

# FOUNTAIN PROJECT

## Nourishing Families, Churches and Communities

DECEMBER 2008

LOTT CAREY BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSION CONVENTION • FOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

### Project enables long-term, sustainable hurricane recovery

It was a turning point for the relief and recovery effort undertaken by the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention and its partners in the Gulf Coast following hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Immediate services and a resurrection model had been in place for more than a year after the 2005 disasters. People's lives were being restored. But so much more needed to happen – and the money was running out.

The recovery plan also needed to shift to one with a more long-range scope. The plan required a focus on development, sustainability and ongoing nurture. A breakthrough was necessary.

That's when Fountain Baptist Church stepped in under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. J. Michael Sanders. Sanders formerly served as president of Lott Carey.

Located hundreds of miles away from the Gulf Coast in Summit, NJ, the congregation of Fountain Baptist donated \$1 million to the cause. And, in the spirit of true sacrifice, the church came up with the money by putting its own building project on hold.

If you look at the Old Testament book of Nehemiah when the temple was destroyed,

although Nehemiah was safe, he wept and mourned for those in the temple, said the Rev. Kenneth D. Cooper, minister to missions at Fountain Baptist Church.

With hurricanes Katrina and Rita, "it's the same thing," he said. "We have a connection to our brothers and sisters, and even though we were not directly affected, we were indirectly affected."

"We could hear their cry, we could feel their pain," Cooper said. "You have no other choice but to reach out and help."

The Fountain donation was earmarked to come in over a two-year period, yet the church gave it all in 18 months, said the Rev. Samuel C. Tolbert Jr., president of the Louisiana Home and Foreign Missions Baptist State Convention.

The convention partners with Lott Carey and the National Baptist Convention of America in the hurricane recovery effort. Also joining Lott Carey on the ground in Louisiana is the African-American Catholic Congregation Cathedral of the

Lafayette Province, Imani Temple #49.

With that as the foundation, the Fountain Project was birthed. Designed under the goal of nourishing families, churches and communities, the project is providing a holistic approach to long-term hurricane recovery.

The project has provided for educational scholarships and job readiness training for hurricane evacuees and others affected by the storms, pastoral care consultations, and grants for innovative ministry efforts and community rebuilding, among other things.

"The Fountain Project has enabled us to bring resources directly to families (skills training and life skills training), churches (strategic coaching and ministry grants), and communities (sustainable community redevelopment support)," said the Rev. Dr. David Emmanuel Goatley, executive secretary-treasurer of Lott Carey. "When these core units of community are strong, life is more livable."

"Through this partnership, we have advanced our goal of touching people with the transforming love of Christ," he said. ■



Rev. Dr. J. Michael Sanders



FOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

# Consultation ministers to ministers after Katrina and Rita

New Orleans area pastor Christopher Von Cockrell was so deeply depressed after hurricane Katrina that he would go days without eating.

Compounding that was the fact that his marriage had ended in divorce. "I suffered mental loss," he said.

Von Cockrell moved about an hour away to Baton Rouge, La., so he wouldn't have to face his congregants at Macedonia Baptist Church in Slidell. He only came to town to preach before retreating again.

"I wore a face" and was "constantly telling folks I was alright," he said. In reality, "I was in depression. I was mad. I was crazy."

Von Cockrell needed help, and he got it through a pastoral consultation provided by the Fountain Project.

The project – a ministry response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita – is being implemented in Louisiana by the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention and its state partners. Funding comes from Fountain Baptist Church in Summit, NJ.

The Fountain Project seeks to nourish families, churches and communities through such things as job readiness training, grants for innovative ministries and initiatives to strengthen pastors and the people they serve.

The pastoral consultation began in May 2007 and brought together a core group of about 30 ministers for more than a year to support and care for each other and to focus on worship, nurture and mission via workshops, retreats and other activities.



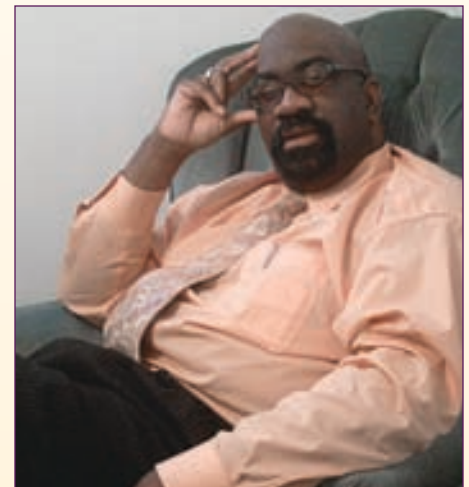
Fountain Project pastoral consultation participants and others worship together during a service and grant awarding program.

"The ministers were real with each other. We were honest with our fears and our emotions," Von Cockrell said. "I was able to be healed in this process."

"I rededicated my life to Christ and I got re-baptized," he said. "This was truly life changing."

Each of the pastors received \$10,000 grants through the Fountain Project to implement mission programs they designed to resurrect and transform lives (see page 3). Among the initiatives were efforts targeting young males, the launch of an intensive street witnessing ministry, and support of evangelism, education and health ministries in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

"I was rejuvenated, refreshed and renewed," said Elder Bernard Waters with Book of Acts Ministry II in New



Rev. Dr. Christopher Von Cockrell

Orleans. Because of the consultation, "I then understood that it (the hurricane crisis) was bigger than me." ■

## Ministry opportunities abound at campground and retreat center

There are endless possibilities for ministry at a campground purchased through grants from the Fountain Project and slated to be operated by the Louisiana Home and Foreign Missions Baptist State Convention.

The 19.55-acre retreat center located in Grant Parish, La., was secured after 10 pastors pooled \$10,000 grants they each received through the Fountain Project (see page 3). The property already includes dormitories, bath houses, office space and a house for an innkeeper.

Each of the pastors participated in a consultation conducted through the Fountain Project designed to support the Gulf Coast leaders and focus on worship and mission. The pastors all minister to bruised and battered congregations in a post-Hurricane Katrina environment.

The project was implemented by the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention and its Louisiana partners, and funded by Fountain Baptist Church in Summit, NJ. Its primary goal is to nourish families, churches and communities after

hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Fountain Pines Baptist Camp will, among other things, provide mission camps for youth, retreats for adults and leadership training for pastors and lay leaders. The retreat and camp center also will provide a safe base of operations for the convention in the midst of future hurricanes.

"We are getting a whole lot of mileage with Fountain dollars," said the Rev. Samuel C. Tolbert Jr., president of the Louisiana Home and Foreign Missions Baptist State Convention. ■

# Fountain Project Pastors' Consultation – Ministry Grants

African-American Catholic Congregation Imani Temple #28 and Book of Acts Ministry II, New Orleans	Deacon John Milton and Elder Bernard Waters	To support a therapeutic summer program to assist 16 males ages 12 to 16 in identifying manhood challenges and issues, and to help foster positive self identity while creating balance, self esteem and self reliance.
Church of God in Christ, Trinidad and Tobago	Bishop Alton E. Gatlin	To launch the development of evangelism, education and health ministries in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the Church of God in Christ.
Ebenezer Baptist Church, Lake Charles, LA	Pastor Lannis Joseph	To enable the "Center of Refuge" to provide a food program and clothing bank for the community the center serves.
Faith Temple Church of God in Christ, New Orleans	Elder Horace Bernard Sr.	To support the church's early childhood ministry for spiritual and social development of children in its day care program.
First Free Mission Baptist Church, New Orleans	Pastor Melvin Collins III	To support a 10-week summer camp with children and young people from age 6 to 18, and to extend the program for 2 weekends beyond the 10 weeks, thus involving both parents and children in forums addressing their journeys after Katrina.
First Missionary Baptist Church, Biloxi, MS	Pastor Eric E. Dickey	To support a 10-week summer uplift program for youth ages 9 to 15 in the economically depressed areas of East Biloxi, MS (Harrison County) who were adversely impacted by Hurricane Katrina. The program will provide educational, social and cultural enrichment, and spiritual and physical nurture.
First St. James Missionary Baptist Church, New Orleans	Pastor Wayman L. Frost Sr.	To strengthen the evangelism capacity of the church by retraining an evangelism team, launching an intensive street witnessing ministry, distributing Bibles and conducting a tent revival.
Galilee Baptist Church, New Orleans	Pastor James S. Casimier Jr.	To sponsor 2 clients in a reconciliation, restoration and recovery program, and to purchase furniture and appliances for the program.
Golden Gate Church Ministries, Harvey, LA	Rev. Willie Frazier	To enlarge the capacity of Golden Gate Church Ministries' Employment Readiness Program, which provides city employers with secretarial, clerical, and computer and data processing personnel, and services for technical and mid-management jobs. The focus will be on women who desire to enter or reenter the workforce.
Good Hope Baptist Church, Norco, LA	Pastor D. B. Mollaire	To support the reestablishment of a transportation ministry for members of the church that have been displaced by human and natural disasters, and to support a cultural enrichment and self esteem program for tween and teen girls ages 9 to 17.
Lafayette Restoration Center and North Star Resources, Lafayette, LA	Bishop Marie Washum and Bishop Taara Williams	To support a ministry of skills development, leadership training and substance abuse aftercare for women in Cape Town, South Africa.
Macedonia Baptist Church, Slidell, LA	Pastor Christopher Von Cockrell	To launch Hands Across Slidell—a community based program that will promote better reading, self discipline and pride, and will bring a safe and healthy environment to the community for young people.
New Birth Cathedral of Glory Ministries, Kenner, LA	Pastor Richmond Edwards	To promote the nutritional health and wellbeing of seniors and economically disadvantaged families in the Saint Rose, Kenner and River Ridge areas by offering nutritious and health-sensitive meals for those with diabetes, hypertension and other ailments; a senior exercise program; and overall support and care.
New Faith Baptist Church, Moss Point, MS	Pastor Dennis Stevenson	To provide educational, social and cultural enrichment, and spiritual and physical nurture to youth ages 5 to 13 impacted by Hurricane Katrina.
Oak Grove Baptist Church, New Orleans	Pastor Ernest Peters	To support a program that creates an environment for youth that promotes learning and academic excellence. The program also will improve the lifestyles of community residents through health and wellness education.
Pray the Word, Say the Word Ministries, New Orleans	Pastor Josephine Phillips	To support educational and recreational activities that both improve children's life skills and provide a safe and secure nurturing environment away from home in which to exercise natural creativity and curiosity.
St. Rock Baptist Church, Harvey, LA	Pastor Alfredia Loston	To support a transportation, nutrition and literacy program for low income and disadvantaged elderly persons in the Harvey and Marrero areas.
Spirit of Liberty Christian Fellowship	Bishop Larry J. Lloyd	To promote community wellness by launching a creative prostate cancer awareness program that provides men of Acadiana with the information needed to live longer, healthier and more productive lives.
Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, D'Iberville, MS	Pastor Kenneth M. Davis	To provide educational, social and cultural enrichment, and spiritual and physical nurture to youth ages 8 to 13 impacted by Hurricane Katrina.
True Vine Baptist Church, Marrero, LA	Pastor Terry L. Robinson Sr.	To support youth programming designed to foster leadership, brotherhood, respect and faith, and to offer parental empowerment seminars on a variety of relevant subjects.
Way of the Cross Fellowship, Lake Charles, LA	Bishop Winston Williams	To implement a music training program for youth of all ages that will enhance the church's worship experience.
Louisiana Home and Foreign Mission Baptist State Convention	Pastor Samuel C. Tolbert Jr. Pastor Donald Boutee Pastor James Chapman Pastor Malcolm J. Collins Pastor J. D. Dupree Pastor Carlos Ross Pastor John White Pastor Lilton McQuarter Pastor Mitchell Stevens Pastor Christopher Von Cockrell	To support the acquisition, renovation and operation of a 19.55 acre retreat center run by a predominantly African-American Christian community. The center will provide opportunities for summer worship, nurture and mission camps for youth, retreats for adults, leadership training for pastors and lay leaders, a recreational vehicle park and a disaster response facility.

# Funds provide job skills training, community development

Finding a job and a decent place to live is tough in the current economic recession. But try doing it as an evacuee from the costliest hurricane in U.S. history.

Those displaced from Hurricane Katrina, and subsequent Hurricane Rita, relocated to Louisiana communities like Lafayette and Lake Charles in 2005. Today they are still struggling to find affordable housing and gainful employment.

The task hasn't been easy given skyrocketing rent and housing costs and too few jobs to match people's skills. That's why the Fountain Project has made family empowerment and community development major priorities.

Efforts including job skills training and education assistance, as well as home building initiatives and infrastructure enhancements are part of the project implemented by the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention and its Louisiana partners. The project is funded by Fountain Baptist Church in Summit, NJ.

And, central to all the work is its faith-based foundation.

*"We're here because God mandated us to be here. He has trained us for a season such as this."*

— Bishop D. Taara Williams  
Lafayette Restoration Center chief executive officer

"We're here because God mandated us to be here," said Bishop D. Taara Williams, chief executive officer of the Lafayette Restoration Center. "He has trained us for a season such as this."

The nonprofit restoration center is a ministry flowing from the African-American Catholic Congregation Cathedral of the Lafayette Province, Imani Temple #49. It has received funds through the Fountain Project.

One of the integral components of the restoration center's work is its employment readiness program. Clients learn such things as how to complete a job application, the proper communication during a job interview and cultural



New homes like this one in Lake Charles, La., are planned for the area's needy.

differences in the workplace.

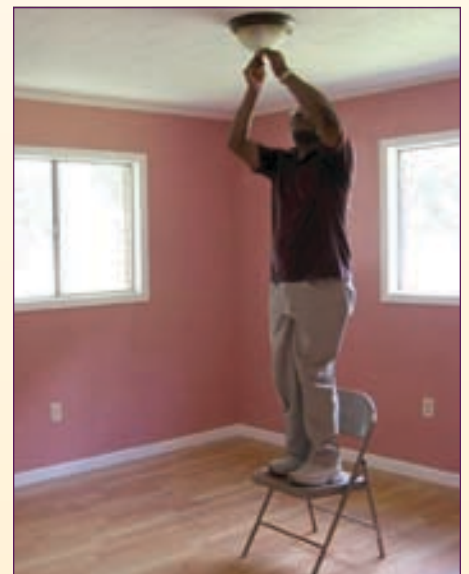
A computer lab is available to program participants, and various procedures are addressed including the issue of substance abuse testing in order to qualify for a job.

"We found that it was hard for most people to qualify for jobs," said Courtney Ledet, the employment readiness coach for the restoration center. "We try to target those individuals to obtain certain skills."

The Fountain Project also is making strides in the area of community development.

In fact, the Louisiana Home and Foreign Missions Baptist State Convention, based in Lake Charles, recently bought eight acres of land in town to redevelop into single family homes. The convention also has received funds through the Fountain Project.

Through its B.J. Maxon Community Development Corporation, the Baptist convention plans to build 20 homes over the next two years for mid- to low-income people, and to provide home ownership training. Once the homes are built the focus will turn to housing for the elderly.



An employment readiness program client works on a home renovation project in the Lafayette, La., area.

There is public housing in the area, "but people want better, they want more and we want to offer them that," said Mary Bills, administrative assistant for the Fountain Project.

If the project can get them on a path, while also ministering to them spiritually, "then that's going to help them and their children," she said. Ultimately, "it's going to impact the whole community." ■