

# CBF *fellowship!*

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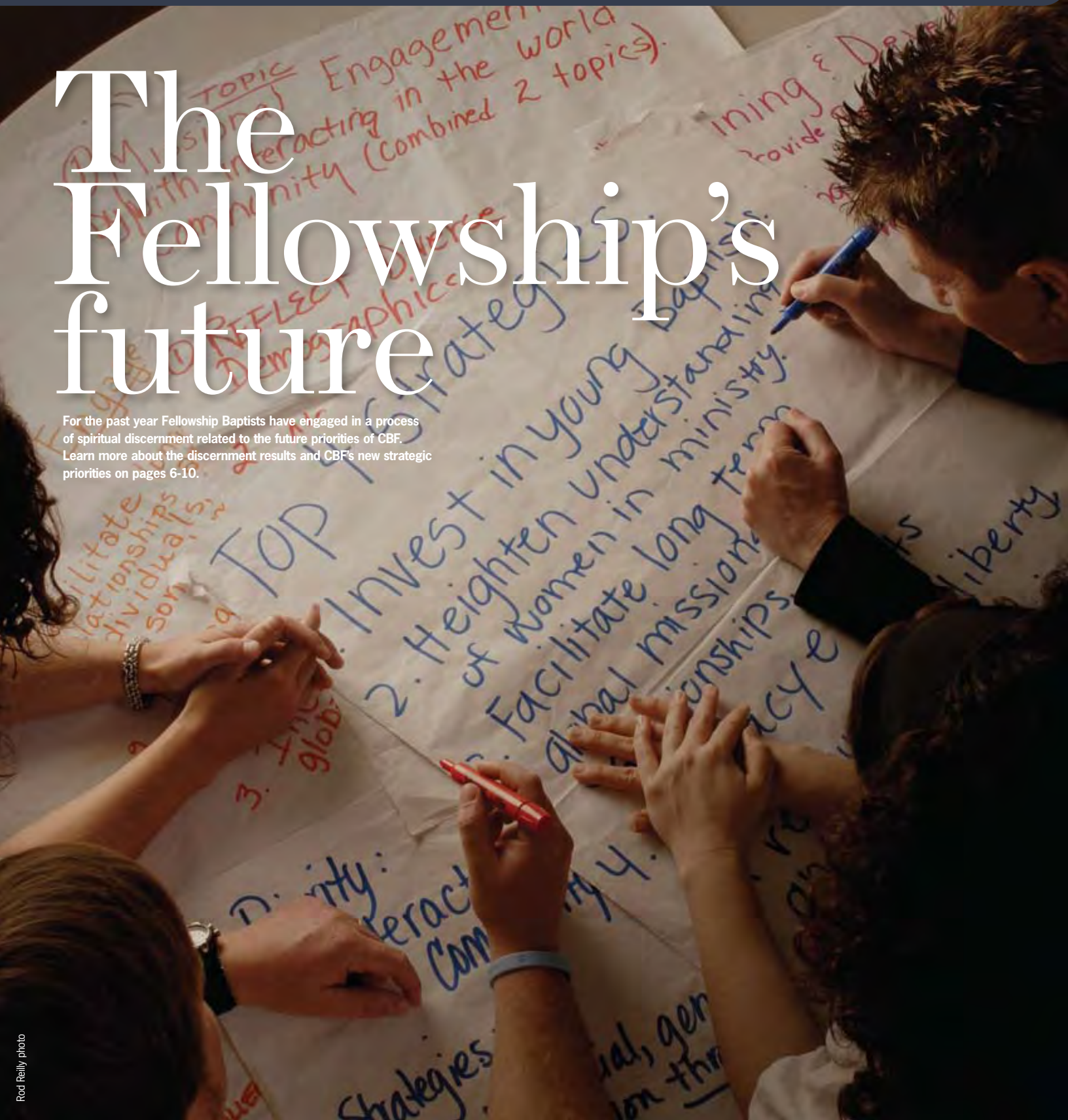
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2008

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



# The Fellowship's future

For the past year Fellowship Baptists have engaged in a process of spiritual discernment related to the future priorities of CBF. Learn more about the discernment results and CBF's new strategic priorities on pages 6-10.



# Churches and CBF



Communities of Christian discipleship are the very salt and light that can transform culture. Churches, as communities of missional practice, are empowered by the Spirit to engage the world so as to transform the world. Churches are agents and instruments of an alternative order of reality — the present and coming Kingdom of God. Churches are signs that the Kingdom has come in Jesus Christ and embodiments of that Kingdom. Churches are islands of hope in a sea of despair. Churches are laboratories of love in a world of hate. Churches are the places and spaces where justice and reconciliation are demonstrated.

Many have given up on churches and others are cynical about their influence. And churches themselves most often are the exact opposite of the Kingdom they claim to represent. But when and where churches incarnate and communicate the servanthood, sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ, nothing is quite so powerful and profound.

When Christ followers live in authentic community and demonstrate in their shared life a humility, passion and holiness like their Lord's, nothing is quite so transformative. Before such a reality, the spiritual and societal strongholds that destroy human beings will fall, the barriers that separate people will crumble. Even the gates of Hell cannot withstand this "little flock of Jesus whom God has been pleased to give the Kingdom."

So let us not retreat into a pious and sentimental spirituality that isolates us from the Christian church community. And let us not run to governments or corporations with the illusion that they alone have the medicine that can heal the world's brokenness. And let us not think that non-governmental organizations, institutions and para-church organizations can replace bodies of baptized believers who gather for worship, study, prayer, fellowship and then scatter to minister and serve. Rather let us boldly follow Christ in covenanted congregations where the Word is proclaimed and the sacraments are celebrated.

And let us as Cooperative Baptist Fellowship reaffirm our mission to serve these congregations. We are not a church, but we exist as a Fellowship of Christians and churches to serve and strengthen one another so that every church can fulfill its God-given mission of being the presence of Christ in the world. The power and impact of churches that seek first Christ's Kingdom cannot be overstated. In fact, scripture declares that "through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known."

I believe this is not only true in a final and eschatological way but in present and practical ways. Here and now, churches are the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, the household of God. Here and now, churches are "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone." Here and now churches are "being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit"

What a privilege we have as Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to care for churches, to help start new ones and nurture old ones. What a wonderful ministry we have been given to walk beside churches as they make disciples, baptize and teach them. What a joy to encourage, resource and connect churches as they proclaim and live the reign of God inaugurated in Jesus Christ.

Our service to churches has a global impact because the mission of every church is global. But our partnership with churches is customized because every church is unique. Each is valued, no matter how large or small and no matter its imperfections. And our love for churches is grounded in Christ who loves each one as a part of His body and bride.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Vestal". The signature is fluid and cursive.

*Daniel Vestal, CBF Executive Coordinator*

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CBF Photo



CBF photo

## *meet* Jim Smith



Jim Smith began serving as the Fellowship's director of field ministries in October 2008, focusing on the day-to-day work of CBF field personnel. He provides a connection between the field personnel serving around the world and the national CBF resource center. Smith's work includes developing strategies for

partnerships, managing and monitoring financial and logistical details, and recruiting new field personnel candidates.

Smith and his wife, Becky, have served as CBF area coordinators for missions teams since 1993. Their prior missions service included working in Germany and Austria.

**Hometown:** Martinsville, Va.

**Education:** Averett University in Danville, Va.; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

**Interesting fact:** Having lived in Europe for 29 years,

Smith has preached more sermons in German than he has in English.

"My goals are to represent field personnel and to inform them about what CBF is doing and becoming. I also want to be sure that field personnel are working effectively and collaboratively. This is not something we can assume for all work around the globe. It is always easier to do things well yourself, but it is too little and ineffective in light of the needs of our modern world. Our name which features the word 'cooperative' is easy to abandon in real life with personal agendas and partners who view things differently. Lastly, I hope we can increase the benefits and support for field personnel and global partners and have field personnel network more with local congregations to enable them to better participate in cross-cultural missions."

Contact Jim Smith at [jsmith@thefellowship.info](mailto:jsmith@thefellowship.info) or (800) 352-8741.

### Chester Thompson

In April, Chester Thompson will become the first African American moderator of CBF of Arkansas. Thompson, pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Camden, Ark., first learned about CBF while surfing the Internet. He stumbled on to CBF's Web site, and then met with then CBF of Arkansas state coordinator Tom Logue.

"We had dinner, and he gave me material and a video about CBF," Thompson said. "He told me about Together for Hope

(the Fellowship's rural poverty initiative). I took church members to Helena, Ark., to view the work. That was it. CBF is addressing poverty, and its missions philosophy meshes with my church's philosophy."

Thompson said two of his goals as moderator are to involve more African American churches in the Fellowship and spread the message of global missions.



Chester Thompson

### Hannah Crosby

While helping lead Vacation Bible School one summer, Hannah Crosby learned an important lesson — ministry can happen anywhere.

As a teenager, Crosby traveled with missions teams from her home church of First Baptist Church of Aiken, S.C., to Florida; Perry County, Ala.; Atlanta; and Romania. But her experience at VBS in nearby Gloverville, S.C., made a great impact on her.

"This was an eye-opening experience since most of us had not

helped with local missions before," Crosby said. "And serving on a local level seemed to be more of a challenge, mainly because serving where you live can make it easier to choose something else to do."

Crosby is now a freshman at Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C., and is continuing to serve locally. Along with participating in the Cooperative Student Fellowship, she serves at a local center for children who have been abused.



Hannah Crosby

### Todd Boling

Todd Boling said that he's "always been Baptist" and developed strong ties to the Fellowship while a student at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology, a CBF partner. Boling, who graduated from McAfee in 2004, is now the chaplain at Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, N.C.

"The heart of what I feel called to do is pastoral care," said Boling, a native of Pellville, Ky. "My favorite part of my job is walking with students on their spiritual journey."

As a seminary student, Boling worked part-time at the CBF

Resource Center in Atlanta and had the opportunity to see the workings of CBF first-hand.

"[I was first] attracted to the Fellowship because of who I am as a person of faith and how I live out my calling and sense of purpose," Boling said. "I stay involved [in CBF] because of the relationships that I formed with people in the national office. They do a good job of approaching ministry and identifying how God is at work in the world."



Todd Boling

### Edlyne Dickson

Last year, Edlyne Dickson traveled to a Southeast Asian village to participate in Christmas celebrations and distribute gift bags to children. Dickson, a member of Agape Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, has helped facilitate this ministry at the 3-year-old congregation.

Agape Baptist members have partnered with CBF field personnel serving in Southeast Asia to provide the bags to children in the hilltribe village. Members collect school

supplies, toiletries and toys to include in the drawstring bags.

"We are proud of what we've done with the [people and resources we have]," said Dickson. "[Church members] give of their money, their time and their expertise. I was just fortunate enough to go and see what's being done. After hearing about the village for so long, it was just a wonderful experience."



Edlyne Dickson

# Why I give...

“My belief is that if you are part of an organization you need to support it in whatever way you can. I’ve felt that way about CBF all along.”

Wayne Patterson  
Clemson, S.C.



Rod Reilly photo

Wayne Patterson attended the founding meeting of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Atlanta in 1991. He vividly remembers the discussion surrounding the name of the new organization, and how he thought “cooperative” was a perfect name for Baptists who make it a priority to work together. Since then, Patterson, who recently retired from teaching at Clemson University, has remained involved in the Fellowship.

“The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is an organization with an agenda that I agree with completely,” Patterson said. “Until recently I couldn’t fully explain why. My best shot at an explanation is that I like the idea of being the presence of Christ. As my church has studied the ‘It’s Time’ materials, I realized there is no time like the present to be a part of Christ’s presence.”

Patterson not only gives regularly to CBF, but he has supported and been a part of the organization in numerous ways. In

2002, he began serving as a member of the Coordinating Council of CBF of South Carolina, and currently he serves as the organization’s treasurer. He is also a member of the CBF national Coordinating Council.

At First Baptist Church of Pendleton, S.C., Patterson serves as the congregation’s disaster relief coordinator. He facilitated 11 trips to Alabama after Hurricane Katrina, and recently spent a week in Louisiana with CBF Louisiana coordinator Reid Doster helping with Hurricane Gustav disaster response.



**GIVE**

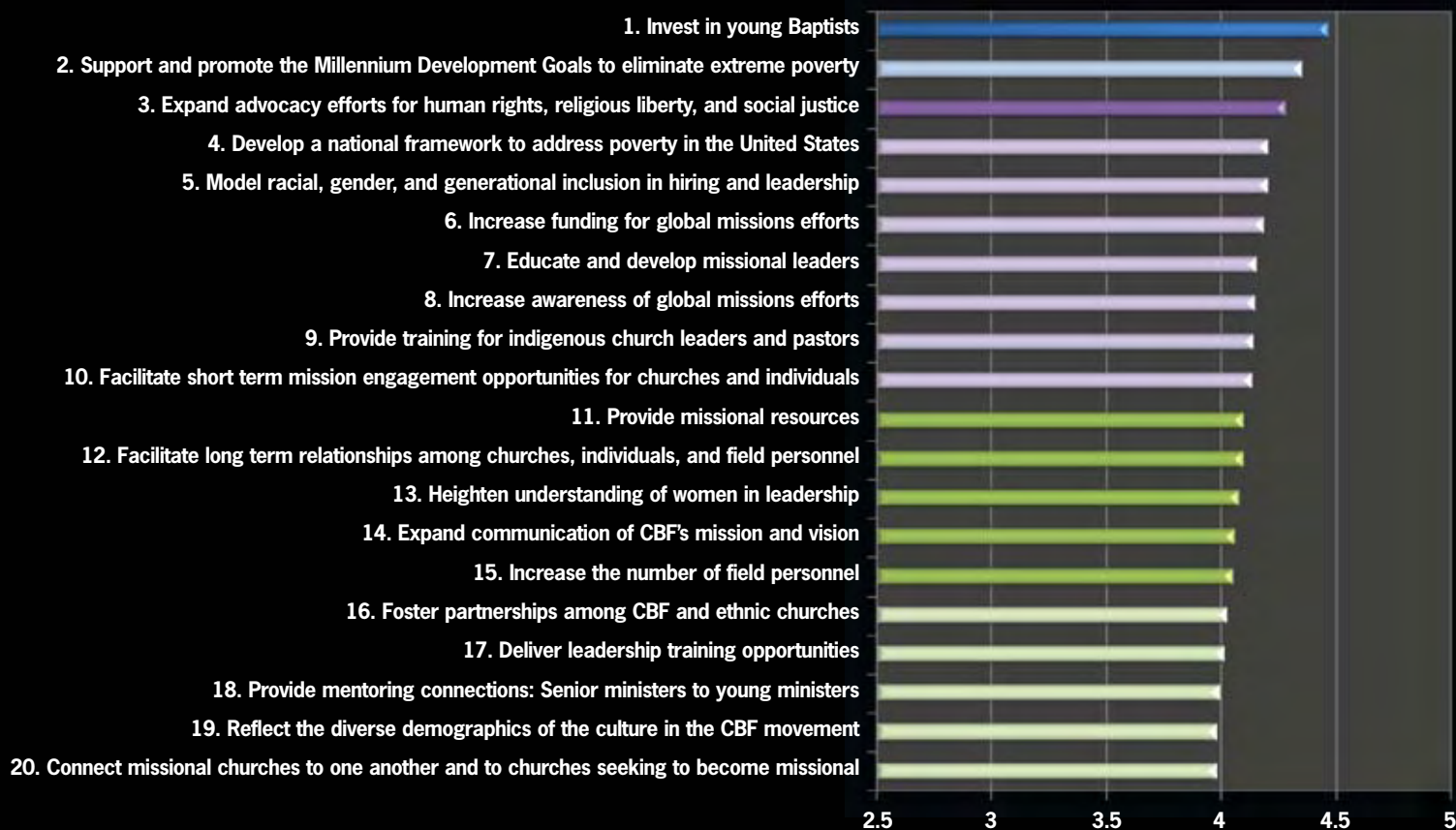
To give to the Fellowship’s missions and ministries, go to [www.thefellowship.info/give](http://www.thefellowship.info/give). Thank you for giving.



# The fellowship's future

Year-long spiritual discernment process leads to new strategic priorities

## Discernment Question Responses



ABOVE: At the 2008 General Assembly, participants were asked to evaluate the relative importance of 47 potential priorities, which had been identified by nearly a year of discernment involving various groups within CBF. Assuming that all the potential priorities were important, participants were asked to rank each as either “Most Important, Important, Neutral, Less Important or Least

Important.” Using a Likert-type scale, responses were given a numeric value where “Most Important” equals 5, and “Least Important” equals 1. This allowed researchers to calculate an average (mean) score for each issue and to rank them. On the graph above showing the top 20 priorities, color indicates groupings of similar statistical significance.

**H**ours of prayer and discussion and hundreds of ideas written on flip charts and note cards culminated this fall as Fellowship Baptists concluded a year of spiritual discernment and adopted new strategic priorities for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

CBF Executive Coordinator Daniel Vestal calls the Fellowship a “movement of renewal,” and during the past year, groups throughout the Fellowship — from young ministers to regional leadership to General Assembly participants — have engaged in an intentional and prayerful discernment about how the organization will move into the future.

“I believe the Spirit has been present in every step of this discernment process,” Vestal said. “We now have a clearer sense of what God is calling us to do together as a fellowship for the next five to seven years.”

The results from the discernment reaffirmed the Fellowship’s vision, mission and core values, and the top actions were in align with many of the missions and ministries in which Fellowship Baptists are already engaged (See pages 8 -10). For example, the top action, “invest in young Baptists,” relates to the Fellowship’s residency program for young ministers, scholarships for seminary students and missions program for undergraduate students.

“God has blessed our Fellowship in its early history,” said CBF Moderator

Jack Glasgow, pastor of Zebulon Baptist Church in Zebulon, N.C. “Now, God has been with us in this prayerful process of discernment. These priorities will support our fundamental principles. Under a vision to be the presence of Christ to one another and to the world, we will continue to strive to fulfill our mission of serving Christians and churches as they discover and fulfill their God-given mission. And, we will continue to live out our core values.”

At the October meeting of the CBF Coordinating Council, members voted to

## The fellowship's future

adopt new strategic priorities and bless the discernment process findings, which included 47 specific activities grouped into seven categories:

- Interacting with the world community
- Honoring race, gender and generations
- Missional engagement
- Training and development
- Spiritual formation
- Resource utilization
- Broadening the CBF community

A survey was developed in consultation with J. Michael Webber, marketing professor at Mercer University, which was presented to participants of the 2008 General Assembly in Memphis in June. The Assembly devoted six hours to prayerful discussions, giving time to respond to the survey and conducting feedback sessions to gather insights not included on the survey instrument.

“Throughout the past year we have moved from a qualitative, subjective process to a quantitative, objective process,” said CBF Past Moderator Harriet Harral, principal and founder of the Fort Worth, Texas,-based Harral Group leadership consulting firm. “We have heard from this Fellowship movement about what they are discerning are the priorities for us in the next three to five to seven years. I think we can be confident in the direction we are being called at this time in our history to be the presence of Christ.”

The results of the survey were that the top 15 actions as ranked by the participants at the Assembly fell under three priorities: “interacting with the world community,” “honoring generations, gender and race” and “missional engagement.” The top 15 actions were as follows:

- Interacting with the world community



Rod Reilly photo

**CBF Moderator Jack Glasgow addresses the Coordinating Council at its October meeting. The Council adopted the results of the discernment process as CBF's new strategic priorities.**

- Support and promote the Millennium Development Goals (#2)
- Expand advocacy efforts for human rights, religious liberty and social justice (#3)

## ALREADY AT WORK

### Invest in young Baptists — Action #1

A desire to deepen his connection with CBF while gaining further ministry experience led Paul Hood-Patterson, a minister with four years experience as a bi-vocational pastor, to pursue a position as a ministry resident at First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla. Hood-Patterson is one of nine



Paul Hood-Patterson

young ministers serving as a resident through the Fellowship's Ministerial Residency Program, a component of the Initiative for Ministerial Excellence.

While on staff at First Baptist, Paul is gaining further experience in preaching, teaching and pastoral care while being mentored by pastor Barry Howard.

“Through an advocacy committee at the church, I receive feedback on my role as a minister,” said Hood-Patterson, a graduate of Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary, a Fellowship partner. “That feedback and the connections made with the larger CBF community are great benefits from my participation in the residency program.”

Through this two-year residency program, CBF hopes that the intentional first placement following seminary in a teaching congregation will allow residents to hone their ministry skills and encourage the rhythms and practices for long-term health and excellence in ministry.



At the Oct. 9-10 meeting of the CBF Coordinating Council, members began discussion on how the Fellowship's new strategic priorities would impact the organization's future.



Rod Reilly photo

- Develop a national framework to address poverty in the United States (#4)
- Honoring generations, gender and race
  - Invest in young Baptists (#1)
  - Model racial, gender and generational inclusion in hiring and leadership (#5)
  - Heighten understanding of women in leadership (#13)
- Missional engagement
  - Increase funding for global missions efforts (#6)
  - Educate and develop missional leaders (#7)
  - Increase awareness of global missions efforts (#8)
  - Provide training for indigenous church leaders and pastors (#9)
  - Facilitate short-term mission engagement opportunities for

- churches and individuals (#10)
- Provide missional resources (#11)
- Facilitate long-term relationships among churches, individuals and field personnel ministries (#12)
- Expand communication of CBF's

- mission and vision (#14)
- Increase the number of field personnel (missionaries) (#15)
- “The officers, staff and Coordinating Council should engage in cooperative effort to develop outcome statements

## ALREADY AT WORK

# Support and promote the U.N. Millennium Development Goals — Action #2

David Harding, one of CBF's field personnel, works to provide clean, safe water in Ethiopia, where approximately 78 percent of the population are not using an improved water source. The availability of safe water has an impact on each of the United Nation's eight Millennium Development Goals — from reducing child mortality to empowering women.

Working side-by-side with Ethiopians, Harding hopes CBF can help install 200 wells each year. These vital water sources, which local villagers will be trained in how to maintain, will give thousands of people the opportunity for a better life.

“We work in partnership with the local church to bring safe water to communities, and we include basic education about the spread of HIV/AIDS as an overlapping emphasis,” Harding said. “It is a call to the African church to be engaged in holistic ministry that affects the fundamental health of members and those in their communities.”

In 2007, the Fellowship endorsed the Millennium Development Goals, but for years, many field personnel like Harding had already been ministering among some of the world's poorest people. This commitment to

holistic ministry — addressing the physical, spiritual, emotional and mental condition of some of the most neglected and least evangelized people in the world — has been a focus of CBF Global Missions since its birth in 1993.





Rod Reilly photo

CBF Coordinating Council member Patricia Wilson, of Waco, Texas, reviews the results of the Fellowship's year-long prayerful discernment.

based on these strategic priorities and recommended actions," Glasgow said. "We are partners together in a process to determine what CBF will look like in its near future, engaging in planning that will determine the next chapters in the CBF story."

Glasgow has appointed a five-member committee of the Council to begin working on a re-organization of the Council to match the priorities. That work group will be chaired by Tom Siddle, of Rocky Mount, Va., and includes Sylvia McQuaig, of Jacksonville, Fla.; Don Horton, of Zebulon, N.C.; Lynn Smith, of Burlington, Ky.; Jeremy Colliver, of Georgetown, Ky., and CBF staff members Connie McNeil, coordinator of administration, and Ben McDade, coordinator of advancement. The results of their work will be presented

to the full Council at its July meeting in Houston.

Glasgow said the 2010-2011 CBF budget should reflect these priorities and encouraged the autonomous state and regional CBF organizations as well as churches affiliated with CBF to consider how these strategic priorities could inform their planning processes.

"As a young minister with a heart for this organization, I am excited about these new priorities and where they might lead us," said Colliver, who serves as youth minister at Faith Baptist Church in Georgetown, Ky. "I'm looking forward to seeing how CBF grows and develops and rises to meet the challenges of the future."

*By Lance Wallace and Patricia Heys,  
CBF Communications*



To learn more about the Fellowship's spiritual discernment and new strategic priorities, go to [www.thefellowship.info/discernment](http://www.thefellowship.info/discernment).

### ALREADY AT WORK

## Expand advocacy efforts for human rights, religious liberty, and social justice — Action #3

Imagine being new in a country, staying at motel because you have no other place to go, and not knowing where to take your six-week old daughter who is so sick she won't stop crying. For a refugee from Afghanistan, his first response was to call Rick Sample, one of CBF's field personnel serving in California's San Francisco Bay area.

"The father shared with me how his heart hurt because his little girl was crying, and he was so happy that I was there to take him to the doctor. That is being the presence of Christ," Sample said.

Rick Sample and his wife, Lita, have ministered among refugees and immigrants in California since 2002. It means helping them find the resources they need — such as furniture and household items — but also advocating on their behalf. The Samples help individuals and families understand complex immigration documents, find jobs, and get children placed in the appropriate grade in school.

"As Christians, we find it our responsibility to show [refugees and immigrants] that we welcome them, that we care for them," Rick said.





Brian McLaren

Two exciting retreats. One great location.



Joy Yee

## Feb. 23-25, 2009 Orlando, Fla.

Two annual CBF events — True Survivor and Current Retreat — will be held at College Park Baptist Church in Orlando. This three-day event includes speaker Brian McLaren, noted author and pastor. Joy Yee, pastor of 19th Avenue Baptist Church in San Francisco, Calif., will also provide one-on-one spiritual friendship sessions for participants. Registration cost: \$90 (includes most meals). Register online today!

### True Survivor IX

Bo Prosser, CBF's coordinator for congregational life, leads this ninth annual conference for Christian educators, featuring breakout sessions, ministry network gatherings, new resources, and discussions about best practices. For registration, lodging and schedule information, visit [www.thefellowship.info/truesurvivor](http://www.thefellowship.info/truesurvivor).



Bo Prosser

### Current Retreat for Young Baptists

Join with other young ministers, leaders and seminary students for fellowship, networking and worship. Be sure to ask about the discount for seminary students. Amy Butler, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., will lead in worship. For registration, lodging and schedule information, visit [www.thefellowship.info/currentretreat](http://www.thefellowship.info/currentretreat).



Amy Butler

# Transformed by HIV/AIDS support group extends Christ's

**T**he birthday celebrations that Karen Estle throws each month at an Indianapolis apartment building for people living with HIV/AIDS stick to the basics — a cake, sometimes pie, ice cream, soda and a card and gift bought from a local dollar store.

For many residents, the celebration is the only recognition of their birthday.

Some residents attend the birthday parties because they are regular members of the weekly HIV/AIDS support group that Estle leads. Others come to satisfy an empty stomach.

"I make it clear that everyone is welcome," said Estle, a member of Speedway Baptist Church in Indianapolis, Ind. "When a resident objects that someone only comes for cake, I explain it is not up to me to judge."

Estle, a certified pastoral counselor with endorsement through the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, is the spiritual adviser with the Palliative Care Team at Wishard

Health Services in Indianapolis.

During the 13 years that Estle has led the support group, residents have shared how others have abandoned or rejected them because of their HIV status. But the residents' expressions — hardened by years of anger and fear — begin to soften when Estle shares her own story of rejection.

Estle, who survived polio as a child, shares how some people were afraid to touch her when she had the dreaded disease of her day. Once she was in her front yard when a man arrived to deliver some important papers to her parents. Rather than delivering the papers to the door and risking contact with someone

who had polio, he instead tossed the papers into the yard.

"It amazes me how this story still calms down an angry new resident today as they realize I understand," Estle said. "I model Christ's unconditional love by touching, listening or being present. It creates an atmosphere in which

topics and questions can be raised, discussed and wondered about. Over time trust develops and healing comes."

The support group gives participants emotional and spiritual support as well as practical help with daily living. Residents have learned how to use the bus, where to buy groceries, how to access social services and how to deal with the side effects of medications, she said.

Estle has seen members of the group transformed by Christ's love. One man recently told Estle that he had let go of his anger and gave her a note asking her to keep spreading the "light."

Other residents ask Estle to buy a gift for a hospital patient in place of a birthday gift for themselves.

Members of her church, Speedway Baptist Church, have joined Estle in her ministry at the apartment complex. The church, a CBF partner, covers the costs for monthly birthday celebrations.

One of the women's Bible study classes at Speedway provides meals for the residents four to five times a year. The women, who range in age from 50 to 90, eat with the residents and often play board games.

"I believe each of the women have helped residents heal from broken family relationships," Estle said. "The new residents are always surprised to find women who are like mothers and grandmas who are coming to feed and nurture them."

One of the women, Joyce Finch, lost her son to AIDS in 1992. She seldom



Shawn Williams photos

**Karen Estle, a chaplain endorsed with CBF, has led a HIV/AIDS support group for 13 years.**

# love

## presence in Indianapolis



Shirley Heidenreich, right, and Joyce Finch, left, members of Speedway Baptist Church, prepare for the weekly HIV/AIDS support group.

mentioned his death and the disease that caused it at the time “because it was not a thing that was talked about,” she said.

Finch’s friendships with the residents have helped her heal from her son’s loss. Her first-hand experience with the challenges her son faced while living with HIV/AIDS now helps her relate to the residents.

“It takes a really courageous person to live with the physical effects of the disease and the social stigma attached to it,” Finch said. “They need all of the encouragement

and help that they can receive because it isn’t an easy way to live. They need to be accepted as they are.”

Finch said she follows the example set by Jesus Christ.

“Jesus was inclusive,” she said. “He didn’t turn his back on anyone.”

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*By contributing writer Charlotte Tubbs, Atlanta, Ga.*

**World AIDS Day**—December 1 marks the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day, when individuals, organizations and congregations around the world join together to remember and demonstrate support for people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. CBF field personnel and partner congregations engage in missions and ministries related to HIV/AIDS, including offering spiritual care to those living with HIV/AIDS, caring for children who have been orphaned by the disease and providing medical care. Learn more at [www.thefellowship.info/aids](http://www.thefellowship.info/aids).

# *This holiday...* give a gift that makes a difference *CBF offers missions giving through annual gift catalog*

**I**mpress your friends and family this holiday season by giving a gift that will change lives. Instead of shopping for a traditional gift, consider purchasing from CBF's Global Missions gift catalog, which has dozens of ministry projects as gift options. You can support a ministry for as little as a couple of dollars, and CBF will send your loved one a special note describing the gift you purchased in their name. It might be tuition for a seminary student in China, a pig for an agriculture project in Thailand, water well in Ethiopia or bus tickets for a Roma family to attend church.

Each gift represents a contribution to the life-changing ministry of CBF field personnel serving around the globe. Your gift can be given in memory, for a birthday or anniversary, or for any holiday or special occasion during the year.

Browse online and order today at [www.thefellowship.info/giftcatalog](http://www.thefellowship.info/giftcatalog).



## *Pre-register today for* **CBF's annual General Assembly**

Don't make those normal July 4th plans before considering the 19th annual CBF General Assembly, set for July 2-3, 2009, in Houston, Texas. While you're at the Assembly for exciting fellowship, inspiring worship, practical ministry workshops and much more, you'll be amid downtown Houston with its restaurants, entertainment venues and shops — plus an easy public transportation system to get you from place to place.

Catch a Houston Astros game, a concert, or quarter horse racing. Visit a museum, the aquarium and more. Whatever your interest, you'll find something exciting in Houston, including the Freedom Over Texas Festival on July 4th. With live concerts and the country's largest land-based fireworks display choreographed to music, you'll be glad you spent the holiday weekend with friends in Texas.

Learn more and pre-register online at [www.thefellowship.info/assembly](http://www.thefellowship.info/assembly). After pre-registration, you can make hotel reservations at the four-star Hilton-Americas Hotel for only \$109 per night.

# Five Tips for creating and nurturing a culture of Christian spiritual formation

By Rick Bennett

Christian spiritual formation is the process of being shaped in the image of Christ by the gracious working of the Holy Spirit for the transformation of the world. Consider the following tips as you go about creating and nurturing a culture of Christian spiritual formation in your church.

## 1 Pray that God's will be done

The Bible indicates that God's will for our lives is formation into the image of Christ. Where this formation occurs, the Kingdom comes. Pray that the Holy Spirit would place a desire for spiritual formation within you and the members of your church. Pray daily for personal and congregational formation into the likeness and presence of Christ. Offer yourself as "a living sacrifice" to this end. Lead others to pray for spiritual formation as well by creating a small group community that prays, watches, listens for and celebrates the Holy Spirit's activity.

## 2 Share your personal journey of spiritual formation in Christ

God uses Christian testimony as a catalyst for formation in the lives of non-Christians and Christians alike. When we articulate our personal experience of Jesus we participate in God's mission to the world. In sharing, emphasize the journey-like nature of your Christian discipleship and help others identify their own. Help people discover that they have a Jesus story. Help them tell it! Recover a place in worship and other intentionally Christian gatherings for testimony, emphasizing the dynamic nature of learning to walk in the way of Jesus.

## 3 Define spiritual formation

We often struggle with new and ambiguous terms. Offer definitions and perspectives on Christian spiritual formation as a way of helping people begin to wrap their minds around this mysterious biblical truth. CBF provides an amplified definition of Christian spiritual formation at [www.thefellowship.info/sfn](http://www.thefellowship.info/sfn). An excellent resource for introducing and defining Christian spiritual formation through a Baptist lens is *Light for the Path: A Guide to Spiritual Formation Resources*. Use this resource to emphasize and illustrate the biblical nature and foundation of spiritual formation through Bible study and preaching.



## 4 Provide innovative opportunities for spiritual formation

A great resource for such opportunities is the small-group resource *Companions in Christ*, available through CBF partner Upper Room Ministries. Beyond the original 26-week resource (which is now available in units), view the series of shorter experiences that include *Exploring the Way: An Introduction to Spiritual Formation*, *The Way of Prayer*, and *The Way of Discernment*. Integrate meaningful periods of silence into corporate worship. Consider starting communities of spiritual practice, communities that gather on a regular basis around

the sharing of a particular spiritual discipline or prayer practice. Balance becoming with being by incorporating periods of re-reflection and journaling into missions activities.

## 5 Prepare for a new generation

A lasting, vibrant culture of spiritual formation begins with preschoolers, children and youth. How does your church provide for the intentional spiritual formation of these groups? How are you equipping and empowering families to take the lead in spiritual formation at home? Upper Room Ministries also provides several wonderful resources for help in this area. *The Way of the Child* provides 39 sessions intended to provide children with tools for a lifetime of spiritual formation. Designed to teach older youth about the rhythm of the spiritual life, *The Way of Pilgrimage* is a resource for senior high youth. Check out CBF's missions education resources for preschoolers (*Form*), children (*Spark*), and youth (*Ignite*). Begin now to teach preschoolers about the necessity of sacred space and the



myriad historically Christian ways that they can pray. Equip children and youth with tools for building a relationship with God, trust the Spirit, and watch the Kingdom come.

For more information about creating a culture of Christian spiritual formation within your church or for spiritual formation resources, contact Rick Bennett, the Fellowship's director of congregational life at [rbennett@thefellowship.info](mailto:rbennett@thefellowship.info). CBF resources identified in this article are available through the CBF Store at (888) 801-4223 or through a CBF partner.



Louisiana residents navigate through the floodwaters following Hurricane Ike.

# Serve

## CBF calls for disaster responders along hurricane-damaged Louisiana coast

In the aftermath of destructive Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has discovered a small Louisiana community that has been nearly forgotten, but with response from Fellowship churches and individuals, that all could change for Houma, La..

Areas of Houma experienced flooding from both storms, with the bayou communities seeing the storm's worst. Only a few feet above sea level, one small fishing and crabbing community saw extreme flooding. Tom Bellon, pastor of the local Live Oak Baptist Church, and his family of five – including one infant — still can't live in their house. They stay in a camper next door.

The church flooded but it doesn't stop members from using the building as a distribution center for basic necessities or a central gathering place in the community.

"The Lord's helpers need some help," said Reid Doster, CBF of Louisiana's coordinator.

The immediate need in the Houma and bayou areas is to make houses inhabitable,

including new interior walls, other basic repairs, minimal furniture and new bedding. Responders will stay at CBF partner Mulberry Baptist Church, where many meals will be provided. CBF may also help in Houma, where many church members, including the church's pastor, Steve Graves, also had storm damage to their houses.

CBF of Louisiana's disaster response will provide building materials and equipment, such as shower trailers, utility trailers and some tools.

CBF's disaster response is completely dependent on the voluntary service of Fellowship partner churches and individuals.

"Without your participation, we have no vehicle for delivering the hope of Jesus Christ to communities teetering on the edge of hopelessness. Together, we have an opportunity to model for hurting people the true meaning of Christmas," Doster said. "A few days of helping the most needy, neglected and forgotten folk 'down on the bayou' will enrich your life forever."

After Gustav, CBF worked in Baton Rouge, aiding CBF partnering congrega-

tions Broadmoor Baptist Church and University Baptist Church and their surrounding neighborhoods. In October, CBF was made aware of needs in South Terrebonne Parish, which includes Houma.

"You can start looking at your calendar and say, 'If you need me, I can come.' Tell us when you are available and if you have some special skill or cause," said Charles Ray, CBF's national disaster response coordinator. "Also, send us what you can financially. We're going to spend it wisely to help the most people possible."



CBF Louisiana photos

Members of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, La., prepare a generator provided by CBF's disaster response ministry.



**SERVE**

Visit [www.thefellowship.info/cbfresponds](http://www.thefellowship.info/cbfresponds) to apply online to serve in a disaster area. Upon completion of the application, you will be asked to enroll in inexpensive, short-term missions supplemental health insurance. For more information, contact Chris Boltin at (800) 352-8741 or [engage@thefellowship.info](mailto:engage@thefellowship.info).



**GIVE**

If you cannot serve, consider financial support of these recovery ministries. You can give online at [www.thefellowship.info/Give](http://www.thefellowship.info/Give).

Patrick Moses has a long commute from his home in Mansfield, Texas, to his job with Homeland Security in Washington, D.C. But that hasn't stopped the former Cooperative Baptist Fellowship leadership scholar from starting and growing Antioch Baptist Church in Mansfield, a community Moses described as "upwardly mobile and extremely progressive."

Throw in a local barbershop and it's a combination tailor-made for a church whose evangelistic approach focuses on using modern technology to communicate the good news.

The Mansfield area is growing, and Moses said many of the families are not connected to a church. Moses' strategy is to use e-mails and text messaging as a means to attract people who don't attend church regularly. Most of their contacts come from two church members who operate a barbershop.

Antioch held its first worship service in December 2007, targeting families moving into the Mansfield/South Arlington/Grand Prairie area of north central Texas. It has quickly become a close-knit fellowship with several families vacationing together in Washington, D.C., this past summer. A tour of colleges is planned this fall so that children and teenagers in the congregation will have the opportunity to visit the campuses of all colleges in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area.

"Patrick contacted me last year with the hope of starting something new in Mansfield, an area with no moderate African American churches," said David King, CBF's church starts assistant. "We worked with him to develop his plan and also put him in contact with the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT)."

Antioch was launched with support from BGCT, CBF, several local African American Baptist churches and a group of pastors serving as mentors to Moses.

CBF and CBF of Texas signed an official covenant of partnership with Antioch at this year's General Assembly in Memphis. While

there are some financial aspects to the partnership, it also involves connecting Moses with other CBF church planters in Texas and beyond. The church will hold a block party this fall, sponsored by BGCT as another way to connect people with Antioch.

"CBF is committed to developing a strategy of church starting that is a partnership between national and state CBF leadership as well as new church starts," said Bo Prosser, the Fellowship's coordinator of congregational life. "This new church start has certainly benefited from this strategy. Patrick's energy for the work and his sensitivity to God's spirit are evident. We are pleased to partner in such an exciting setting."

Moses earned a bachelor of arts in political science and a master of public administration degree from Southern University. He was ordained in June 2005, just before he graduated from Texas Christian University's Brite Divinity School, a Fellowship partner, with a master of divinity degree. He was introduced to CBF while attend-



Photo courtesy Antioch Baptist

**Patrick Moses, a bi-vocational pastor, works with the Department of Homeland Security and as pastor of Antioch Baptist. He is shown here with Antioch's first baptism class.**

ing Greater Saint Stephen's First Church in Fort Worth, a connection that helped him become a CBF leadership scholar.

A bi-vocational pastor, Moses is an 18-year federal employee, having worked in several government agencies in the Fort Worth area. In May, he was recruited to serve in a position in Washington, D.C., with the Department of Homeland Security. He is responsible for the law enforcement and physical security of federal facilities located in the Washington metropolitan area.

Moses' wife, Ronda, is director of social services at Life Care Center of Haltom, and recently earned a bachelor of social work at Texas Woman's University. She is a part of the ministry team at Antioch.

"I love transforming people, and I feel called to doing a church start," Moses said. "It is exciting to watch God create a new church — a church with a new DNA."

*By contributing writer Sue H. Poss, Greenville, S.C.*



To learn more about CBF church start resources, contact David King at [dking@thefellowship.info](mailto:dking@thefellowship.info) or (800) 352-8741.

# ‘The LIGHT came on,’

## Gospel spread in difficult mission field of central Asia

One of the holiest moments in Jabib’s life happened in a humble, borrowed kiddie pool. It was blue — the kind that inflates — and it wasn’t even deep enough to get his knees wet. But it served its purpose, and on a concealed rooftop in central Asia, Jabib was baptized.

John, one of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship’s field personnel, stood to the side and watched his friend take this important step of faith. For months prior to this moment, John helped Jabib learn English, using the Bible as a text. Soon after “it was like the light came on,” John said. “He said, ‘I want to follow Jesus.’”

“It’s a really wonderful story of how God can transform someone. It wasn’t just me. It just goes to prove the old principle about one step at a time. God uses different people in the life of someone over time,” John said. “Now I look at [Jabib] — he’s a different person.”

And that’s just one story of how God is

working in this poor central Asian country, where John has been living out his calling to missions for more than two years.

Always interested in international mission work, John served seven years in the Air Force and 10 years as a school teacher in New Mexico before returning home to Memphis, Tenn., to attend seminary. He applied for missions service with CBF and was given the option of where to serve. One of CBF’s field personnel told him about central Asia and that his presence would be vital there.

“I said, ‘Great, I’ll do it.’ — though I certainly had my doubts,” he said. “It was the land of the unknown.”

In 2006, John arrived in country and began working as a logistics manager with a non-governmental organization (NGO). Though his work helped meet people’s physical needs such as healthcare; it wasn’t this job that kept him there. It was the other opportunities to minister that he found along the way.

John was introduced to a group of young Christian men who wanted to grow in their faith. He began mentoring these men, who were eager to learn and follow the teachings of Christ. The group grew from just a couple to 10.

“They are hungry to grow in their faith,” John said. “They’re willing to face some pretty daunting risks to do so. The government is a threat to them, but the greatest risk to following Christ is from their own family. If a relative finds out they’re a believer, they can be killed.”

But the hope of Christ outweighs the risk for many in this conservative Islamic country. John has been involved in seven baptisms in his two years there — in locations ranging from an open recreational lake to the bathtub in John’s own apartment.

“The country is just ripe for the expansion of God’s kingdom and gospel because there’s a younger generation that are really open to hearing what Jesus wants to do in their life,” John said. “This younger generation is really crucial to the future of the country. If you can impact this new generation, then there’s real hope.”

That’s why another aspect of John’s ministry is a new private school for children run

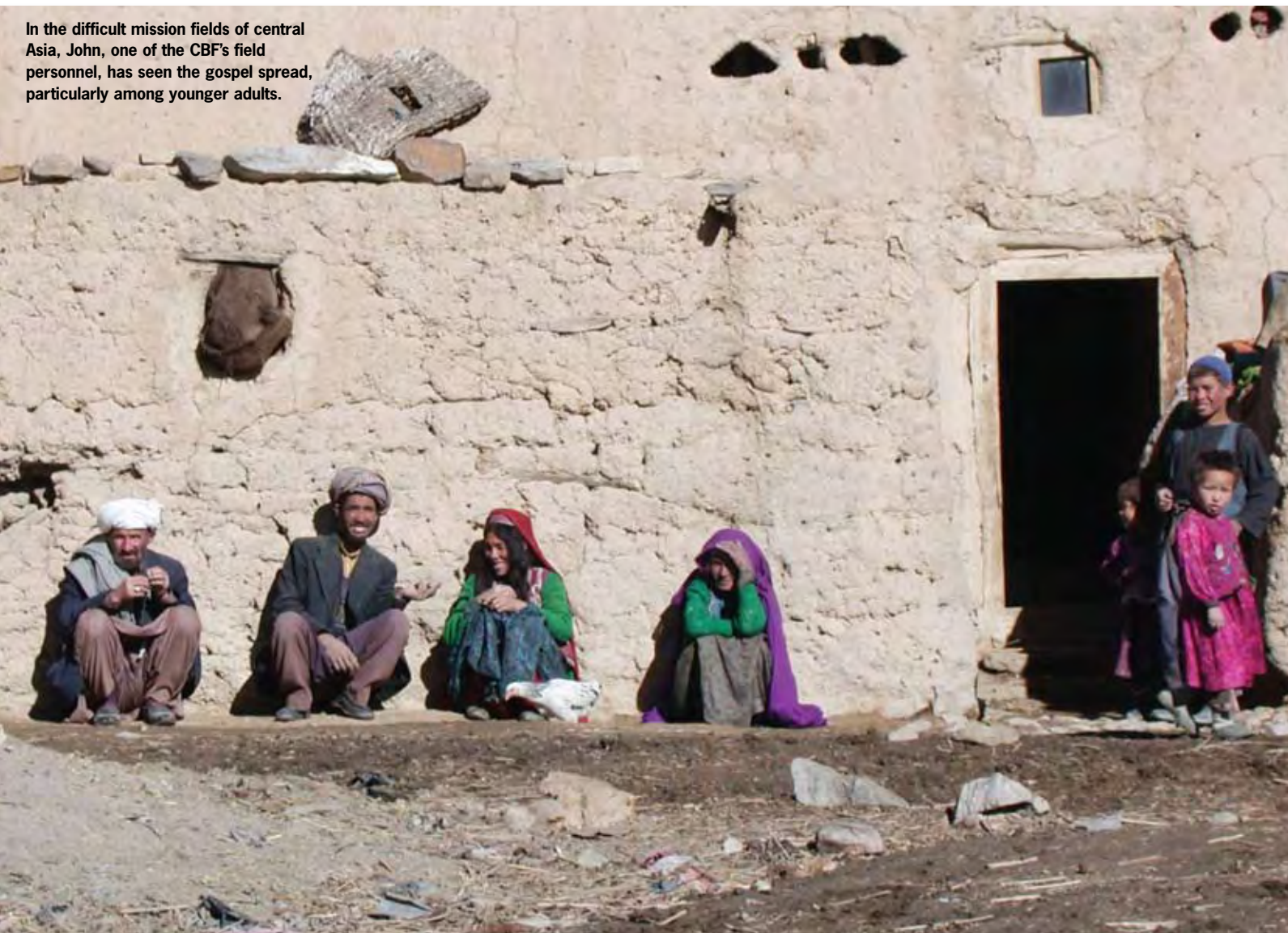


CBF photo



CBF photo

In the difficult mission fields of central Asia, John, one of the CBF's field personnel, has seen the gospel spread, particularly among younger adults.



by a local Christian. Unlike government supported schools, it is committed to not including Islamic indoctrination as part of the curriculum. John's home church, Second Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., is partnering in ministry with John and CBF by giving financial support to this school as well as sponsoring an older student in his quest to receive college education in the United States.

Part of John's future work will be to continue helping with the school, begin teaching English at a local language institute, and relate more with the poorer people of this country.

"It's a very poor country. Life for most is very austere ... yet they are very hospitable ... and warm," John said. "They can be very loyal friends of foreigners."

John prays that the country would grow in openness to Christianity — both in the

government's toleration of the Christian message and in more nationals professing faith in Jesus Christ.

"I've been told by friends that there are probably 3,000 [believers] in country, but that number is steadily growing," he said. "There's a growing church that's indigenous. It's growing especially among young people

— they're hungry for something new, something different, something better."

Like other CBF field personnel, John's ministry is funded through financial gifts to CBF's Offering for Global Missions.

"I wouldn't be here if it wasn't

for CBF's Offering for Global Missions," John said.

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*By Carla Wynn Davis, CBF Communications*

*Due to global security concerns names and specific locations of some CBF field personnel will not be publicized.*

## Give to the CBF *Offering for* GLOBAL MISSIONS



**Online** — Go to [www.thefellowship.info/give](http://www.thefellowship.info/give). For questions regarding online giving, contact [igive@thefellowship.info](mailto:igive@thefellowship.info).

**Mail** — Use the contribution envelope included in this issue and make your check payable to CBF.

**Phone** — Call CBF toll-free at (800) 352-8741.

## Field Personnel **Spotlight**

# Paula Settle

[www.thefellowship.info/settle](http://www.thefellowship.info/settle)

**P**aula Settle, one of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's field personnel, ministers in eastern Kentucky among the rural poor.

**Background:** Commissioned as one of CBF's field personnel in 2007, Settle is originally from Owensboro, Ky. She has served as a missionary in Togo, Africa. A graduate of Kentucky's Campbellsville University and Southern Seminary, she has also served as a children's minister, education minister and with Christian Women's Job Corps.

**Ministry:** Settle serves in eastern Kentucky with Mountain Hope, the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship's rural poverty effort in three Kentucky communities. Her work in Owsley County and Powell County's community of Nada is part of Together of Hope, CBF's rural poverty initiative in 20 of the poorest counties in the United States.

"I am working with individual families, reading to children in the local elementary school, working in a food pantry, a clothes closet, women's groups, summer mission teams, housing repairs, senior adult assisted living center, and being an advocate for the poor with the school system and government agencies. I have opportunities to share God's love with individuals and in group settings," Settle said.

One of Settle's ministry goals is to expose children and teens to other areas of the United States since many of them have never traveled outside their county. During the summer, a "Reverse Missions Trip" took 12 teenagers from Nada to Blacksburg, Va., where they served alongside Blacksburg Baptist Church, a CBF partner congregation that



CBF photo

**Paula Settle**

sends a mission team to Nada each summer. In November, a group of women from Nada will make their second trip to Asheville, N.C., as guests of CBF partner Hominy Baptist Church.



### Learning to give

In December, *Spark*, the Fellowship's missions education resource for children, focuses on the contrasting perspectives of beauty and of poverty in the Appalachian region of Kentucky. Children will learn about CBF field personnel Paula Settle and how they can support her work through praying and giving. Children will be encouraged to collect money to support the ministries of CBF field personnel around the world. For more information about CBF's missions education resources, visit [www.missionseducation.org](http://www.missionseducation.org).

**Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**



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