



Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Louisiana

www.cbfla.org

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Coordinating Council Plans for Future

Following the resignation of Reid Doster last month, the Coordinating Council, meeting at Emmanuel in Alexandria on November 6, affirmed Kyle Kelley as Interim Coordinator. They selected an Executive Committee composed of Terry Ellis, Chris Thacker, John Henson, Jenny Hodge and Kyle Kelley to explore various re-structuring options. In coming weeks they will bring back a recommendation to the Council for deliberation and presentation to the full CBF-LA body for approval.

Serving on the Coordinating Council are:



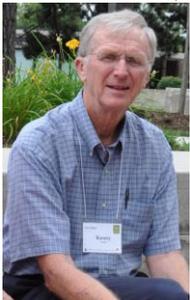
Terry Ellis, Pastor, Broadmoor-Baton Rouge as Moderator;



Ron Perritt, Layperson, University-Baton Rouge as Moderator-Elect;



John Henson, Pastor, Church for the Highlands-Shreveport as Past Moderator;



Kenny Crump, Layperson, Temple-Ruston, Treasurer;



Elizabeth Lott, Pastor, St. Charles-New Orleans, Secretary;



Chris Thacker, Pastor, Emmanuel-Alexandria Moderator-Elect (starting January);



Randal Cope, Layperson, Broadmoor-Baton Rouge, Southern Representative;



Ralph Blake, Layperson, Church for the Highlands, Northern Representative;

Give your prayers and encouragement to these folks who represent you on our CBF-LA Coordinating Council.

On Builders and Boosters . . . Like the Kesslers



by Kyle Kelley, CBF-LA Interim Coordinator

Shortly after I finished last issue's article on that cloud of witnesses, I got word of a generous gift from the estate of one of those in that cloud, Elizabeth Kessler.

Al and Elizabeth were my neighbors just a couple of streets over. We shared rides to Alexandria for CBF meetings. Never will you find a more consistent, grounded, encouraging couple.

Al was the original town cryer, in Paul Revere fashion, who traveled the state with John Goodwin back in the early 1990s talking to churches and pastors about the changes in Baptist life and this new upstart Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

A childhood friend of Frank Stagg, Al turned to his buddy to explain some of the nuances of interpretation and claims being thrown around back in the day, and quickly understood what needed to be done. Al was a promoter in the best sense of the word. He was a builder with tireless positive energy. With his characteristic phrase, "Thank you, Thank you, Thank you," he was one of the handful who willed CBF-LA into being by the grace of God.

Al and Elizabeth met at the phone company where she worked for him. They married later in life after Al's first wife died. She cared for him through some difficult final years as his health failed. Though both had their share of sorrow, it was hard to get a complaint from them.

I served all together over 20 years at First Shreveport with the Kesslers where they were a consistent presence, a calm encouragement. They were very supportive of the new start Church for the Highlands and would frequently ask me for an update.

Whenever I stopped for a visit in her final years widowhood, Elizabeth wanted the latest information and invariably would not let me leave without a check for CBF and a boost of encouragement. The greatest gift was being in the presence of one so completely comfortable inside her skin, so certain of her place and to Whom she belonged.

Elizabeth soldiered on with dialysis and complications of diabetes, yet each month would mail out a copy of the latest prayer letter from Romany Missionaries Keith Holmes and Mary van Rheenen. I think of Elizabeth each month now when I post the Holmes prayer letter on our website (the latest is in this email.)

A little over a year ago, she knew it was time to discontinue dialysis. Ronney Joe Webb, Missions Minister at First Baptist, commented to me on her serenity and utter peacefulness in her decision, even joy at the new life which awaited.

My first thought upon receiving the estate gift was the bittersweet realization she was not around for me to thank. But then again . . . there is this great cloud of witness thing of the early church. I sense a serene smile gazing down who shares in my gratitude in this time of Thanksgiving.



Al and Elizabeth Kessler at Emmanuel-Alexandria for CBF meeting in 2004.



DAWNINGS is a free retreat for your missions team being held at Broadmoor Baton Rouge **January 15-17**. Complimentary lodging is available. Draw close to God and your missional calling. Learn more at: cbfdawnings.org

Homesick for Poznan (Poland)

by Mary van Rheenen

Have you ever been homesick for a place where you only stayed a brief time? I'm homesick for Poznan, a surprisingly artsy city in Poland. Last autumn Keith, Ellen, and I lived there for just over two months. Keith and Ellen were working on a recording project for Faith Comes by Hearing. I was doing support things like making coffee for the break times, brightening up the all-black recording studio, and getting to know a wonderfully creative group of Christians. You can hear this recording of a contemporary translation of the New Testament at <http://www.bible.is/POLNCV/Matt/5/D>. I've randomly chosen Jesus's Sermon on the Mount.



[Holmes / van Rheenen family](#)

I miss spending time with Katya, a committed Christian and talented artist who volunteered to be a "proof-listener" almost every day. I miss getting to know people like Krystyna Zaremba, chief proof-listener, psychologist, and German translator; artist Kuba, the "voice" of Paul; another proof-listener married to an American artist and her sister, who combined sports with visual arts; the jazz musician who

offered the use of his studio; and a host of other wonderfully creative people. Many were involved in creative outreach like a Christian arts center, a coffee house which also offered conversational English classes, and a motorcycle club with a Bible study.

I miss the big, tasty Polish potatoes (don't know why Dutch ones are so small); the string of little shops within walking distance of our rented apartment; the big, cheap pumpkins (don't know why they're so expensive here); a certain soft Polish cheese (somewhere between cream and cottage cheeses, great with Mexican dishes); and the simplicity of living in a rented apartment with just the essentials rather than all the clutter we've collected in our own home.

I miss being close enough to family to spend time together. Keith's brother and sister-in-law Ted and Bev Holmes live in Warsaw, just a 2 or 2 1/2 hour drive away, where they serve as church planters with another mission board. They came to visit once. We went to visit twice, including over Thanksgiving. It's been a long time since we celebrated Thanksgiving on Thanksgiving Day with fellow Americans. Usually we invite some Dutch folks over for supper on the Saturday close to the day and explain the reason behind the celebration (and the traditional foods). Usually we do not have turkey since a) it's hard to find here and b) a whole turkey would not fit in our little Dutch oven.

In the coming week, we'll be sharing photos of our experiences in Poland along with written "snapshots" of some of these brothers and sisters in Christ on <http://cbf-romany-ministries.blogspot.nl/> (also on Facebook). We'd love to hear your own reflections on being homesick. And we're thankful that, though all Christians are sojourners on this planet, we can find family and a taste of our future home wherever followers of Jesus gather.

Keith Holmes and Mary van Rheenen are a husband-wife missionary team (field personnel) with CBF. Their work is with the Romany (Gypsy) people of Europe, and they are based in Holland. They have 2 daughters Ellen and Rebecca. Keith's home church is University Baptist in Baton Rouge.

See [video](#) of their Romany work.

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