

Top Ten Events of the Decade January 2010

1. Retirement of Ron Cumbie

There is no more significant event in the life of a established local church than the change that takes place at its senior pastoral level. In 2000 Ron Cumbie retired from the pastoral ministry after 26 years of service at Yates Baptist Church (OK, so it was Dec. of 1999, but that's close enough). His tenure was marked by steady growth, the building of the family life center, wise pastoral care for his flock, and a healthy ethos he helped nurture among the staff and congregation. Ron and Rosemary left their imprint on Yates for the good that continues a decade later.

2. Call of New and Continued Leadership

If the retirement of one ministerial pillar is the top event it stands to reason the next call is crucial to maintaining growth and health in the congregation. Russ Wimmer came to Yates Baptist Church to serve as an intentional interim and do important work in helping the church come to grips with its identity in preparation for the call of a new pastor. Russ Wimmer's steady work helped pave the way for the call of Don Gordon, who would follow in Russ and Ron's footsteps for the remainder of the decade. The church continued to benefit from the long tenures of other ministers on staff, celebrating key anniversaries throughout the decade: Ted and Mary Martha Reed (25 years), John Frederick (20 years), Jeff Prince (10 years), Krissy Snyder (10 years). New ministers joined the staff as well, J Muckenfuss (Children) and LeAnne Spruill (Students).

3. Denominational Struggles

The loss of denominational identity across the nation affected Yates during the first decade of the 21st century. During the intentional interim period, the church studied its denominational relationships and determined to alter its bylaws to include the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a moderate Baptist missions organization founded in 1991 as a result of the controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention. As the SBC, and later, the Baptist State Convention, became increasingly narrow in its direction, Yates moved closer to CBF. While CBF became a stronger partner with Yates, a lessening of financial support and ties with any denominational body became more apparent throughout the decade. Mission dollars were directed to multiple Christian groups outside the Baptist denomination as an expression of the church's sense of mission.

4. HGH

After years of facility decline, the church finally mustered the will, organizational energy, and money to renovate and expand its facilities in 2004. The Long Range Planning Team's work led the church to adopt the Honoring God's House program (HGH). The results of the HGH program were a new welcome center that included an elevator, a renovated educational building from top to bottom, a conversion of the old attic above the Family Life Center into a top of the line youth space. Subsequently, the church purchased additional property for future parking expansion. The 1.8 million dollar expansion and renovation plan increased to 2.1

million with the purchase of homes and properties for future use. By the end of the decade \$350,000.00 remained to be paid off.

5. Achievement of 5 Star Rating for CDC

Near the end of the previous decade the deacons and ministerial staff recommended the Yates Preschool be closed down because of the financial burden and administrative strain it was placing on the church. In a surprise move, which many would credit to the Holy Spirit, the church voted to keep the preschool open. Yates called a young lady fresh out of college to lead the school and 10 years later, Krissy Snyder, is a veteran administrator of a 5 star center, the highest ranking given by the state of N.C. The school has converted to an infant through pre-K development center that provides care for 63 children from 12 different countries who speak 10 different languages. It is the only five star center in Durham that is housed in a church facility that uses a Christian-based curriculum.

6. Mission Trips

In the 1990s local congregations began to send teams on short-term mission trips rather than merely send their money to mission agencies. The desire for hands-on mission experiences was a national trend that impacted Yates Baptist Church. In the first decade of the 21st century, this movement accelerated rapidly. Yates sent teams to South Africa, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Haiti, India, Nicaragua, Mexico, Canada, Ukraine, Belize, and Germany. A regular pattern of teams traveled to Haiti in conjunction with Christian Flights International, where they would build homes, deliver food, medical, and dental care to people living in the village of Ranquitte. A team from Yates also taught classes at the India Baptist Theological Seminary and a children's orphanage in Kerala, India.

7. Ministry to Community

Yates offered important ministry to the community of Durham in the last decade in areas other than our outstanding CDC. Yates joined Interfaith Hospitality Network in providing shelter, home-cooked meals, transportation, and Christian hospitality for homeless families for an entire week every quarter. Our Sunshine Class on Wednesday nights received statewide acclaim for its ministry to 65 mentally handicapped adults. Operation Inasmuch became an annual blitz of 150 Yates members serving in mission projects for one day. Our space became utilized by a Filipino-led congregation of about 30 people on Sunday afternoons. Support of the Boy and Girl Scout organizations became part of the church's ministry to the community. There are untold other ministries that are carried out by our church members that receive little recognition but advance the cause of Jesus Christ in important ways.

8. Team 24/7

In 2007 the church began a process that was named "Team 24/7." The team, appointed by ministers and deacons, and approved by the church brought a report to the congregation which was adopted in 2008. The impact of the report will have far-reaching implications as it directs the church to consider the possibility of a second worship service in 2010 and to study the efficiency of our committee structure in the year 2011.

9. Technology

Like every organization in the 21st century, Yates has been deeply impacted by technological advances and is using technology to advance its mission for Christ. The Yates website (yateschurch.org) was completely revamped in 2006 to become one of the most important outreach tools used by the congregation. Today, more people visit our church website than they do our Sunday morning worship service. Through the website, members and visitors can see the church calendar, learn about upcoming events, see photos of recent mission trips, review the church budget, read the newsletter and listen to sermons. Online Bible studies have been initiated and other possibilities await the future.

10. Ministerial Interns

What seems to be a small part of the church life may have as much impact as anything we do for the future of God's church. In the first decade of the 21st century Yates began to serve as a training ground for ministerial interns from the Baptist House at Duke Divinity School. Two of those interns are serving strong, established churches in Texas, and a third will soon complete his internship and move into a congregational setting somewhere in the country. The Christian churches, seminaries and divinity schools are all in a state of decline in the nation. It is crucial that young people be encouraged to enter the ministry and that they find healthy congregations that will nurture their nascent development. Yates has become an integral place for young Christians to hear a call in ministry and be nurtured by a people committed to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

That's my list. I welcome your responses and reminders of what I left out.