

Beulah

Land News

Commissioned!

It was a special night on July 1, 2005. One that we won't ever forget. It was on this night that we were commissioned as Affiliates with the new CBF AsYouGo program. An additional seventeen field personnel were also commissioned during the Friday evening service bringing the total number of CBF Global Missions field personnel to 162.

After the commissioning service, we listened as Dr. Daniel Vestal, the Fellowship's coordinator, challenged one and all to live more intentionally and sacrificially for Christ.

As Affiliates, we will be working with Partners in Hope (PIH), CBF's 20 year commitment to work in the 20 poorest counties in the United States. We actually started our new assignment before we were commissioned. In May we met with the CBF Missouri folks regarding the High Plains Partners in Hope work among the Native Americans, interviewed Don and Doris Littrell about Community Development (more about them inside), and we got a taste of the PIH work going on in Kentucky. Also, in June we partici-



Nick and Ann Skipper being commissioned as CBF Field Personnel by Jack Snell, interim CBF Global Missions Coordinator during the 2005 CBF General Assembly in Grapevine, Texas.

pated in the 2005 All Church Challenge in Helena, Arkansas (more about this inside, too).

As Volunteer Advisors with Partners in Hope, we will be working with local churches and individuals to find new ways to assist them as they seek missions opportunities here in the United States. Keep us in your prayers as we travel, learn and serve.

—Nick and Ann Skipper

For more information about our ministry with Partners in Hope, go to www.blmm.com or contact us at nick@blmm.com or call 830-303-7722.

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August 2005

Visit our website at www.blmm.com

Note: In May, we were privileged to spend three days with Don and Doris Littrell, leading authorities in the field of Community Development. Before he went home to be with the Lord on August 1, Don wrote the following article especially for us. Don requested that his tombstone read: "He left it better than he found it." We are definitely better for having known him. —Nick & Ann Skipper

Community Development: A New Way to Work

Everybody can see what's wrong within a community. There may be poor housing, bad schools, lack of jobs, violence. There is poverty—of mind, body, and spirit.

Often it's harder to see the strengths or positive features within a community. People care about each other. They want their children to have a better life. They aren't satisfied with the status quo, but they often don't know how they can make a difference or how to go about it.

This is where asset-based community development comes in. Using the concepts made popular by John McKnight and John Kretzmann, people can learn to identify their assets—what they have to give to make the community better.

Even the poorest people have assets. They can learn to work together. They can work together to determine what they want their community to become in the future. They can realize that everybody in the community has strengths, knowledge, skills, gifts, and talents, no matter what their situation.

Community development is a process to help people learn and grow. Through Partners in Hope, the process can help people identify assets inside and outside the community and help people learn to work together over time to accomplish their desired future.

For example, a group of women in a rural area became concerned about the lack of senior citizen housing. Two community developers got the group together to discuss what could be done about the situation. The discussion revealed that the women had named themselves incompetent to do anything because they weren't "senior citizen housing" experts.

Upon further discussion, they found out that they had many assets. There were real estate agents who knew land values. Some of them managed farms, so they had business skills. One was an accountant. One was a retired health worker who knew all of the health agencies. Some of them knew the County Court, the governing body that would have to approve any development. At the end of a long afternoon they had realized that they could do something about the problem. They had identified a network— ei-

ther they knew or they knew someone who did know how to do the things necessary to move ahead. They got people involved to get the project done, including senior citizens. They identified and divided up the work and began to work toward getting senior citizen housing for their community. It stands there today as a testimony of the community's efforts that began with a small group of concerned citizens.

Community development takes time and hard work. It involves developing relationships and trust. There are resources available to help you work in community development. The Partners in Hope website (www.ruralpoverty.net) has information. Doris & Don Littrell are volunteer community development consultants to Partners in Hope. Their email address is dlittrell3@centurytel.net.

Back to School

Going back to college at this stage in our lives was not something Ann or I had given much thought to. But after spending three terrific days with Don and Doris Littrell, it became very obvious that we lack the training we would need in our new assignment as Volunteer Advisors with PIH. Thanks to the Littrells encouragement and their recommendation, we have been accepted at the University of Missouri's Community Development Academy. We will begin the first of three specialty courses in mid-September in St. Louis.

However, since this comes so soon after our commissioning we have not had an opportunity to raise the \$1,700 needed for the course. We need your financial help today. Will you help us lay a solid foundation for our ministry by sending your gift today? Make your checks payable to CBF and designated for Nick and Ann Skipper. Mail your contribution to P.O. Box 101699, Atlanta, GA 30392-1699. May the Lord bless you.

Beulah Land News

2005 All Church Challenge

It was our first time to visit Helena, Arkansas. We really didn't know what to expect. As we drove into West Helena on highway 49, we thought, "this town doesn't look so bad. Where's the poverty that we have heard about?" Continuing on down the highway we entered Helena. Then we saw the reason we had come.

Block after city block, abandoned homes and business stood silently decaying. Businesses that had once thrived had long since departed leaving the town's population with nowhere to work. Many had moved on to other towns in search of work—hence the abandoned homes. A large percentage of the population are on the welfare rolls. Children grow up with no father in the home. Alcoholism and drug abuse are common.

But there is hope.

Partners in Hope has begun a good work in Helena, and the community is responding. Ben and Leonora Newell, CBF Field Personnel, have committed to live in Helena full time with their young children to make a difference for Christ. With their encouragement and hard work, community leaders are joining with the Newells to look for ways to make the community better.

That is where the All Church Challenge comes in. The All Church Challenge brings in mission teams from several states to work during the three week event doing activities such as swimming lessons at the public pool, planting community vegetable gardens, painting houses, renovating old buildings, sports camp, children and youth activity camps.

The teams arrive on Saturday so that they can attend Sunday morning worship services in local churches. Sunday, June 12th found us worshipping at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, pastored by Elder Billy G. Williams. We were delighted and inspired



Elder Billy G. Williams, Jean Williams, Ann & Nick Skipper

by the service and preaching. Bro. Williams is known for singing the summation to his sermon

and sing, he did! We were warmly received by the pastor, his wife, Miss Jean, and the members of the church.

The week (June 11-17) that we were in Helena, over 100 volunteers came from North Carolina, Texas and Arkansas. Local churches took on the task of feeding lunch to the hard working volunteers. We were impressed by the hard work of both youth and adults and with the warm reception that the community gave all those who came such a long way to help them.

Not only did we work, worship, share and minister, we also became the roving reporters—driving around town to all the locations where teams were working, photographing and interviewing volunteers so that we could write articles about the activities and send the information to CBF for publication on the CBF website. We had never really done anything like this before, but we were willing to help in anyway we could.

One of the activities we reported on was the swimming lessons being offered every morning at the public pool in the city park. Over 250 children turned out to learn how to swim. By request of some of the adults in town, lessons for adults were offered in the evenings.



Youth volunteer helping a young Helena, AR boy learn how to swim.

The All Church Challenge was a great experience that we will always treasure. We got to meet some wonderful people and developed relationships that we hope will continue as we serve Christ.

Support CBF Global Missions

To support CBF Global Missions contact:
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A Time for Everything

During our recent trip to Kentucky to work with Partners in Hope, we became convicted by God that we were to relocate to the Appalachian region. Like Gideon laying out a fleece to gain direction from God, we put our home in Texas up for sale and waited to see what God would do with this step of faith.

Long story short, less than two weeks after listing the property we have a contract. The closing date is set for late October. We will be looking for a home in the Bristol, Tennessee area.

It is a difficult thing to pull up roots and move so far away. Fortunately, the Bristol area is where I grew up and still have many family members including my mother who lives in Kingsport. We have many friends and loved ones here that we will miss, but we hope to keep in touch and continue to do missions together.

Keep us in your prayers as we look for a new home.

—Ann Skipper

We Need You!



Nick & Ann Skipper

In order for us to do the work that God has called us to do with Partners in Hope we need your prayer support and your financial support. We ask you to partner with us as we serve in Partners in Hope.

Please designate your contribution for Nick & Ann Skipper's ministry and send it to:

*Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
P.O. Box 101699
Atlanta, GA 30392-1699*