

The Vision

Of

The Appalachian Baptist Association

A family of churches on mission

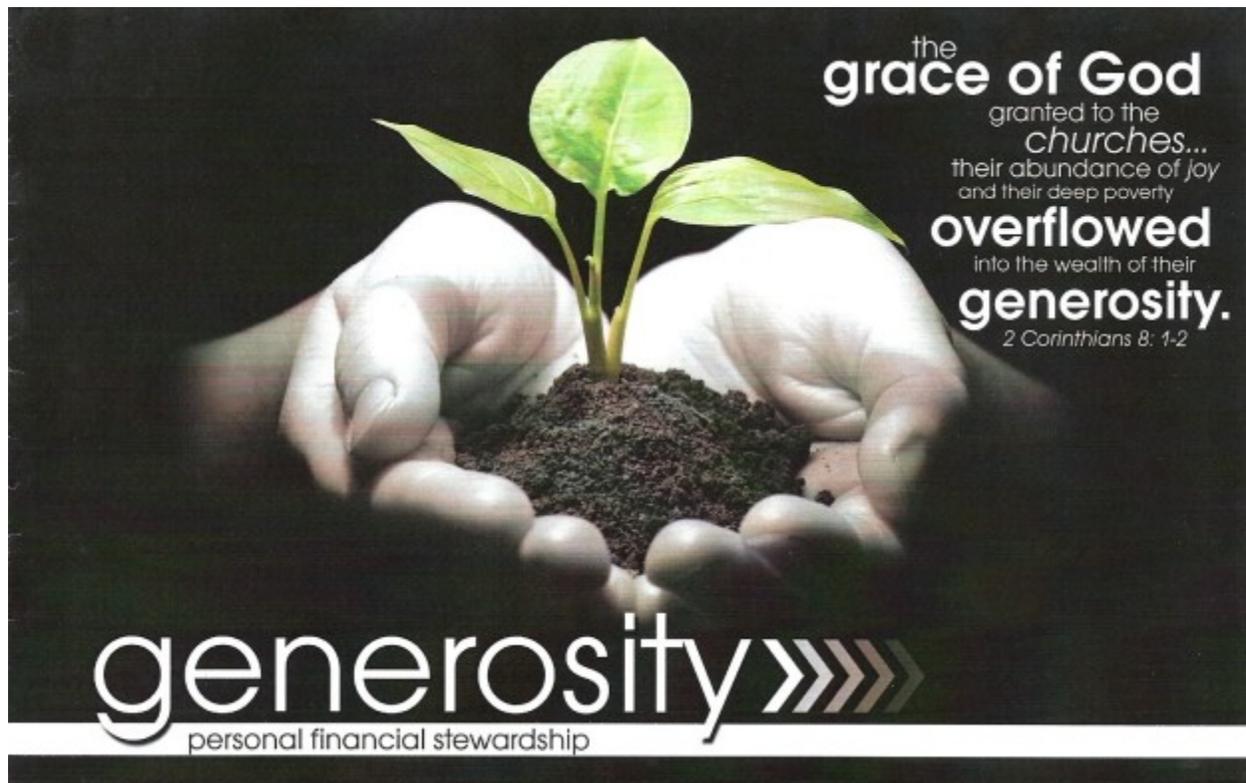
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ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



“It’s not a material problem, but a spiritual one,” said Dr. Kenneth Hemphill at the launch of the Generosity Campaign meeting Thursday, May 12th at First Baptist Church Winder. Among other poignant statements Dr. Hemphill reminded us that although we have titles to cars, and deeds to property in reality everything belongs to God and we are privileged to be His stewards of His creation.

Realizing that we Southern Baptists give about 2.5% per member to our churches, it is not difficult to understand why many church programs must suffer during these economic times. Appalachian family of churches is just a small percent higher at 3.5% per member. While that is above average, this reveals a grave spiritual problem. For several years, we have failed in the matter of discipleship training at the points of personal witnessing and stewardship. Consequently Southern Baptists report little more baptisms than we did since the 1950’s even though we experienced a population growth of 125 million people. In 1950 the average offering of members was nearly 2% of their income. After factoring in inflation fifty-nine years later with an income of almost three times larger, it is 3.5%. Hemphill is correct. It is a spiritual problem and the two issues (making disciples and stewardship) are inseparately linked!

More than two years ago your associational missionary became burdened regarding these two areas. He began to re-establish an evangelism team and led the association to consider a new position called the “associational stewardship director” This became a matter of personal prayer and anticipation that someone would step up to fill this position. Someone did!

But God had other more exciting plans! Sensing the spiritual dilemma the Georgia Baptist Convention approached our association and offered to join us in a pilot project in the area of stewardship. We agreed and spent much time in prayer, preparation, and promotion. Both the state convention and our association are committed to the project for the long term at little or no cost to the churches.

WHAT DOES THE GENEROSITY CAMPAIGN LOOK LIKE?

Call it a campaign, a project, a program if you like. We are not sure what name is best. But here are some of the basic elements that you may expect as you participate:



Exciting Training events like the May 12th launch designed to help church leaders “catch the vision,” led by Dr. Ken Hemphill

“**Church Budget Development**” is the next training event at First Baptist Church, Social Circle on July 14th. Dr. Bill Townes will lead this one.



“**Planning your church’s annual stewardship calendar**” will be led by Dr. Frank Page on September 22nd. This conference will be at the First Baptist Church of Monroe.

“**Celebrating God’s Provision**” will be the theme of a celebration rally with Dr. Chuck Kelley on January 12th.



Excellent materials will accompany all the conferences and additional materials such as bulletin inserts, CD’s and workbooks will be provided. Some video series from Crown Financial Services will be provided through the Convention.

KEY STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL GENEROSITY IN YOUR CHURCH

Pray. Call your prayer warriors to prayer asking God to bring conviction on cold hearts. Confess the church’s failure to disciple youth in the matter of the blessing of stewardship.

Elect a stewardship leader

Find a layman who will champion the cause of generous stewardship along with the pastor and provide encouragement and training

Use the materials

We are providing some of the best materials on stewardship ever written at no cost to the churches. *Be a good steward of the materials on stewardship!*

Call on members to give stewardship testimonies

Select members who are committed to generosity and can share the blessings they have received as a result.

Use your own creativity

Don’t feel limited to any one approach, but use your own expertise to share the joy of proper stewardship of life, talents, salvation, and finances.

Generosity to be on Face book

Yes, the Appalachian Baptist Association has decided to “Join the new generation!” Very soon you will be able to exchange information, get updates and keep up with everything about the Generosity Campaign instantly on Facebook. There will also be a link to our web site.



FEEDBACK

A personal interview with one of our pastors



Rev. Clyde Self, Pastor of LifeSprings Baptist Church attended the launch with several of his members. He was interviewed by a member of the associational staff.

Staff: Brother Clyde, what did you learn or have re-enforced from the meeting?

Clyde: The up most importance of stewardship as a response to God's love and his ownership of all things.

Staff: Some of your people were there. Have they made any comments?

Clyde: One young man commented to me how excited he was about his new understanding of biblical stewardship and new vision of how to manage God given resources. Another commented that if people actually allowed this to get a hold of them, it would change their lives.

Staff: What changes do you think will take place as a result of your participation in the Generosity Campaign?

Clyde: I foresee that our people will be better equipped to manage their money biblically and this will include giving to the Lord and others. It will help them personally and the church's ministry as well.

Staff: Was this experience worth your time and effort?

Clyde: Absolutely. It gave us a vision of what is possible for the future even though we are in a recession. We still can minister to people.

Staff: What plans do you have to make your members aware of their own joy of stewardship?

Clyde: Through our new volunteer stewardship director we will keep these issues before the congregation. I'm excited that it is not just the pastor's responsibility and that others are on board. We are certainly going to offer people help with their personal finances. I will be preaching and teaching on stewardship.

Staff: Is there anything that disappointed you?

Clyde: I was greatly disappointed and it broke my heart that more people didn't take advantage of this opportunity.

**Are you ready for
VBS? Don't forget
to report your
victories!**

From Where I Sit

I recently was honored to hear my grandson who is graduating from Jefferson High School, deliver the baccalaureate Sermon. I share this letter in honor of all our graduates. J. B. Graham
Josh,

Life is much like the journey on an interstate highway. There are mile markers and exit signs every so often. You are approaching a very important mile marker called High School Graduation. In fact, you are already decelerating to veer off the main highway and celebrate the festivities of baccalaureate. This is a well deserved exit you are taking because you have worked hard passing many mile markers along the way.

When you have celebrated your progress so far, you should take the entry ramp back onto life's highway where there will be more mile markers, more exits, rest areas, refueling stations, etc., because life doesn't stop for successful people when they reach only one mile marker. I believe you will be one of the successful ones!

When I first started using interstates I referred to a carefully prepared map. At that time, a map was the best guide available. Now we have GPS (Global Positioning Systems) thanks to the Space program. The GPS is more accurate than a map. Josh, there is a "spiritual GPS" that will guide you on life's highway. It is The Bible that you love and the guidance of the Holy Spirit that lives within you and all other Christian believers. Pay close attention to this guidance system!

There are occasional detours on the interstate. There may be some detours on your life travels. While these are aggravating, discouraging, and sometimes pretty devastating, I encourage you not to let your frustrations with detours keep you from getting back on the main road. Tragically too many people never overcome the detours.

Josh, I've had my share of mile markers, exits, entry ramps, and yes, detours. Obviously, at age 75 I'm a little farther down the road than you. I can tell you that it's been a great trip for me. I know you'll enjoy it. So rev up your engines and take off-- full speed ahead!

Pawpaw

The Vision is published monthly except for **July & August**. The Vision's purpose is to inform, encourage and share the story of the Appalachian Baptist Association of churches. Please share your Church's noteworthy activities and news items. Information should be received by the 21st of each month. You can send information by e-mail at administration@appalachee.org or mail to Appalachian Baptist Association, P.O. Box 1064, Monroe, Ga. 30655. The Vision is mailed free by request. If you wish to receive it, simply contact us and give us your name, church and mailing address.



The Apostle Paul put it simply in
I Thessalonians 5:25,
“Brethren, pray for us.”

- ~ Bethlehem First Baptist
Pastor Jason Britt
- ~ Bishop Baptist
Pastor Eric Buffington
- ~ Bogart First Baptist
Pastor Ted Tedders
- ~ Bold Springs Baptist
Pastor Jim Bolton
- ~ Braswell Baptist
Pastor Allen Whitley
- ~ Briarwood Baptist
Pastor Rick Standard
- ~ Calvary Baptist
Pastor Bryan Armour
- ~ Campton Baptist
Pastor Deland Roberts

JUNE 2011

- 7th Minister's Meeting – 12:00 p.m.
- 14th Budget & Finance Committee Meeting –
10:00 a.m.
- 14th Associational Council Meeting – 11:00
a.m.
- 21st Evangelism Team – 7:00 p.m.

JULY 2011

- 1 & 4th Office Closed for the 4th
- 13-16th BLUME, Orlando, Fl.
- 16th ABA WMU Leadership Team Annual
Planning – 9:00 a.m.
- 21st Executive Committee Meeting – 7:00 p.m.
- 30th WMU Assoc. Leader Training – Warner
Robins, Ga.

AUGUST 2011

- 2nd No Minister's Meeting
- 9th Budget & Finance Committee Meeting –
10:00 a.m.
- 9th Associational Council Meeting – 11:00
a.m.
- 16th Missions Development – 10:00 a.m.