MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

RBA
 ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL
 MEETING

JANUARY 24, 2008
(Note: This is a change from the regular date)
7:00 P.M.

RBA OFFICE

TRANSFORMED! is published monthly by the Richmond Baptist Association, 3111 Moss Side Avenue, Richmond, VA 23222, 804-329-1701.

If you would like to submit an article by the 20th of each month, or be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact Frances Jones via email or snail mail at the addresses listed below.

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Greetings!

It is almost surprising to realize that 2007 is quickly coming to an end. As the saying goes, “My, how time flies when you are having fun.” Yes, this has indeed been a wonderful year for the Richmond Baptist Association. Last year, I wrote in my article that 2006 had been a great year. Now I must say that 2007 has been a fantastic year! It is certainly appropriate that we give thanks for God’s many blessings on us this year. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 we read: “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” Let us suggest a few things that we are grateful for as we reflect on 2007.

First, we are thankful for the work and vision of our churches in seeking to take the Good News of Jesus Christ to “Judaes, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Our purpose as “ambassadors for Christ” is to be actively involved in the ministry of reconciliation whereby we seek to bring a lost and dying world into a right relationship with a loving and forgiving God (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). If we don’t have a purpose, then we won’t have a passion. And without a passion, we won’t be involved in the mission. Thank God we are privileged to have a real purpose for living in being His witnesses with our lives. We have purpose, we have passion, we have mission.

We are grateful for the diversity and ethnicity within the 72 churches and missions that make up the Richmond Baptist Association. The RBA is blessed to have 47 white churches, 18 African American churches, and 7 international churches and two or three new church plants each year. Each church is unique in its style of worship, organization, building, and ministries, but we all are united under the banner of the Cross of Jesus Christ. And even with our differences within the Baptist family, we are one in the bond of love as Christ commanded us to be (John 13:35). Together we can do so much more for the Kingdom of God than any one of us could do alone.

We are thankful for the many ministries provided by our three Baptist Centers and Camp Alkulana. So many lives have been touched and transformed by the love of Christ shared by our community missions and the Richmond Baptist Association. The City of Richmond is our spiritual responsibility and we do not take that lightly. We endeavor to let our light shine in the darkness (Matthew 5:16). The fields around us are truly “white for harvest” (John 4:35). God is at work all around us and we want to join Him in making a difference in Richmond.

We are grateful to God for His financial provisions for our churches and through them to the Richmond Baptist Association. Once again, the RBA will end this financial year in the black. It is the hope of the Administrative Council that we will be able to make another good deposit into our Endowment Fund at the end of this year. And we praise God for the bountiful Week of Prayer/Camp Alkulana Offering. The offering goal was exceeded and thus established a good Emergency Reserve Fund to provide for those crises that come along in operating a mountain camp facility.

Of course, we all know that God is good all the time, but God was especially good to the RBA during the year of our Lord – 2007.

**Advance Notice**

**SPECIAL NEEDS RETREAT**

**OCTOBER 17-19, 2008**

**EAGLE EYRIE BAPTIST CONFERENCE CENTER**

**2008 THEME:**

OUTRIGGER ISLAND: LIVING GOD’S UNHAKEABLE LIFE (Lifeway)

Psalm 86:11- Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that may fear your name.

This retreat is for youth and adults (ages 15 and up) with special needs who are trainable and educable from individual families, church classes or group homes. Retreat program involves music, small group classes (for students, parents, church leaders and chaperones), Talent shows, Square Dancing, Worship & much more. Education leaders, Church leaders, and persons with a passionate heart for individuals with special needs. A nurse is also provided, in the event of medical needs or emergencies.

For further information, contact Rod Miller, Director, Eagle Eyrie Baptist Conference Center 434-384-2211 or rod.miller@vbmb.org or Mary Buckner, Retreat Coordinator 434-973-7473 or mary@springhillbaptist.org.

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**THE SAINT PAUL’S BAPTIST CHURCH DEDICATED TO THE GLORY OF GOD**

**September 25, 2005**

In an unprecedented and historic act of generosity, the beloved members of Weatherford Memorial Baptist Church gave this land and these buildings to The Saint Paul’s Baptist Church that this “light in South Richmond” might continue to be used to achieve a great victory for the Kingdom that results in the salvation of many souls and an incredible witness to the glory of God!

Dr. Ricky Hurst, Pastor
Weatherford Memorial Baptist Church

Dr. Lance D. Watson, Pastor
Saint Paul’s Baptist Church

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**A Living Legacy**

The Richmond Baptist Association was so proud when the Weatherford Memorial Baptist Church gave itself away to The Saint Paul’s Baptist Church in 2005. The wonderful story of Weatherford Memorial has been put into a recently published book – A Living Legacy, The Church Which Gave Itself Away. The authors are Nancy R. Elliott and Alberta L. Lindsey. This wonderful story is available from the RBA office for $8.00 per copy. It will stir your heart to read how God blessed this faithful congregation through this wonderful act of generosity. The Richmond Baptist Association was also proud when The Saint Paul’s Baptist Church had a special worship service at their South location (previously Weatherford Memorial) on October 27, 2007 marking what would have been the 100th anniversary of the Weatherford Memorial Baptist Church. The congregation planted a large brass plaque on the exterior of the building at the entrance to the sanctuary. It reads as follows:

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Dr. Ricky Hurst, Pastor
Weatherford Memorial Baptist Church

Dr. Lance D. Watson, Pastor
Saint Paul’s Baptist Church

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**From Your DOM, Pete du Plessis**

Greetings!

I cannot believe that it has been an entire year since I accepted the position as Regional Ministries Coordinator for Central Virginia Baptist Ministries. In this short time I have felt so blessed to work with so many of you. I have had the opportunity to visit a number of the 179 churches that make up CVBM and see God at work. There are many more that I plan to visit. I have sensed God’s leadership as the three associations networked together in shared missions and ministries that have included the Pastor/Deacon Conference, Vacation Bible School, Raceway Ministries, the State Fair Ministry, the leadership of CVBM, and several local mission projects. I’ve had the opportunity to pray with you, study God’s word with you, and serve with you on the mission field.

It’s exciting to serve God! To get to know other believers and to have the awesome responsibility to reach others for Christ. To go out into the world to see where we can glimpse signs of a God like the one we read about in the scriptures. To use the gifts God has blessed us with to reach the lost for Him. I thank you sincerely for your encouragement and support. Serving together with you has helped me pay attention to special places where God has been present in my own life. To better see God’s presence in the midst of the mundane. And that’s what I think I love the most about serving as the Regional Ministries Coordinator for CVBM. It is realizing the promise God makes to us in Matthew 18:20: ‘For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.’

That scripture has become the tagline for CVBM. Three associations (Dover, Middle District, & Richmond) gathering together. As CVBM make plans for future missions and ministries, I ask for your continued prayer that God would make known where He is leading CVBM. And that we would all be faithful in following God’s call in our lives.

My prayer for each of us this Christmas season is that we would have the joy of realizing the excitement of search and discovery that comes from trusting God with our lives. I count it a privilege to serve Christ with you.

Blessings....

Rev. Nita May, Regional Ministries Coordinator,
Central Virginia Baptist Ministries
7200 Cogbill Road, Chesterfield, VA 23832
(804) 271-8299, (cell) 332-4670; (e) nita.may@cvbm.org

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**2007 FINANCIAL BOOKS**

We will be closing the 2007 Financial Books on January 18, 2008. Any contributions that you desire to be included in 2007 need to be sent in and postmarked by December 31. Thank you.

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**A Word From Nita May, CVBM .....**
FOR THE RBA

HURCH

A round the Association

CHURCH NEWS

BON AIR recently sent a mission team to Lima, Peru in response to the latest earthquakes and tremors that have destroyed homes and displaced families. They were going to set up and run personal shopping assistants during store hours for the South Richmond Baptist Center Christmas Store. Rev. Jim Sanderson, pastor of sister church, Mimico Baptist Church (Toronto), and others will be present for the Week of Prayer for International Missions. 

FIRST will also send a group of volunteers to the South Richmond Center to help set up the store which also serves the Oregon Hill Center. GAYTON is sending volunteers to help build a Habitat for Humanity house. They also have a couple traveling to Malaysia to participate with a missionary leader from South Asia. HATCH MEMORIAL is completing their Wednesday night study, Effective Parenting in a Defective World. HUGUENOT ROAD is sending volunteers to work at the Christmas Store at the South Richmond Center. They have also collected Thanksgiving food for CCHASM (Chesterfield Colonial Heights Alliance for Social Ministry). NEW COVENANT is excited to have its Sanctuary Renovation project progressing. OAKWOOD MEMORIAL will send volunteers to help with intake, set up, and “mind the store” for the Oregon Hill Center. RIVER ROAD is also sending volunteers to help with the RBA Christmas Stores. WESTHAMPTON is sending a team of volunteers to Charlotte, NC to work in the Operation Christmas Child distribution center. WOODLAND HEIGHTS will send volunteers to help at the Christmas Stores. MANY, MANY RBA CHURCHES are collecting clothes, toys and money for our three Baptist Centers. With help from our churches, last year we helped Oregon Hill serve 49 families and 108 children; South Richmond served 11 families and 35 children; and Church Hill served 87 families and 259 children. THANK YOU!!!

STAFF NEWS

RIVER ROAD welcomes Jeanne Wetherell as their Financial Secretary. STAPLES MILL ROAD has called and ordained Rev. Mike Bowles as their new Associate Pastor for Discipleship and Missions.

RBA Disaster Relief Team Members needed. The Virginia Baptist Mission Board is endeavoring to establish a Disaster Relief Communications Network for the State. The Board would like each local association to form a team to better assist with coordination and the distribution of the Baptist relief efforts in Richmond. If your church is interested in hosting one of these teams, please contact Pete d’Plessis at 329-1701 or rbanderline.org. RBA Team, please contact Pete d’Plessis at 329-1701 or peted@rbandeonline.org.
We told her about this and asked if she would gift the property to us or sell it to us at a reasonable price. Both requests were rejected. She is now trying to sell the 158 acres adjacent to Camp Alkulana. She would like to have unconditional access to her property by way of our road so that she can log timber and sell the property for development. She has tried to use the little bit of land that our cabin sits on as a pawn. We are confident that the property in dispute meets the qualifications for “reverse possession” since the cabin has been there, undisputed for about 30 years. However, she is taking us to court about this, and about the road, hoping that the judge will grant her the right to use our road by virtue of necessity—which our lawyer tells us could happen since the terrain is very rough, and this is by far the best way in.

The court date is December 27, 2007.

I have recently been re-reading What’s So Amazing About Grace by Philip Yancey. He recounts the following incident:

“During a British conference on comparative religions, experts from around the world debated what, if any, belief was unique to the Christian faith. They began eliminating possibilities. Incarnation? Resurrection? No—other religions had accounts of these. The debate went on for some time until C.S. Lewis wandered into the room. ‘What’s the rumpus about?’ he asked, and heard in reply that his colleagues were discussing Christianity’s unique contribution among world religions. Louis responded, ‘Oh, that’s easy. It’s grace.’”

Far too many of the children who come to Camp Alkulana live in a “graceless” world with little or no opportunity to know that gift of God’s exquisitely, unmitigated, unconditional love. This summer, like all 92 summers before, Alkulana has dispensed grace to the children of Richmond through the lives of a committed team of staff who give up their summers to make it happen.

During this season of Thanksgiving, I am reminded of the many ways in which our Richmond Baptist Association Churches contribute to this effort: for the many volunteers who give time and energy to keep the facility in good repair; for ladies who make “warm fuzzies,” ditty bags and award certificates; for those who saved and cut out Campbell soup labels and cashed them in for a new computer for camp; for the many money and labor gifts that enabled the expansion of our dining hall this past year; for the grand response to the Camp Alkulana Offering (formerly known as the Week of Prayer for Association Missions Offering) and certainly not least of all, for the prayers of those who seek God’s support and blessing for this ministry. Thanks be to God!

Camp Alkulana is still in the middle of a property settlement problem. The “Reader’s Digest” version: about 5 years ago, Camp Alkulana had a survey done. At that time we learned that we have a building on someone else’s property. We told her about this and asked if she would gift the property to us or sell it to us at a reasonable price. Both requests were rejected. She is now trying to sell the 158 acres adjacent to Camp Alkulana. She would like to have unconditional access to her property by way of our road so that she can log timber and sell the property for development. She has tried to use the little bit of land that our cabin sits on as a pawn. We are confident that the property in dispute meets the qualifications for “reverse possession” since the cabin has been there, undisputed for about 30 years. However, she is taking us to court about this, and about the road, hoping that the judge will grant her the right to use our road by virtue of necessity—which our lawyer tells us could happen since the terrain is very rough, and this is by far the best way in.

Needless to say, we do not want trucks going back and forth down this driveway. This would compromise the safety of our campers and the ambience of the camp setting.

She has threatened to hire a paper company to clear-cut the entire mountain (which she owns) if we do not give her the right of way to at least do logging. She claims that a big company can get to all the timber they want, but they would have to clear cut to make up for the money they would have to put out to build a road over the mountain. Naturally, we would hate to see the woods behind Alkulana clear-cut, but we are not going to give her the right to the road.

Last Spring, I issued a plea for someone to purchase the entire 158 acres for camp. Her original asking price was one-half million for the entire tract. Now the ad in the Bath County newspaper reads, “make an offer.” We have most recently made an offer of $20,000 to her to obtain 10 acres as a barrier (which would include the disputed property and the area just off the road she wishes to use). A condition of this sale would be to drop the lawsuit.

It is doubtful that this offer will be acceptable to her, but the least we can do at this time. If you know of someone or a group of people who would like to make a contribution toward these 10 acres, should she counter with a higher price, please let me know: 329-1701x206. If you know of someone who would want to make an offer for the entire 158 acres, please talk to them about this and ask them to call me. We would hope that such buyer would either give the property to Alkulana or put a conservation easement on it (tax incentives for both).

Lastly, if you would like to join me at the Bath County Courthouse in Warm Springs, VA on December 27 to lend support, I would welcome your presence. If you cannot help in these ways (or if you can!), please lift this situation up to God. We want our Lord to be honored in whatever happenings so that we can continue to make a difference in the lives of children.

Thank you so much for support and prayers!

Gracie Kirkpatrick, Director, Camp Alkulana
3111 Moss Side Avenue, Richmond, VA 23222
804-833-206, alkulana@juno.com
www.alkulana.org