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**In This Issue:**

1. An Amazing Community - by Mike Massar  
(*Louisiana and Mississippi Fellowships Meet at General Assembly in Dallas*)
2. New Start Church for the Highlands featured in General Assembly video
3. Bags of Hope August 1 - Help Needed
4. Holmes/van Rheenen Coming to Louisiana
5. CBF-LA Calendar

## *An Amazing Community*

*by Mike Massar, CBF-LA Transitional Coordinator*



CBF Mississippi Coordinator Christian Byrd and CBF Louisiana Coordinator Mike Massar presided over the first ever joint meeting of the two states at the General Assembly in Dallas in June.

One of my favorite continuing education experiences has been The Proctor Institute For Child Advocacy that is conducted by the Children's Defense Fund. The event is a weeklong gathering of people and experiences at Haley

Farm (a Tennessee property now owned by the Children's Defense Fund, but first purchased by Alex Haley with the proceeds of his book, *Roots*). The week brings all kinds of people together. There are ministers, church leaders and gifted preachers, such as Fred Craddock, James Forbes, Barbara Lundblad, Otis Moss Jr., Otis Moss III and many more. There are a whole host of lay leaders. And there are hundreds of young people bussed from the inner cities and other places to spend time with these gifted leaders and teachers.

I love Proctor because of the amazing community that takes place there. For young and old alike it is a community where servant-leadership and collegiality are practiced in a joyful environment that is conducive to communication and creation. For instance, I once observed a group of African-American young people sitting at a lunch table with octogenarian Fred Craddock, talking and laughing and learning. Craddock later quipped that the table wanted to make him their grandfather!

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is an organization that often reminds me of my Haley Farm experiences. Last month's general assembly meeting in Dallas emphasized that - so many different gifted people, so many different opportunities for learning and expression, so many ways to encounter the Good News of the Gospel.



One of the important events that took place was our state meeting that we shared with Mississippi. As most of you know by now, we are experimenting

with the idea of forging our two states into a regional partnership. The Dallas meeting was a giant step toward making that happen. It was exhilarating to see so many "neighbors" in the room, and, more than that, so much energy in the room. Mississippi CBF state coordinator Christian Byrd and I were tremendously encouraged.



*See more pictures from state meeting [here](#).*

To continue that encouragement we have a couple of events scheduled for the next few months:

The first, a **Children's Ministry Workshop**, will take place on **July 18th** from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the First Baptist Church in Meridian, Mississippi. All children's ministers, workers and interested folk are invited to a wonderful ecumenical morning where curriculum and program possibilities will be discussed, not to mention kids' camps and other pertinent issues for those who work with children. And one of the great things about the day is that there is no cost for attendance!

The second, the **Stagg-Tolbert Lecture featuring Rachel Held Evans**, will be a marvelous opportunity to hear one of the best of contemporary voices speak about young adults and the church. This event will take place at St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans on **November 7-8**. You probably need to begin making plans to attend now, because space is limited. Information for the weekend can be found [here](#).

In addition to these events, other opportunities for education, fellowship and worship are being planned. Please share this excitement with folks who need to be engaged in a community of free and faithful Baptists.

Enthusied about the future,

*Mike*

*CBF-LA new start Church for the Highlands featured in General Assembly "Building Bridges" video below.*



2015 CBF General Assembly -  
Building Bridges

## *Bags of Hope: July 31-August 1 Lake Providence*

Donations needed: money and school supplies

contact Jenny Hodge at 318-418-5133 or [hodgejv@gmail.com](mailto:hodgejv@gmail.com)

## Holmes/van Rheenen Visit in Fall



Keith Holmes and Mary van Rheenen, CBF Field Personnel to the Romany/Gypsies in Europe will be in the States October - December; Keith's home church is University in Baton Rouge. Contact them at [holmes@cbf.net](mailto:holmes@cbf.net) to speak to your church or group.

Read their latest ["no frills" prayer update](#).

[See video of their work and other posts](#).

## **CBF-LA Calendar**

July 18-Children's Ministry Workshop  
FBC Meridian, 9-12

July 31-August 1 Bags of Hope, Lake Providence

November 7 Rachel Held Evans to Speak  
at Stagg Tolbert Forum in New Orleans



[Registration and more information](#)

[Read Evans bio](#)

Thanks to the generosity of St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church and the Mabel Palmer Lectures in partnership with the Stagg-Tolbert Forum, nationally recognized Christian author Rachel Held Evans will be coming to Louisiana. She will be in New Orleans November 7-8 where she will speak at the Forum and preach in the Sunday morning service at St. Charles Church. Author of 2 books, Evans is best known for her engaging blog, which garners over a quarter million visits each month. [rachelheldevans.com](http://rachelheldevans.com).

**Forming Together** is more than our new tag line. It's a new way to share the CBF story. It's a deliberate decision to live in to the six attributes that we have discovered about ourselves.



[See video of our branding story.](#)

[See Fellowship Magazine for more of our visioning story.](#)

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