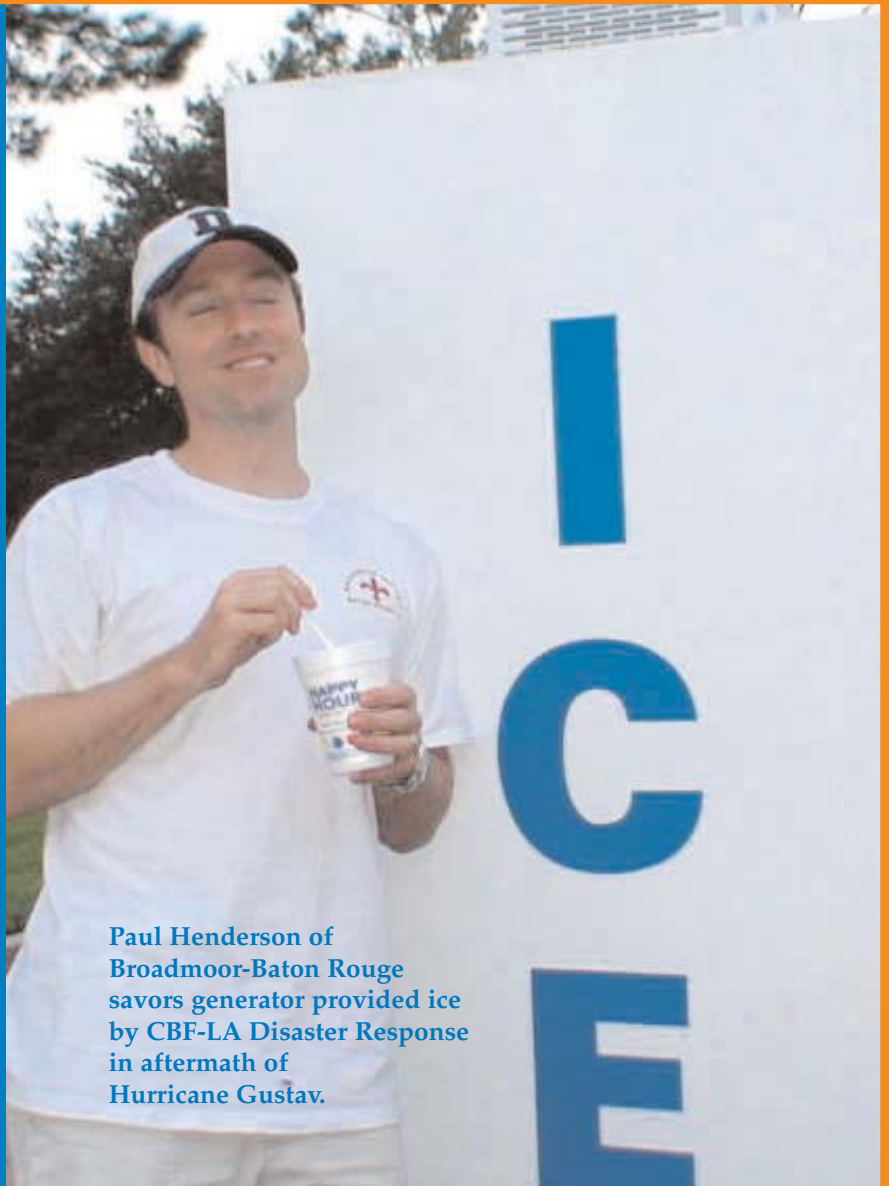
Ministry Opportunities in hard hit areas, National movement news, Upcoming events

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### Romany Mission Updates

Bethlehem and beautiful music, Gandhi School life on the edge



Paul Henderson of Broadmoor-Baton Rouge savors generator provided ice by CBF-LA Disaster Response in aftermath of Hurricane Gustav.

## Brain Food for the Disciple...



Stagg-Tolbert  
Biblical Forum

Dr. Walter Shurden

Saturday, October 18, 2008  
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM  
First Baptist Shreveport



### Session I

Giving In and Giving Up:  
A Theology of Salvation

### Session II

Giving Back and Giving Forward:  
A Theology of Generosity

**H**ear a gifted and inspiring pastor, theologian and church historian.

Register for Lunch (\$5) and  
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## Places of Grace STATE MISSION OFFERING



### Fall Offering Continues

- \* Together for Hope  
Missionary
- \* New Church Starts
- \* Disaster Response

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download a state mission prayer  
guide at: [cbfla.org](http://cbfla.org)

# FROM

## Reid Doster

CBF-LA Coordinator

I am writing this column from Oklahoma City, where I am representing CBF Louisiana in a gathering of our CBF state coordinators and certain national leaders. This meeting is commonly referred to as the Movement Leadership Team (MLT).

At Memphis, during the General Assembly, eighteen of us Louisiana attendees participated, along with many others, in a comprehensive "Prayerful Discernment Survey," covering such areas as (a) spirituality, (b) interacting with the world community, (c) honoring gender, generations and race, (d) missional engagement, (e) training and development, (f) resource utilization and (g) broadening of the CBF community.

Coordinators are now taking a preliminary look at some of the raw data, which will be collated and shared with the CBF National Coordinating Council very soon.

For me, the most exciting aspect of this tool is that it will give us a grid of core values and strategic goals with which to measure successes through such vehicles as our rural poverty ministry in Lake Providence, disaster response work, and the assimilating or birthing of new CBF congregations.

We have been in discussions with a group of several CBF churches from another state who are looking to pool their resources and form a year-long partnership with an African American congregation in New Orleans. I believe this mission will be underway at the time of the next MLT meeting and could provide leaders from around the country a model for cross-cultural cooperation in ministry.

As disaster response coordinator, it has been my joy over the past three weeks to direct volunteers and equipment to Baton Rouge, where we are assisting University and Broadmoor churches in ministering to their neighbors, in the wake of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. Broadmoor is housing the volunteers and providing breakfast and lunch each day.

We have volunteers coming in from Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina and South Carolina. CBF-LA obtained a Bobcat to clear the University campus, loaned both churches generators, extension cords, chain saws, lubricants, tarps, fans, and other equipment, including a shower trailer, from our inventory. We also purchased 1000 bags of ice for



Clockwise from top left: Broadmoor members prepare generator; Reid and Jay Hogewood discuss damage at University; Marvin Jackson of ABA operates Bobcat; Rick Wright of University with representative from Save the Children Federation.

Broadmoor to distribute to her neighbors, and arranged for freezers to hold the ice. The first team to arrive at Broadmoor was from First Baptist Church, Fort Meyers, and was led by their new pastor, John Daugherty. I think this speaks volumes.

In a surprising way that only the Lord could have arranged, I recently crossed paths with a young pastor who is serving a Baptist church in South Louisiana. Both he and his wife are recent graduates of CBF's Truett Seminary, Waco, TX. I had no idea they were in our state, and it makes me wonder if there are others out there. Next week, I am going to visit them.

I look forward to seeing you at the Stagg-Tolbert Forum, in Shreveport, on October 18th, to sit at the feet of Dr. Walter Shurden, who has a gift for making church history quite fascinating.

With the forum in mind, please remember Dr. Malcolm Tolbert in your prayers. He fell last week and got hurt. We love you, Malcolm.



Lake Providence October 25

**Book Buddies** is the ultimate hands-on, mentoring, literacy, natural-faith-sharing and fun event for caring adults and children in need.

A child is matched with a volunteer who reads to the child alternately between steps of assembling and decorating together a "Book Buddies" shelf. Children learn to enjoy reading, building and the attention of a mentor. They will then go home with a new shelf and 4 books to place on it. One of the books will be a faith story which allows for natural sharing.

Come for the day or spend the night in an inviting lake house and enjoy the fellowship.

**Sign up to go by October 18**

Contact: Kyle Kelley, cbflouisiana@gmail.com or 318-780-4127

**Still needed:**

New or gently used children's books, DecoColor paint pens  
Money for book shelf kits

# Giving Back

When Jesus Whipped Up on Theologians

by Walter B. Shurden



I love that passage in Matthew 23: 23-24 where Jesus whips up on the theologians and Pharisees for tithing. Jesus says, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglect-

ing the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!"

These religious leaders needed this theological spanking! Sock it to 'em Jesus! Sock it to these theological mathematicians who meticulously measured their spirituality by their strict obedience to the law! How elementary can religion get, anyway? Notice what is happening in this passage. Jesus is exposing the horror of religious legalism with, of all things, the law of tithing! Jesus was teaching Torah! Jesus was throwing Bible at them. He was insisting that obedience to Torah was to lead to compassion, not cockiness of spirit. It was to lead to unconditional mercy, not religious meanness.

But here's the rub in these verses. Once I get the Pharisee bashing and legalizing out of the way, I may get a spiritual scrubbing of my own from Jesus. A question: are we non-legalistic Christians drawn to this passage of scripture because it plays into the hands of our personal greed? Do we interpret this passage in such a way that it provides us a rationale to avoid "giving back" or at least to avoid giving back generously? Do these verses become a rationale to avoid "tithing"? Have "moderate" Baptist Christians become solely satisfied with attitudes of compassion--jus-

Once I get the Pharisee bashing and legalizing out of the way, I may get a spiritual scrubbing of my own from Jesus.

tice, mercy, and faith--- without any serious and generous actions of "giving back" our money? Isn't showing mercy profoundly and inextricably tied to giving money?

I want to speak a candid word about money. My word is not about America's financial tailspin in 2008; my word is not about the global economy, the plight of the poor, the



**Walter Shurden**, who speaks October 18th at the 2008 Stag-Tolbert Forum, is Minister at Large for Mercer University.

He is:

*A gifted and inspiring pastor, theologian and church historian;*

*A popular professor who has taught at Southern Seminary, Carson Newman, and Mercer University where he recently retired as Chair of the Department of Christianity;*

*The former pastor of First Baptist Church, Ruston and has served as Interim Preaching Minister of numerous churches;*

*Author or editor of 15 books, on numerous topics including the Priesthood of the Believer, Four Fragile Freedoms, the Bible, the Church and Religious Freedom;*

*A recipient of numerous academic and denominational leadership awards;*

*A leader who has been at the table of many events that have shaped our common heritage;*

Passionate about his calling from God:

*"For me, one of the saddest lines in all of Holy Scripture comes from the little fellow with the one talent: 'I was afraid and I went and hid your talent in the ground.' Fear loses. Passion wins." —Walter Shurden*

poverty of the rich, or ways to fix all of that. I honestly have no idea what economists often talk about, and I certainly do not know how to fix a world where the poor keeping getting poorer and the rich richer and the middle class gets squeezed.

My concern is much simpler, much more elementary. My concern is about those of us who claim Christ as Lord of our lives and how we handle our money in light of that conviction.

Whatever a Christian is, a Christian is someone who takes seriously what Jesus took seriously. No reader of Matthew's gospel needs to be told that Jesus took money seriously. If our discipleship is not simply an academic matter and if we are dead serious that Jesus is Sole Ruler of our lives, how does His Lordship impact "giving back" our money to the Jesus and Jesus-like causes?

I am not interested here in the nitpicking argument of whether a Christian should tithe “before” or “after” taxes, though I do think Christian generosity might lean one way and not the other. I don’t even have a brief for “storehouse tithing,” making sure that my first 10% goes to the church for its functions and programs, though I have a hard time thinking of a better place to begin my “giving back” than my local church. What I am saying is that “growing generous Christians and growing generous Churches” is basic to what it means to take Jesus seriously.

My sense is that many of us who are moderate Baptists, having fled the ugliness of legalism, may be in danger of citing biblical passages for not “giving back” their money to the Lord of their lives. I am still convinced that Frank Stagg was on to something in his commentary on Matthew when he argued that one of the major issues in this particular gospel is a struggle between legalism and antinomianism,

help get us back to doing the will of God for our lives. It will help us to take seriously what Jesus took seriously, a life characterized by “giving back.”

I have come to believe that there is a “stewardship cycle” in most of our lives. It goes something like this: my “selfish greed” hopefully butts up against God’s “amazing grace” which issues into “enormous gratitude” that multiplies into “incredible generosity” and ends up with great, “great gladness.” I am very glad that serious New Testament scholars such as Mark Allen Powell (*Giving to God*) and church historians such as James Hudnut-Beumler (*Generous Saints: Congregations Rethinking Ethics and Money*) are working on this subject with their students and with all the rest of us.

Our local churches are sanctuaries to shape the spiritual life, much of which is about “Giving Back.” If we do not begin developing individual disciples who want to “give back,” if we do not develop “new” tithers and people who want gladly to give beyond the tithe, we are asking for stunted Christians, selfish churches, and an impaired witness to our culture.

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between law and liberty. My guess is that most of the Christians I run with have less trouble with the latter than the former. We would not be caught dead being a “legalist.” But have we used our “liberty” to exonerate us from living the Christlike life, the life of incredible generosity?

Let me put it to you straight. Do you give 10% of your income, however you figure it, outside yourself as a “hedge against greed” and as a witness that Christ is Lord of your life? I am confident that such giving back would make a world of difference to our local churches, their ministries in Christ’s name, their missions, and their goals. But I am more confident that personal generosity will make us “feel better” about ourselves. However, “feeling good” about self is surely not what Matthew’s “The Kingdom of Heaven” is all about. Giving back generously, starting but not ending with tithing, will

Frank Stagg, my professor, and Malcolm Tolbert, his student and my dear friend, represent the best in Baptist life over the last fifty years about “giving back.” They constitute Exhibit A of “justice, mercy, and faith,” what Jesus called the “weightier” matters of the law. But I am willing to bet you that Stagg’s and Tolbert’s check stubs will bear witness to the fact that their attitudes of compassion never caused them to minimize the actions of generosity, the practice of giving their money on a regular basis to the cause of Christ.

*Note: This piece is Dr. Shurden’s revision of an article that he published in the Review and Expositor in 2007.*



See complete Roma updates at [cbfla.org](http://cbfla.org).

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\$10 Contribution on line at [cbfla.org](http://cbfla.org) or send to:  
Vulcanesti CD,  
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## Beautiful Music! From Bethlehem Romany (Gypsy) Church

This little flock, the only all gypsy congregation in a little town of 1,000, in the poorest country in Europe, has made beautiful music!

Pronounced **O Del si Amentsa (God is with us)**, the Bethlehem Church music group seeks to build bridges between Romany origins on the Indian subcontinent and their own future in Moldova--between Romany and other Moldovans--between Romany believers and non-believers. **Gradinarul (The Gardener)** is the CD title with Psalm 117 as the jacket text.

Bridge building happens through songs in their own Romani language (Usari) and in Moldovan Romanian. These songs have an intentional Indian influence and an even more intentional Christian message. Many Moldovans are surprised to hear Christian Romany—surprised into listening.

Hear a selection from the CD on a slide show of the building's development at [www.cbfla.org](http://www.cbfla.org). Any funds not needed for the building itself will go towards sound equipment for the music group. They use their music to evangelize in other Romany areas.

### From Mary van Rheenen:

**"A cause for unmixed rejoicing:** It looks like Bethlehem Baptist Church building in Vulcanesti, Moldova, will be finished in time for an October dedication. Your gifts, prayers, and (in some instances) sweat have helped make this possible."

### Excerpts from Glen and Clista Adkins news:

\* Two Gandhi students have scholarship offers at UT Austin!

\* Because the salary of teachers in the former Eastern Bloc countries is so low (about \$400/month here), folks often leave these countries to work in England, France, or Germany for more pay. A teacher at Gandhi can do housekeeping in England and make three times as much as he/she can teaching English at the school. As in years past, over the summer, we lost a number of teachers to manual labor jobs in western Europe.

\* Although these are some of the brightest Roma in Hungary, most of them live right on the edge—in their homes, in their

hearts, and in their living situations.

Their presence at Gandhi is a

feat in itself. Most of them don't have two healthy, able, or functioning parents, and many of them have no parents at all. They need your prayers. They truly are an unreached and desperate group of people. Please pray for us as we begin to develop relationships with more and more of these students, teachers, and community folks who have no faith at all—of any kind (the majority of our acquaintances here). At the school and in the community, God keeps bringing people into our lives who are looking for love and for faith. This is a unique opportunity, but it keeps us on our toes! Please pray that we will stay ready and open to God's leading us as we walk through all of these open doors.

\* There are 10-12 million Roma in Europe/Eastern Europe. The situation is so dire for them (70-80% unemployment, little/no education, discrimination and hatred . . . )that the European Union is constantly having meetings and summits trying to figure out how to help them. Their experience has been so awful that they don't believe that God loves them. These fields are open but the laborers are few. Pecs is only a tiny plot of ministry in the great world of need, and we barely make a dent here. We only trust that God takes our efforts (yours and ours together) to plant seeds and that He develops them. We love being the people who get to represent you in this little plot. We would love for you to come do some planting of your own!

This car is very popular in Pecs. It is an old Russian made Trabant that Clista calls a Porky Pig car. The one horse-power version is found only in Eastern Europe.



Bethlehem Church Final Construction



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## Looking Ahead:

**October 18** Stagg Tolbert Biblical Forum with Walter Shurden, First Baptist - Shreveport

**October 25** Make a Difference Day, Lake Providence - "Book Buddies" Literacy Event

### Dear Cooperative Baptist Fellowship,

On behalf of the students and staff of Tensas Elementary School, I would like to express our appreciation for the school supplies that your program donated to us at the beginning of school. The students are enjoying the supplies.

We are encouraged by your thoughtfulness. Together for Hope is awesome.

*Demetria R. Dix*

**Principal, Tensas Elementary School**

You can now **donate on-line** and keep up to date at [www.cbfla.org](http://www.cbfla.org)

### IDENTITY:

We are a fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches who share a passion for the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and a commitment to Baptist principles of faith and practice.

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Being the presence of Christ in the world.

### MISSION:

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

CBF-LA Receipts	August	Fiscal Year 7/01/08-6/30/09
Undesignated	\$4,467.53	\$7,370.13
Together for Hope	\$1,565.82	\$5,379.15
Disaster Relief	-	-
Stagg-Tolbert Forum	-	-
New Church Start	-	-
Extra-budget/DesgFunds	-	\$180.00
Credits	\$80.00	\$80.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,002.67</b>	<b>\$12,324.60</b>

**Louisiana Fellowship People**  
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Published by CBF of Louisiana

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**Jay Hogewood, Past Moderator**

**Charlene Kelley, National CBF Representative**



### Partners in Prayer Calendar

Omitted names due to sensitive nature of work.

#### OCTOBER

- 1 Cokie Westfall, medical work, India
- 2 \_\_\_\_, unevangelized people group, Mid East
- 2 **Keith Holmes, Romany, Europe**
- 3 Jonathan Bailey, international arts, Asia
- 5 Jo Ann Hopper, Emeritus, November 1999
- 10 Nomie Derani, internationals, Brooklyn
- 12 Ben Newell, Together for Hopr, Arkansas
- 13 Fran Turner HIV/AIDS, sub-Saharan Africa
- 13 Bob Newell, Albanian/Balkans, Greece
- 15 \_\_\_\_, son, unevang. people group, Mid East
- 18 \_\_\_\_, unevangelized people group, Mid East
- 20 Annette Ellard, video prod. Internationals
- 20 Daniel Houser, 1988, son, Ana Marie & Scott Houser, Southern Africa
- 25 Suzie, scripture translation, Asia
- 26 Dean Dickens, Mission Teams, Texas
- 28 Erin Binkley, 1991, daughter, Duane & Marcia Binkley, Ohio
- 29 \_\_\_\_, unevangel. people group, N. Africa
- 30 \_\_\_\_, daughter, unevang group, N. Africa

#### NOVEMBER

- 2 Karen, medical work, Southeast Asia
- 2 Amanda Hambrick, New York City, NY

- 4 Eric Maas, ministry coordinator, Belize
- 5 \_\_\_\_, unevang. pple group, M. East/N. Africa
- 5 \_\_\_\_, son, Persian World Outreach, N. Jersey
- 7 Mike Graham, Slavics, Asheville, NC
- 7 Zachary Morrow, 1995, son, Frank & Karen Morrow, Texas
- 10 Jim Smith, Global Ministries, Atlanta, GA
- 10 Aidan Storie, 2001, son, Matthew & Melanie Storie, Alabama
- 11 Susan, unevangelized people group, Asia
- 12 Jessy Togba-Doya, developmt work, Liberia
- 13 Shelia Earl, Albanian/Balkans, Macedonia
- 13 Earl Martin, Emeritus, retired June 1994
- 13 Tirzah Turner, Washington, DC
- 17 Cade Whitley, 2004, son, Joel & Tiffne Whitley, Spain
- 17 Dylan Whitley, 2004, son, Joel & Tiffne
- 21 Ana Marie Houser, developmt, S. Africa
- 21 \_\_\_\_, unevang. pple group, Middle East
- 22 Becky Smith, Mission Teams, Atlanta, GA
- 25 Sue Smith, Latinos, Fredericksburg, VA
- 27 Macarena Aldape, Banjara Gypsies, India
- 28 **Clista Adkins, Romany people, Hungary**
- 28 Joel Whitley, internationals, Spain
- 29 Shannon Binkley, 1993, daughter, Duane & Marcia Binkley, Ohio
- 30 John David Hopper, Emeritus, Nov. 1999
- 30 Lucas Pittman, 2003, son, Angel & Jason Pittman, Florida

Save a Tree.

Save CBF-LA Some Dough.

Receive our newsletter by email in PDF format. Sign up at [cbflouisiana@gmail.com](mailto:cbflouisiana@gmail.com).