



North Central News

Serving the Churches of the Etowah, Hightower, Lanier and Roswell Baptist Associations

December 2011 - January 2012



HISHEART HISHANDS HISVOICE



2011 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®

National Goal - \$175 million

December 4 - 11, 2011

Every penny given to Lottie Moon is used to support Southern Baptist missionaries as they share the Gospel overseas. The offering represents 57 percent of the International Mission Board's total income.

2011 Associational Annual Meeting Report

Etowah Baptist Association - 51st Annual Meeting

The 51st Annual Celebration Meeting of the Etowah Baptist Association was held on October 25, 2011, at First Baptist Holly Springs. Dinner was provided by First Baptist Holly Springs. Dr. Gerald Harris, Editor, *The Christian Index*, was the guest speaker.

Hightower Baptist Association - 176th Annual Session

September 28, 2011 - Harmony Grove Baptist Church
Rev. Brody Hughes preached the Introductory sermon saying we are healed by the blood of Jesus Christ. We all have a duty to go forth and spread the gospel. Rev. Gerral Richards preached the Doctrinal sermon, reading from Acts 2:42-47. He asked what do we truly believe in our heart about God? He stated it is important to believe in the virgin birth, believe Jesus died on the cross, He ascended and He is coming back again.

September 29, 2011 - Juno Baptist Church

Rev. Scott Sorrells preached the Missionary sermon, saying God's Church needs to be strong. He shared a dream he had and asked the question, "When someone is in need do they know who to call?" He stated we need to call on God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Roswell Baptist Association - 125th Annual Meeting

The 125th Annual Celebration Meeting of the Roswell Baptist Association was held on October 11, 2011, at Atlanta Street Baptist Church. Dinner was provided by Atlanta Street Baptist Church. Dr. Gerald Harris, Editor, *The Christian Index*, was the guest speaker.

The PIER Foundation

Hutch and Cindy Matteson have established the PIER Foundation in Cumming, Georgia. The goal is to:

- Provide
- Inspiration
- Employment and
- Resources

to adults with disabilities.

Their first venture is The PIER Thrift Store and Consignment Center located at 5185 Browns Bridge Road in Cumming. *If you have items you would like to donate to the Center, please contact Hutch at hutch@pierfoundation.org or 678-455-7437.*

For additional information, please go to www.pierfoundation.org.



Cumming Baptist Church will be hosting

Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University

starting Thursday, January 19, 2012 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm.

Free preview sessions on Sunday, December 11, 2011 and Sunday, January 8, 2012 at 12:00 noon (following the Sunday morning worship service).

Childcare will be provided

For details and registration, go to www.cummingbaptist.net.



2012 JumpStarts

Tuesday, January 17, 2012
Tabernacle Baptist Church, Cartersville
Thursday, January 26, 2012
Beech Haven Baptist Church, Athens

2012 VBS Regional Clinics

March 10, 2012
Tabernacle Baptist Church,
Cartersville

March 17, 2012
Beech Haven Baptist Church, Athens

For additional information or registration, go to www.ssog.gabaptist.org or call 770-936-5270.



Begin the new year with a new perspective

This conference will help you find your place of service. It is intended not only for Men's Directors and Royal Ambassador leaders, but for every man in your church.

2012 Men's Ministries Region Conference

January 28

Saturday • 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

South Region Men's Conference

First Baptist of Ty Ty
157 North Church Street
Ty Ty, Georgia 31795
229-382-6247

Gifts of Georgia Baptists through the Cooperative Program enable us to partner together in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Online registration is available at mens.gabaptist.org
 Cost: \$10 (includes continental breakfast; cookout lunch; special activities)
 Fishing Trip Giveaway with Royce Railey, Professional Bass Fisherman with Go Fish Ministries
 Contact Men's Ministries with questions:
 770-936-5256, 1-800-746-4422 ext. 256, or cwhitaker@gabaptist.org

Beautiful

Georgia Baptist Ministers' Wives Winter Retreat

January 19-21, 2012

Georgia Baptist Conference Center - Toccoa

For additional information, go to gbmw.org, email mcox@gabaptist.org or call 770-936-5362

SELAH

A retreat for women who lead women

January 19-21, 2012
Pinnacle Retreat Center, Clayton, GA

Selah is a retreat designed especially for women who direct or lead the women's organizations of their local church.

For additional information or to register, go to www.georgiawmu.org or wm.gabaptist.org.

awaken

Luke 9:32

2012 Evangelism Conference

"...and when they were fully awake, they saw HIS glory..."

March 5 & 6, 2012 - FBC Newnan, GA

For additional information, go to evan.gabaptist.org or call 770-936-5289

Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments... O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name." Daniel 9:3, 4, 19

It is unusual that you will find me on any "bandwagon." I have learned from experience that the latest fad, the newest craze, or whatever is "hip" is generally overrated. I have seen the hottest "must-haves" go cool to cold very quickly, leaving unrealistic expectations to create a real "let down" for those that initially were excited. Such an experience can have lasting consequences on momentum, volunteerism, and passion. I have learned to move slowly, investigating not just the "commercialism" behind the fad, but to observe the impact and results much later. Does it have a positive affect on the individual, the church, and the community? Was the investment worth the outcome? Rarely does it prove to be. What seems to be "too good to be true" usually is.

After attending this year's Georgia Baptist Convention's Annual Meeting, the 190th session of the GBC, I am finding myself not choosing my default response. The "5 Stones" emphasis struck simultaneously a biblical and pragmatic cord to the degree that I am breaking from my normal "wait and see" mode and desiring to begin implementing this vision immediately. I am confident that if our churches focus on these five priorities the prediction of over 8 million lost people in the state of Georgia by 2020 will be nothing more than a dooms day prediction without substance.

One of my favorite "revival passages" in the Scriptures is Daniel's prayer in chapter 9 of his book. It is one of the longest prayers in the Bible and it is a balanced, gut-wrenching cry for God to transform the nation of Israel. His opening and closing statements are at the top of this page and gives you a quick overview of his intention and purpose. The reason for my quick adherence and acceptance of this emphasis by our state convention is that it so mirrors the cry of Daniel. Notice the parallels.

Stone #1 Spiritual Renewal

The first emphasis that the GBC task force laid out was one that begins with personal responsibility, a resolution to humbly seek repentance and spiritual renewal. This is exactly how Daniel's revival prayer begins. Notice verse 5 that states, "*We have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled*

even by departing from Your precepts." Daniel, a godly leader, took personal responsibility. He didn't point his finger at denominational heads, elders or leaders in the synagogues, political figures, or even the influences of the peoples around them. He took personal initiative to deal with his own issues first. He acted like a man, a real leader, the adult in the room. He "cowboy'd up!" (that was for you, Rebecca!)

Imagine what would happen if all of our churches called on their people to block a season of time during the month of January for intense prayer. What if churches scheduled an all-night prayer vigil, or used their Wednesday evenings during January to draw the people's attention on prayer for personal revival and renewal? What if pastors preached on spiritual disciplines with their application on personal renewal and deeper commitments, encouraging their flocks to make 2012 a year of transformation? Would there not be a significant change in our churches, homes, and ultimately the community? If we just chose *this* stone...

Stone #2 Kingdom Generosity

When you consider the average active church member gives only 2.3% of their income to the Lord, this second stone is certainly a needed and an achievable goal. Consider if you will that each of us decided to obey the Scriptures regarding our finances. That would translate into an immediate tripling (plus!) of ministry funds. We could reach more of the poor, the indigent, and the struggling ethnic groups that live and work among us with physical hands of practical ministry that can clearly point them to a loving God. We can use those funds to send more missionaries, create more ministries.

It would also make sense if every church gave a "tith" of their receipts to mission's causes, setting the example for their flock. It's no mistake that the average percentage of giving of the local church to mission causes is not much different than the giving practice of the average member. As goes the church so goes the congregants! As Baptists we should be proud of the fact that we have over 10,000 missionaries in over 162 countries, a staggering number untouched by any other denomination or organization in the world. We do missions! Let's give so we can do even more. Biblical giving is a simple act of obedience. Daniel cried out, "*We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws;*" (v. 10) and we have not either. We need kingdom generosity!

Stone #3 Church Revitalization

Most of our churches are currently either in decline or have reached a growth plateau. Even our churches that are growing are not growing at the level of the birth rate plus community growth, thus every day we are losing ground. The recent flurry of statistics, though shocking,

reveals that Christianity in America is only one generation away from the "European transition," a condition where Christianity is practically non-existent. Thus, we need to be more serious about the numbers! We need to engage in cooperation, partnering together with other churches to develop a mentoring relationship to see EVERY church grow, become more effective, and reach into the darkness.

Churches helping churches would be a beautiful picture of cooperation and unity that would make an impact on the dog eat dog world we live in. For pastors of declining congregations to say, "Hey, I need someone to help me get back on track," is not a statement of weakness, but a powerful action of supernatural strength. Only a true leader would look at the facts and make the right call. This is the beauty of associations, building relationships that can allow "iron sharpening iron."

Stone #4 Church Planting

Only a confident, mature leader can imagine his church helping to plant another church. The reason so few churches engage in helping to plant other churches is because they lack a "Kingdom focus." They have been duped into thinking it's all about them, their budget, their building, their people and not the Kingdom! Once we can move past this limited vision, the Kingdom becomes the focus and purpose for the church. Imagine if every church in the North Central Area Mission decided to assist in planting one church in the year 2012. When you consider that new church plants account for the largest percentage of baptisms per members, you quickly see the dynamics of such a vision! This is the goal of every mature, healthy church – to reproduce themselves over and over. There is a desperate need for new churches. Did you realize that if every lost person decided this Sunday that they were going to go to an evangelical church, we would only be able to accommodate approximately 37% of those that come!

Stone #5 Authentic Evangelism

I believe if we just genuinely agreed and pursued the above 4 stones, this last one would be an automatic response. We would create a natural, relevant environment for the sharing of our faith, for helping the lost, for us to rescue the perishing. There would be greater interest and longing for what the church proclaims as truth – a relationship with the Creator and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ! If the lost world saw us truly repentant, broken before Almighty God, sacrificially giving, working together in cooperation, and planting new churches all over the region you couldn't keep 'em out! The church would be the way the church was designed to be – revived, powerful, equipped, and reproducing itself. We would see a change in our community's attitude toward the church and eventually a change in our community! (Continued of page 4)

New Staff

Cherokee Baptist Church in the **Etowah Association** has called a new student minister, **Scot Luman**. We welcome Scot and his wife, Katie.

(Continued from page 3)

In the early church, Acts 2:47 tells us that “*the Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved.*” If just the state of Georgia adopted these **5 Stones** principles, we could see a return to these overwhelming baptisms. If all 3,603 churches planted just two churches this year, and each church won two people to faith in Christ per week, by the year 2020 we would have NO LOST PEOPLE in the state of Georgia, and we could have sent off almost a million missionaries to boot! This must be our vision, our goal, and our new status quo. We cannot accept the alternative. We cannot accept 8 million lost people living in our state by the year 2020. If that happens, the secular European landscape will be reproduced in the state of Georgia. This vision is bold. It is Biblical. It is achievable.

Pastors and lay leaders, plan now how you can implement this focus in the year 2012. Look at your calendar and begin seeking God’s face and His Word in how to strategically implement these 5 stones into your church DNA. We need a Daniel-size call to revival and spiritual renewal. *Will you stand up and be the Daniel in your church?*

Alan Morris



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Return Service Requested

North Central Area Missions Team

Alan Morris - Area Missionary
Curtis Meador - Associate Area Missionary
Janice Dinsmore - Administrative Assistant
Ramona Lively - Financial Secretary

For articles to be placed in the *North Central News*, they must be received no later than the 15th day prior to that month’s publication.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

December 2011

- 1 Talking Rock Baptist Church Food Trailer (10:00 AM - 2:00 PM)
- 5 Hightower Baptist Association Preacher/Deacon Meeting, 7:30 PM
- 7 Roswell Baptist Association Pastor’s Breakfast, J. Christopher’s, 3070 Windward Plz, Suite Y, Alpharetta - 8:30AM
- 10 Hightower Baptist Association Food Bank (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
- 15 Lanier Baptist Association Pastor’s Meeting/Luncheon, Slopes in Cumming, 11:00 AM
- 23-31 Christmas Holidays! GBC & NCAM closed
- 27 New Hope Baptist Church (Etowah Association) Food Trailer - (10:00 AM - 2:00 PM)

January 2012

- 1-2 New Year’s Holidays! GBC & NCAM closed
GBC & NCAM will return to work on Tuesday, January 3, 2012
- 2 Hightower Baptist Association Preacher/Deacon Meeting, 7:30 PM
- 5 Talking Rock Baptist Church Food Trailer (10:00 AM - 2:00 PM)
- 11 Roswell Baptist Association Pastor’s Breakfast, Time/Place TBA
- 14 Hightower Baptist Association Food Bank (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
- 19 Lanier Baptist Association Pastor’s Meeting/Luncheon, Slopes in Cumming, 11:00 AM
- 24 New Hope Baptist Church (Etowah Association) Food Trailer - (10:00 AM - 2:00 PM)
- 31 Etowah Baptist Association Pastor’s Luncheon, O’Charley’s in Canton, 11:30 AM

NOTE: North Central Area Missions and the Georgia Baptist Convention will be closed for Christmas and New Year’s Holidays beginning with the close of business on Thursday, December 22, 2011. The offices will reopen on Tuesday, January 3, 2012.

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