

cbf Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
Forming Together

Louisiana

June 2017 cbfla.org

CBF turns 25

2017 CBF GENERAL ASSEMBLY Atlanta June 28-30

- * Celebrating 25 years of doing missions together
- * Marking \$100,000 grant to CBF-LA
- * 3 days of networking, learning, fellowship and faith
- * Over 60 workshops and opportunities to connect and be energized



Theologian and author Brian McLaren will give keynote address.

Register for free at cbf.net

A Thanks and A Yes

by Mike Massar, CBF-LA Coordinator

Thirty years ago “cooperative Baptist” seemed like an oxymoron. Baptists were arguing over a variety of things – the inerrancy of the Bible, women in ministry, missions and so much more. Cooperation didn’t seem to identify Baptists in any stretch of the imagination. As a young seminarian I asked my mentors, people like Herbert Reynolds who was then President of Baylor, James Dunn, the Executive Director of the Christian Life Commission, David Matthews, my pastor, and many of the Baylor professors, what was to be made of the controversy.

Some said that this was just “Baptists being Baptists.” That is, because of our bent toward independence, Baptists had always had ongoing debates over things like slavery, education and the likes. The folks who mentioned this felt that the tenor and scope of this particular contention would soon subside, and we would go back to being the Baptists we had always been.

Others were not quite so hopeful. They pointed to the fact that the debate had taken on a political edge, and that pastors, professors and institutions now found themselves in peril as never before, the reason being that the fundamentalist faction of the Southern Baptist Convention felt the conviction to purge all institutions and people of anything that disagreed with their politics and theology.

Now, I don’t need to rehash the events for many of you. You are well acquainted with the process that led to the breakup of the Southern Baptist Convention. I know that is still a deep bruise for many of us. However, for so many in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, that controversy is ancient history. And, in a sense, I am glad for that. I would much rather be discussing strategies for starting churches and doing mission.

With that noted, we, as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, are about to celebrate a most significant birthday.



Rev. S.C. Dixon (right) and Mike Massar will speak at the CBF Birthday Celebration about our partnership with Greater Mount Olive Church.

This June at our annual meeting we will commemorate 25 years of doing missions together. I think a look back is not a bad thing, especially in regard to the advances we have made with women in ministry, mission work in some of the poorest places in our world, and education opportunities that expand in scope and significance. There is much for which we should be thankful.

And there is also so much for which to be hopeful. I am encouraged by the fact that there are so many young people stepping into leadership roles at the Fellowship. To visit CBF headquarters (which, by the way, is the third floor of an office building in Decatur, GA., giving firm evidence that our stewardship is focused on mission and ministry and not bricks and mortar!) you can’t help but be infected by the youthful enthusiasm. And not only is there the vibrancy of youth, there is the delightful diversity of gender, race, and experience.

Louisiana mirrors the national CBF in the sense that our history is punctuated by free and faithful Baptists who have stood firm in the past quarter of a century for ideals and principles. Our heritage is inspirational. But our future is infused with enthusiasm for even further breakthroughs in opportunities to serve Christ.

At this year’s annual meeting we will celebrate together, but we will also pray together about a future that holds so much promise. As CBF-LA, we are to receive a grant from CBF Global of \$100,000. At the annual meeting we will have time for a state meeting. During that time we will discuss how we want to invest these funds. I have proposed to our Coordinating Council that we consider investing \$50,000 in Together For Hope and \$50,000 for new church starts. (We have a couple of areas in our state that are prime locations for a CBF church startup.)

The annual meeting is going to be such a joyful celebration. The only thing that will make it better is if you could attend. Get on CBF’s website and make plans now to attend. The party just won’t be the same without you!

For all that has been--thanks; to all that shall be--yes!



Greetings from Lake Providence
by Marc Boswell, CBF-LA Together for Hope Director

Life in town has been bustling over the past few weeks as the school year ended and graduation ceremonies commenced. Thankfully, the GED (HiSET) program will continue to move along throughout the summer. It's my expectation that an additional two students will have completed their degree by next month when I sit to write another update. They each have one subtest left and are scheduled to take them within a month.

Of the students who have progressed to the point of taking the tests, all have completed at least two of the five portions. This is a major accomplishment for them, and their confidence only continues to grow. We'll continue to celebrate with them and help them in their discernment process as they think about their career and educational options after receiving their degree. One young woman is already enrolled in a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) program beginning in June through the Louisiana Delta Community College of Lake Providence.

In late April, the economic/community development plan that I helped write for the town was accepted and approved by the town council. A few residents have been excited to work on a few of the projects in the plan, e.g., the development of a

youth leadership program and registering Lake Providence as a Main Street community. These plans have come about as I've met with people in town who work with the Historical Society and other local leaders who are already actively working on community development related projects in town.

The summer is gearing up to be a busy time. Three church groups are coming into Lake Providence for a time of service-learning and community work in June and July. We'll host a reading/literacy day camp in July and other groups will be involved in other service/educational related projects. I'll also be attending the CBF General Assembly in June. At the beginning of August, we'll host another effort to help get school supplies to children in Lake Providence. You can find more information about that effort in this newsletter.

Please continue to pray for the efforts of Together for Hope, and thank you for your contributions and support. Know that you are always welcome to come to the Northeastern part of the state to learn more about life in East Carroll Parish and to meet and work with the many people here who are striving to make their community a better place. Take care!

Planning Ahead Bags of Hope August 5 We Need:

- * **Adopt a Grade Groups:** Churches, Sunday School classes, mission teams or other groups are needed to:
 - Supply teacher generated list of student supplies to begin year for that grade
 - Receive period reports, pictures or letters back to the congregation coordinated by Marc
 - As able groups give periodic support and communication with their grade.
- * **Carnival Volunteers** on August 5 to assist with jump houses, activities, refreshments and distribution of supplies.

What You Can Do Now:

- * Contact person needed from each church to coordinate church or group response with Marc.
- * Begin collecting following high need supplies: pencils, pens, spiral one subject notebooks, crayons, colored pencils, large rubber erasers, highlighters. Online purchase and shipping direct to the mission house is also an option.

Marc's growing partnership with the schools and staff has yielded both much gratitude from school staff and lots of ideas to make Bags of Hope even better! Stay tuned. Contact Marc for more info at email or phone info in blue square below.



John Henson Honored

The dog tag on his stethoscope read: "To Dr. John Henson, Doctor of Ministry, doctor of our souls, presented by Church for the Highlands May 21, 2017 to a true heart doctor ever pointing us to the Tree of Life." The congregation also celebrated this recent McAfee grad with a hand made blue stole and cake.



Picture God's Love
Give to CBF-LA

___ CBF-LA Ministry Budget \$ _____ ___ New Church Start \$ _____
 ___ Together for Hope Rural Poverty \$ _____ ___ Disaster Relief \$ _____
 ___ Hope (Missionary) Fund \$ _____ Other: _____ \$ _____

Your name (please print) _____

Address _____ City _____

State ___ Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Make checks payable to CBF-LA, Finance Office, c/o Sabra Hicks,
520 Olive Street, Shreveport, LA 71104 Give online at cbfla.org

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