

Your

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THE NEWS JOURNAL OF THE BLUE RIDGE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2009

✘ Gather at the River ✘

Fellowship Church has record turn out for Baptism Service

Fellowship Church, Middletown, had an all-time high attendance of 63 for a campground worship and river baptismal service at the Brunswick Family Campground on June 14. Five new believers were baptized.

“The Lord’s been doing a lot with us,” Moss said. “In December attendance was about 15. Now, we’re up to 35.”

Later in June, church members manned a booth at a Middletown Recreation Council Independence Day celebration, helping the council sell tickets for a train/tractor ride through town and giving folks information about the church.



The church also held a children’s carnival on July 18 at Middletown Memorial Park. Jeff Moss, pastor of the new church plant, said the carnival was the biggest outreach for the church yet.

Children learn about Jesus in 2 languages.

For 2 years 2 congregations have been sharing the Virginia Avenue Baptist Church building.

Ender Zambrano leads the Iglesia congregation that meets Sunday

morning on the second floor of 17426 Virginia Avenue.

Aaron Miller pastors the English speaking Baptist membership Sunday AM on the first floor. And this summer both groups experienced the unique adventure of sharing a bilingual VBS. Children enjoyed interacting with each other

for Bible study, crafts, recreation, and snacks. Everyone was pleased with the enthusiastic response to the English-Spanish format.



How Blue Ridge Baptists Should Respond to the Economic Crisis

from your Director of Missions - Bruce Conley

As I have visited churches in our region, talked with Pastors over lunch, and exchanged information with other church leaders in our state convention, one thing is clear - the economic crisis that has hit our country has also affected our local church's finances. Some of our churches have had to cut staff, others are reeling from increased expenses in the face of decreased giving in their congregations.

Cooperative Program giving has decreased of late, and even our Association lost thousands of dollars in investments in the Baptist Foundation - following the downward spiral that hit Wall Street last year. Everyone is taking a hard look at how money is managed, and we're all responding as best as we can in the face of uncertainty.

FREE BOOK AVAILABLE THAT MIGHT HELP!

For all the Pastors, and church financial managers in the Blue Ridge Baptist Association - we are making a book available to you that can help your church during these difficult times. *"How To Survive The Economic Meltdown"* by Patrick Morley (author of *"Man in The Mirror"*) is an excellent book that contains 35 spiritual, practical, and financial strategies that Morley learned while suffering a personal financial crisis as a real estate developer following the Tax Reform Act in 1986.

If you have not yet received your copy of this book ... call Mae in the Association office at (240) 818-8760 so we can get a copy in your hands.

KEEPING THE PROPER FOCUS

Jeremiah 14:22 says: *"Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, the LORD our God. Therefore our hope is in you ..."*

Ultimately, no matter how good or bad things seem to be around us, our hope still rests with God, and our mission is still the same ... to reach a dying world with the gospel, and help them find the saving grace that comes through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Even if our resources are few, the church must still take care of the needs of those who Jesus called "the least of these" - the poor, the homeless, those who are sick, the elderly, widows, children, etc. In all circumstances it's so important that we maintain the proper focus.

THERE IS HOPE IN STAYING WITH GOD'S ECONOMIC PLAN

We know from scripture that God's economic plan does not change, even though things change in the world around us. What is that plan? It's the principle of tithing to your local church 10% of your income, and then giving sacrificial offerings as you are able to - and as God leads. If you lose your job ... no one (including God) will expect you to keep up the same amount of giving to your church that you did when you were gainfully employed. We must however remember that whether we have much, or little - God's standard does not change. All he asks is for the first fruits of what we earn to come to Him ... in honor for who He is, and for what He has done in and for our lives.

Likewise, churches should honor their commitments to mission causes, even if times are difficult on the home front. Most churches designate a percentage of their budgets for mission giving - to the local Association, the Cooperative Program, etc. I think this is the best way for a church to give missionally - because then - if economic times fluctuate, your congregation can still forward the designated percentage to the mission field as God provides it through your congregation. ***We must all remember that HE (God) is in control in every situation in life, and HE WILL PROVIDE and make a way - even if there seems to be no way.***

VICTORY CAN BE FOUND IN STAYING WITH GOD'S PRINCIPLES

How many times have you heard a church member say "Well, I'm not going to give to the church, because I don't like what is happening there right now..." I don't remember seeing anywhere in the scriptures where it says that you should withdraw your financial commitment if you are discontent with something. Malachi 3:10 says "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

At my home church, we were suffering from 5+ years of being in the red on our church budget. It seemed that no matter how much we tried to adjust the budget according to income, we still came up short towards the end of each budget cycle. Church leadership began to pray - and we felt led by God to plan a month long emphasis that would teach everyone about *biblical whole life stewardship*. For 5 weeks in May of this year, we studied what the Bible has to say about being good stewards - and how we are supposed to personally

handle the resources and gifts that God has given to us.

The result? My church is now operating in the black for the first time in 5+ years. I continue to be amazed at how God will work, and multiply what we give - if we will just honor God's principles and our commitments that he has placed in our hands. We tend to forget that our God can work miracles, and our churches and mission causes can realize great victories - even in a national financial crisis.

My church's story is not unique. I am reading daily about churches that are starting building and construction programs because - while finances are tight - construction costs are at the lowest they have been in decades, because contractors are hungry for work! Never forget that our God can take any negative, and work something positive out of it.

May God continue to bless you, your family, and your church as we all do our best to navigate through the financial storm, and to God Be The Glory Great Things He Hath Done!

In Christ,

Bruce M. Conley



How to set up a Facebook Fan Page for your Church

from your Media Guy - Phil Graves

As a church you may not have enough time or money to advertise right now right now with the state of the economy and increased needs for your services. Fortunately, the best advertising is word of mouth, which Facebook and other social networking sites make very easy and it's free! One of the greatest tools out there is an application on Facebook called a "[Fan Page](#)" that allows your attenders to show they are fans of your organization, helping the page to go viral.

Many non-profits are starting to use the Fan Page as a way to connect with volunteers and solidify their brand. [The American Red Cross](#) has over [4,500 fans on their page](#), [The Salvation Army](#) has over [5,300](#), while the [World Wildlife Fund](#) has over [130,000 fans](#). However, the benefits aren't just in the numbers; each page allows you and your volunteers to share pictures, stories, links, videos and events. Remember that Facebook played a huge role in [helping Barack Obama's campaign for presidency](#).

To get started you need to have a Facebook account for your church. If there is someone at your church who has an account they can serve as an administrator or you can delegate someone to the position. It's important to note that your own Facebook profile should be representative of a person, to abide by Facebook terms of use. Once logged in, you can [create your page](#) and add any necessary information about your church. You don't have to publish the page until you are ready.

After your fan page is set up you should embed the link into your newsletter, email, and website to encourage more people to join.

Don't be shy about letting people know about your page as a means for communication. You can also track how many people view the page on particular dates by going to the view insights link on your page. You can use this as a metric system to see how affective this type of advertising is in helping your organization grow.

You may think that Facebook is only for teenagers, college students and young professionals, but you'll be surprised to see how many old friends find you through the network and are willing to support your cause.

Phil is happy to help you set up your Facebook Fan page. You can find him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/skstarkiller.



PrayerFirst

Stirred, not shaken...

from your Prayer Coordinator - Mae Argilan

It's a story as old as man himself. Some tragic circumstance happens – loss, disease, violence – and a voice calls out to God for mercy. Bargains are struck, begging ensues. In an act of sheer desperation the petitioner offers to trade places with the victim and is eager to sacrifice anything God requires. We are willing to do just about anything when we are shaken to our foundations. Fear shakes.

That's not what God wants. That's why He provided the only sacrifice that will ever be acceptable. He will intercede, out of his deep well of compassion; He will heal and comfort. But that's not what He yearns for from us. He wants us to be stirred to seek his face. He wants to be our *first* priority, not our *last* resort. Which is, by the way, why we call our prayer group Prayer First.

The first priority should be a passion for intimacy with God. *That I may know Him and power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings...* Phil 3:10.

Intimacy means revealing the deepest secrets of my heart to God. The degree of my transparency determines the degree of our intimacy. We develop this through basic communication. There's no trick to it. Don't hide behind sacred words. Just talk about what's on your mind. You may find yourself thinking, "But He already knows all this." Push past that notion. How many times a day do you tell your family that you love them? Don't they already know that? But something rises up in your heart – is stirred – and you say it again. You can't help yourself. Love stirs.

How do we know that God wants intimacy with us? *He has spoken to us through his Son...the very expression of God's essence. Heb 1:2-3.* To know Him is to love Him.

Next time we'll pursue how to build on our intimacy through the practice of meditation.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

August Birthdays

- 1 Richard Krauss
- 3 Ed Jordan
- 11 Susan Smith
- 13 Crissy Crawford
- 14 Terry Crawford
- 18 Christine McClellan
- 25 Becky Krauss
- 30 Larry Eubanks

September Birthdays

- 1 Kimberly Pope
- 5 Steve Rose
- 18 Van Heslop
- 23 Aidsa Zambrano
- 23 Phil Graves

August Anniversaries

- 6 Dan and Mille Housam
- 7 Van and Karen Heslop
- 8 Steve and Donna Rose



Spotlight on Fellowship Church

“Walking together with God” 1 John 1:7

Fellowship Baptist Church exists to glorify God and build a community of believers that walk together with God. That’s what their literature states as their purpose, and that becomes apparent about two minutes into any conversation with the congregants of Fellowship. There is a real sense that they are all about discovering who God is.

Pastor Jeff Moss begins his church week on Wednesday with Bible Study in Middletown. The village of Middletown has long been an affluent bedroom community in Frederick County. Whenever a church survey has been done they find the families to be fairly self-sufficient. That was the same result Jeff’s group found in the summer of 2007 when they went around knocking on doors.

How do you reach a population for God who is happily complacent about their lostness? The Fellowship family did a great deal of seeking God about His strategy and came up with a simple response. The impossible is possible; search for any open door.

Jeff took over the responsibilities from previous pastor, Bill Burcher, when he moved on to plant another church. Even though the work was already in progress, Jeff knew he needed to find out what direction God planned to take them. There was a lot of advice and resources to draw from, but Jeff, his wife Susan, and their 3 sons decided to put their confidence in God alone. The journey for the lost souls in Middletown would take deliberate, decisive action.

Membership there comes with the expectations that they are to read God’s word, pray regularly, focus on Jesus, and get involved with others. All of their meetings focus on the Word of God, not the church constitution. Even when they have a potluck it is followed after by a time of prayer. There is a blue-collar lack of formality that is unique in this wilderness where there is no other evangelical movement.

In January of 2009 they saw that most of the events that they had scheduled received little attendance. They decided to abandon conventional wisdom and cut back on promotional events. Instead they asked God to add one family a month to Fellowship. Whenever someone visits the church Jeff finds out what they are hungering for and as that need is met word-of-mouth gets around that the church in Middletown is a place to get nurtured. One family was interested in knowing more of the origins of the Bible, so now they have Greek classes. As more people join, more instructional opportunities become available. As confirmation that they are doing something right, they are growing in number and in depth. In June they baptized 5 in the Potomac River in Brunswick.

There are 3 things that the Fellowship leadership has learned over the last year. (1) Established programs aren’t necessarily a predictor of success. (2) You learn how much you depend on God. (3) Unless the Lord builds the house the building is in vain.

Jeff says his perspective now can be summed up from the NKJ version of Ecclesiastes: “Fear God, keep the commandments...that is the all of man.” He also appreciates the participation of Blue Ridge Association, which has been supportive of the church plant since the beginning.

Read more about Fellowship @ fellowshipmiddletown.com





Broken Before The Throne is a week long Prayer Conference being held at Virginia Avenue Baptist Church from August 8 - 14, 2009.

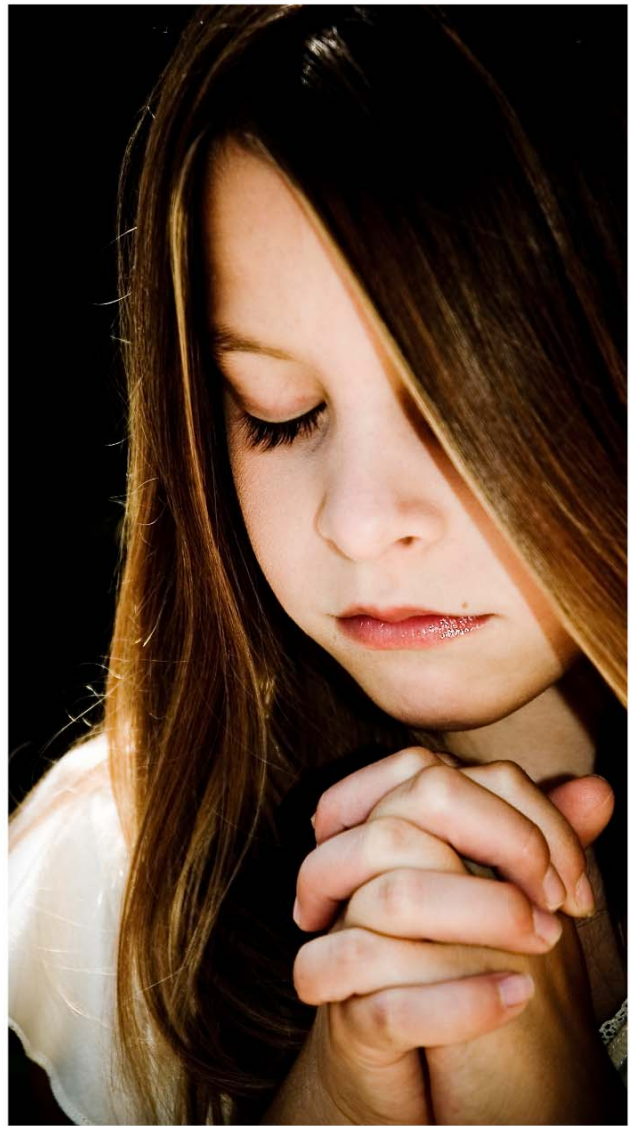
For more information and a schedule of events, check out brokenbeforethethrone.com

There is a lot of talk about prayer but very few are actually doing it. Organizer, Dan Biser said, "I had the the desire for a lengthy conference that would spend time in prayer and give us time for the Lord to deal with us."

Most conferences last 1 to 3 days and are geared for rest and entertainment. In Acts they labored 10 days before the Spirit fell. With Broken Before the Throne, it was decided that we would bring in praying people that had experienced revival and walked with God through the power of prayer.

Speakers include, John McGregor, T.W. Hunt, Al, Whittinghill, and Greg Frizzell. They are given 2 /12 hours to teach, preach or share on what the Lord laid on their heart and then they will gather the group into prayer.

There are three session per day, a total of 9 hours per day in worship and prayer., from 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM, and then 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM. This creates a time to stay before the Lord and wait on Him to move and work. There needs to be a long period that compels people to meet the Lord in unity and confession. One of the things missing today is 'waiting before the Lord'. And because no other conference is built and geared like this it offers a desire to see revival come and an example set before the church of prevailing prayer.





BAPTIST CONVENTION OF MARYLAND DELAWARE



Event Calendar

August 5, 2009

Pastor's Prayer Breakfast at Barbara Fritchie in Frederick - 8:00 AM
All Pastors and Church Staff are Welcome!

August 6-9

BCM/D Boys Camp
Camp Wo-Me-To

Boys from grades 1-6 will enjoy a great time of Fun - Archery - Water Slide - Hiking - Canoeing - Fellowship

Cost : \$160.

Contact: Donna Shiflett (800) 466-5290

August 8-14, 2009

Broken Before the Throne Prayer Conference at Virginia Avenue Baptist Church

August 26, 2009

Personnel Committee Meeting 10:00 AM @ The BRBA Office

September 2, 2009

Pastor's Prayer Breakfast at the Red Byrd in Keedysville - 8:00 AM
All Pastors and Church Staff are Welcome!

September 8, 2009

Nominating Committee Meeting 10:00 AM @ BRBA Office

September 19, 2009

Pinewood Derby and Field Day

Location: Bethel Baptist Church

4261 Montgomery Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21043

Cost: \$8.00 per person (lunch provided) Registration Deadline: September 8

September 19, 2009

BRBA Mass Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM - Noon at South End Baptist Church

September 21-22, 2009

Language Pastors and Wives Retreat at Skycroft

September 29, 2009

Stewardship Committee Meeting at 7:00 PM @ the BRBA Office



In Your Churches

Covenant Baptist in Shepherdstown...

Will be planning a mission trip to Kakamega, Kenya. Women will be leading a women's conference and also doing children's ministry at the church and at an orphanage. Men will do construction work to complete the Children's Sunday School Building for the church.

The trip dates are August 13-16 and the cost is approximately \$3000

If you are interested, Gail Scheffers can be reached at (304) 876-2212 x33



Fellowship Middletown...

REGULAR EVENTS

PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB - 2nd Monday evening of the month

BEGINNERS GREEK - 1st and 3rd Monday evening of the month

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS CLASS 101 - 4th Monday every other month

Smithsburg Valley Baptist Church...

Will Celebrate their 20th Anniversary on August 23, 2009

Congratulations to **South End Baptist Church** for winning an award from the International Mission Board for "The Highest Giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for 2008".



Myersville and Crossroads Baptist Churches are teaming up to do a new outreach program in their communities called "Somebody's Praying For You". Volunteers from both churches will solicit prayer requests from their communities and then try to track the results as prayers are answered.

To share what's happening in your church, please send an email with all the details to Mae Argilan at mac@blueridgebaptist.org

Attendance Up at 2009 SBC Convention

Official registration figures for the 2009 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting show that a total of 8,795 messengers were sent by 3,642 churches from 48 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. While attendance was up significantly among the 35-39-year-old demographic, it was down in the 45-49 and 55-59 categories and up among those 60 and over. Last year's SBC registration total for Indianapolis was 7,277.

Kentucky Baptists had the largest number of messengers, 1,680,- while Maryland/Delaware Baptists were represented by 90 messengers. West Virginia had and Pennsylvania had 66 and 41 messengers present respectively.

Rev. Thom Smith, Pastor of 1st Baptist Church of Hagerstown was one of the spiritual leaders from the Blue Ridge Baptist Association that attended this year's meeting, and he enjoyed the experience. "The Pastor's Conference was the best part of the week. The anointing that was found in each message this year was incredible." Smith went on to say that it was the best preaching he's heard from every speaker in years. "Anyone who missed it really missed a treat, and I would encourage non-attendees to check in on line and catch an audio or streaming video sample of the stirring messages." Smith also said that he was very much pleased with the spirit of cooperation in all the meetings and sessions.

To access the sessions go to www.sbc.net and click the 2009 SBC Annual Meeting Archives. Orlando, Florida will host the 2010 Convention.



Some Available sessions include:

Sunday Night

J.D. Greear
Mac Brunson
Chuck Colson

Monday Morning

Mike Landry
Ed Stetzer
Francis Chan
Tom Elliff

Monday Afternoon

Michael Catt
Fred Luter
Gov. Mike Huckabee

Monday Evening

Alvin Reid
David Platt
Johnny Hunt



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You can subscribe to the online version of our newsletter at www.blueridgebaptist.org



Partnering together to reach our Communities for Christ

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