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“Latest Announcements”

Belize Missions Opportunity – Our association is gathering the following items for the children in Belize: new lace-up children’s tennis shoes (sizes 1,2,3, wide widths), socks umbrellas & hard candy. If you would like to donate any of these items, please take them to Gate City, First Church or Nickelsville, First Church by June 7th. Thanks.

“Preechin to the Choir”

Pastors: Do *you* realize how fortunate you are to be a part of the church you’re serving in?

Churches: Do *you* realize how fortunate you are to have your pastor and his wife serving you?

People: Do *we* realize how fortunate we are to be called the people of God? Do *we* realize what a wonderful opportunity we have to reach our world for Christ?

“Losing Our Identity?”

Have you ever noticed how pastors and pastor’s wives are seldom called by their given names? More often than not people simply refer to their minister as their “preacher, pastor, parson, reverend, teacher” etc. That is, if things are going well. At other times, when things might not be going as well as expected the pastor might be called a host of other names which we’ll not mention at the present.

That reminds me of the story of the young pastor who was only six months into his first pastorate. Each Sunday when church dismissed he would stand outside the entrance of the church and shake hands with the worship-givers as they exited the church. Most of the parishioners came by and wished him well but there was one fellow that kind of irked him. Each week he would exit the building and say, “That’s the sorriest sermon I’ve ever heard!” Week after week he did this and week after week the pastor’s irritability grew.

One Sunday after which he thought he had preached an outstanding sermon the preacher stood outside with the chairman of the deacons and the fellow again came by muttering, “That’s the sorriest sermon I’ve ever heard!” The pastor looked at the deacon and said, “Who in the world is this fellow? I’m disturbed at how he spouts off every week after I preach!” To this the deacon said, “Oh, don’t pay any attention to him, he’s a little ‘tetched in the head.’ He only repeats what he hears everybody else saying.” Needless to say, the deacon’s words offered little comfort.

When we came to Nickelsville, First Church some sixteen years ago we had one dear gentleman in the congregation who simply referred to us as Mr. and Mrs. Preacher. That way he never, regardless of who the preacher happened to be, forgot his name. And, as an added bonus he never, like many of us do all too often, called the preacher’s wife by the wrong name either.

Through the years I came to the realization that many preacher’s wives have absolutely no identity outside of their husbands. That point was deeply driven into my heart when we were visiting my sister-in-law and her husband in Florida several years ago. My wife, Sandy, had visited there on many occasions without me. As such, she was well-acquainted with many people in the neighborhood. One afternoon, I was lounging in the pool while my wife and her sister went shopping. To my surprise the back gate opened and in walked a couple that I didn’t know from Adam; however, they were as surprised as me. They quickly asked, “Who are you?” When I started to answer them they said, “Oh, you must be Sandy’s husband!” At that moment, I knew exactly how my wife must have felt for many years. On that turf I had absolutely no identity of my own.

Like it or not, this identity problem is one experienced by a good number of ladies, even when it comes to motherhood. Author and preacher Tony Campolo once said that when his wife, Peggy, was at home fulltime with their children many people, when they discovered who she was, would ask, “And just what is it that you do, my dear?” After a while she came up with what I would call a classic response. When asked that question she would respond, “I am socializing two Homo sapiens into the dominant values of the Judeo-Christian tradition in order that they might be instruments for the transformation of the social order into the kind of eschatological utopia that God willed from the beginning of creation.” Then Peggy would look the other person in the eye and ask, “And just what is it that you do?” *John Ortberg and Ruth Haley, An Ordinary Day with Jesus (Zondervan, 2001), p. 122;*

Like it or not, I think there is a challenge for us here, especially in Baptist life. Let’s make sure that we never allow anyone or anything to steal the identity that God has given each human being, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion ... over every living thing that moveth on the earth ... And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold it was very good.” (Gen. 1:27-31a, KJV).

But then, losing our identity, as couples serving Christ, is really a blessing in disguise. To this Paul said of all his earthly accomplishments, “... I consider them rubbish, that I might gain Christ and be found in him ...” (Phil. 3:8c-9a, NIV).

As both Mother’s and Father’s Day approach let each of us resolve, along with the Apostle Paul, to let go of our egos and pride and gain His identity!

Steve J. Collins, Pastor, Nickelsville, First

Pastors, Write an Article and Send it to Me for Future Issues

Training Opportunities for Our Churches

Crown Financial Conference – The Stewardship Team & Strengthening Churches Team are partnering to bring a **“Journey to Financial Freedom”** workshop to our association of churches. The event will be held on Saturday, May 16th at the Scott County Vocational Center. The cost of the workshop will be \$25.00 per person and lunch will be provided. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to develop better stewardship habits and further advance our Redeemer’s Kingdom. We need a minimum of 50 people enrolled. For more information contact P.J. Johnson at 276-479-1271 or e-mail him at pjandamanda@mounet.com Each of our churches will be receiving promotional material in the mail.

CVBA Scholarship Funding – Scholarship assistance from our association of churches is available to those in our churches enrolled, or planning to enroll, in continuing education in the summer and fall semesters of 2009. Please remember, these funds are not limited to pastors but are available to others enrolled in college, seminary, or other training that will aid in the advancement of our Father’s Kingdom. In addition, there is funding available to our churches to assist in training events. For further information or assistance contact the Strengthening Churches Team at 276-479-3222 or e-mail Steve Collins at fbcnick@mounet.com

Southwest Virginia Christian Leadership Network

- **May 8-9 -- PASTOR/DEACON/CHURCH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, Eagle Eyrie**
- **June 12-13 and June 26-27 – Masters intensive class in Spiritual Formation. 9 am to 4 pm each day. Classes meet at Bonsack Baptist Church, Roanoke.**
- **July 16-17 -- APPALACHIAN PASTOR/STAFF/SPOUSE RETREAT, Wytheville.**
- **August 3-7 -- MINISTER'S FAMILY RETREAT, Oak Hill Academy.**

For more information contact
Dr. Gary A. Chapman, Director
540/777-3014
Toll Free: (866) 223-9344
gary.chapman@vbmb.org

GOOD NEWS!!!!!!! CONCERNING POSTAL SERVICE

All churches aligned with the Clinch Valley Baptist Association, Inc. are eligible to use the CVBA Bulk Mailing Permit. The only stipulations are (1) you must use the Gate City Post Office. (2) You must use the return address of the association on your mailers rather than your church address (listed on this publication) and (3) You must have at least 200 pieces of mail per mailing. This information and service could save many of our churches at least \$180.00 per year which is the annual cost of a bulk mailing permit. For more information concerning usage of the bulk mailing permit you may contact the Gate City Post Office at (276) 386-7911.

Missions Opportunities

Missions, Belize Missions Trip – June 6th – 14th in partnership with Body and Soul Ministries to help construct a church in Central America. The estimated construction cost is \$18,000.00. The individual cost would be as follows: Plane Fare: \$700.00 - \$1,000.00 Food, Lodging & Transportation - \$300.00. Requirements for the trip would be: a valid passport, health check-up, necessary vaccinations, completed volunteer mission trip forms, International Mission Board insurance, & attendance at team planning meetings. Contact Persons – Rev. Larry Browder – 423-335-4960; Rev. Layton Bentley – 423-361-1008; Dr. Tommy Holtzclaw – 423-967-9660 (DOM, CVBA) Monetary donations may be tax deductible and can be mailed to: Heritage Baptist Church, 5102 Bristol Hwy., Suite 101, Gate City, VA 24251.

MISSIONS, Belize Missions Trip – Aug. 15 – 22 for *book distribution*. This project will include the distribution of school books, supplies, and uniforms to 700 children. Sponsors are needed so each child gets the books, supplies, and uniforms they need. If a child does not have a sponsor they can only go as far as the fourth grade in school. Please pray about this situation and consider sponsoring a child. The cost of sponsoring a child is \$225.00. When you invest in these children they will keep in contact with you. You will receive their picture, name, and birthday. If you would like to be involved in touching the life of one or more children please make your check out to Body and Soul Ministry and mail it to Teresa Hayden at 111 Magnolia Ave., Church Hill, TN 37642. If you have further questions you can contact her at 423-357-8527. Please respond by August 1st, 2009.

Clinch Valley Kingdom Builders, In the spring of 2009 churches from the CVBA will be engaging in missions work throughout the county. This work will involve home repairs and hopefully will include representation from all churches making up the CVBA. If you are aware of someone in need please contact Pat Johnson at 276-479-2249 or patrickj@mounet.com

Impact Virginia – is a one week construction mission opportunity for teenagers. The projects will have between 250 and 300 participants and will focus on home repair and renovation. Morning and evening worship celebrations will help begin and end the day of work with the right spirit and mind. The cost is \$250.00 per person. Dates and locations are as follows:

- June 21st – 27th: Wise, VA, Wise Association
- June 28th – July 4th: Bluefield, VA, East River Association and Bluefield College
- July 12th – 18th: Abingdon, VA, Lebanon Association
- July 19th – 25th: Easter Shore, Accomack – Northhampton Association.

For more information contact Jeannette Hilderbrand at 800-255-2428, extension 7260 or e-mail her at jeannette.hilderbrand@vbmb.org



Scholarships and Ministerial Education Funds

For many years, the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) has offered scholarships and ministerial educational funds to deserving recipients. Through Cooperative Missions dollars of Virginia Baptists, students are able to receive scholarships and ministerial educational funds to assist in their education.

The BGAV is committed to financially aiding the development of emerging leaders of all ages for advancing the Redeemer's Kingdom, and offers three separate options for scholarships and ministerial educational funds.

ACHIEVEMENT SCHOLARSHIPS:

Funds are provided by Virginia Baptists for students from cooperating churches of the BGAV who need aid in financing their undergraduate education.

- Award Range: Up to \$1,000 per year
- Criteria
 - Nonministerial students
 - Full-time students
 - Studying in an accredited program
- Academic Level
 - Academy (must attend Fork Union Military Academy, Hargrave Military Academy, or Oak Hill Academy)
 - Undergraduate (at an accredited school)
- Repayment: These funds are to be considered as grants and have no expectation of being repaid.
- Application Deadline: Applications must be postmarked by June 1, 2009.

Achievement Scholarships are awarded using a priority of:

1. Existing BGAV educational partners, and
2. Public and private colleges and universities approved by the BGAV Scholarship and Ministerial Educational Funds Committee.

MINISTERIAL EDUCATIONAL FUNDS:

Funds are provided by Virginia Baptists for ministerial students from cooperating churches of the BGAV who need aid in financing their undergraduate or graduate education in preparation for vocational ministry.

- Award Range: Up to \$5,000 per year
- Criteria
 - Ministerial students
 - Full-time students (reduced aid is available for part-time students)
 - Studying in an accredited program
- Academic Level
 - Academy (must attend Fork Union Military Academy, Hargrave Military Academy, or Oak Hill Academy)
 - Undergraduate (at an accredited school)
 - Graduate (at an accredited school)
- Repayment: These funds are to be considered as grants if a recipient provides service through the sponsorship of a BGAV church or other Baptist state conventions in friendly cooperation with the BGAV for two years after having completed his / her education. Repayment is otherwise expected as explained in the BGAV Ministerial Educational Funds application form.
- Application Deadline: Applications must be postmarked by June 1, 2009.

For more information visit the website at: vbmb.org and click on scholarships under the Emerging Leaders Link. This will direct you to a link where applications can be downloaded. Or you can contact the Mission Board by calling 1-800-255-2428.

Get Started Today!

Contact Information & Upcoming Events

HOW TO CONTACT US:

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County Wide & Regional Missions Opportunity –

Every year in our communities, numerous children are the victims of abuse or neglect and end up without a home to call their own. Although the number is staggering, the CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) Program of Lee, Scott, and Wise Counties is making a difference. This non-profit program trains volunteers to speak for the best interests of children in court and help them find safe, permanent homes.

This year the program is facing extraordinary challenges. Besides their regular activities they must build and train a larger volunteer base because the number of available volunteers is inadequate to serve the ever-increasing number of abused and neglected children in our area court systems.

Would you be willing to volunteer your time (an average of 5 – 10 hours a month) to “speak up” for abused and neglected children? You can make a difference by helping make sure these children are placed in safe, loving, permanent homes. As a CASA volunteer, you will become a voice for children who cannot speak for themselves. Your voice will help children in need by ensuring that these children have a safe, permanent place to call home.

For more information, please contact: Bridget Mullins, Program Coordinator at (276) 679-2272.

***“Speak up for those who
cannot speak up for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.”
Proverbs 31:8-9, NIV***



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