

helping ... not hurting

by Linda Jones, CBFNC Missions Coordinator

As people of love—church people—we enjoy helping others. We like to identify needs and problem-solve. Whether engaging in a short-term mission trip or ministering in our community, we want to make a difference. Good things happen when we engage in ministry and missions, such as team building, feeling close to God, and making new friends.

What if our helping is really hurting those we are trying to help? Could it be possible that we are weakening instead of empowering those we are assisting? Could we be taking away local jobs? How would things be different if we took to heart “Don’t do for others what they can do for themselves”?

We can prevent this from happening if both the local leaders

and the visiting team work together to identify the needs and mobilize capabilities, skills, and resources.

First identify the gifts, abilities, and skills of your ministry and mission team and the leaders in the community you are serving. Ask the leaders, “What are you good at doing?” “What worked well in the past?” “What are your dreams?”

Then ask, “How can we work together to meet those needs?” Together, you can discover the best plans, discern the best course of action, implement your strategy, and evaluate to determine any modifications as needed.

good missions partnership

by Steve Timberlake, lay leader, Oxford, Oxford

The sanctuary, classrooms, and fellowship hall of Batts Chapel, Tarboro, found itself under four feet of water after Hurricane Matthew blew through in October 2016. This situation was all too familiar—Batts Chapel experienced similar flooding from Hurricane Floyd in September 1999, which some had termed the 500-year flood.

In November, a group of men from Oxford, Oxford, worked for two days at Batts Chapel, removing wet sheetrock, insulation, damaged doors, furnishings, and bathroom fixtures. They met Deacon Frank Knight and other church members who offered sincere hospitality to our working team. Though they accomplished a great deal, there was much work to be done before Batts Chapel could return for worship, Bible study, and fellowship in their church which was founded in 1851.

A group from Oxford returned in December to Tarboro/Princeville to do more tear-out work. While in the area, we called Frank and heard that the condition of the church was about the same as when we had left in November. Our group came home with a strong conviction that God had a job opening for us at Batts Chapel!

We returned in January and began to install insulation and sheetrock. On subsequent trips, we replaced doors and trim work, and installed new flooring and fixtures in two bathrooms. In April, new carpet was installed in the sanctuary along with floor coverings for the vestibule. On each workday, men from Batts Chapel worked alongside us.

Early on, we were thinking that when we reached this point, we would have met a nice goal and made a worthy contribution to Batts Chapel. Then we came to believe the Holy Spirit had a way and means for more work to be done. Others beyond Oxford have followed God’s call to offer assistance to Batts Chapel by providing building materials. Financial assistance came from CBFNC, NC General Baptists, Oxford Baptist Church, and Batts Chapel. The congregation of Batts Chapel have worked hard towards their church restoration. We have tried to be sensitive and follow their thoughts and plans. We grew with one another.

Now as God leads, we are making plans to install more flooring, fixtures, and cabinets. We are grateful to be helping Batts Chapel in a small way toward restoration for worship and praise. Homecoming is scheduled for the last Sunday in August. We pray this will truly be a God-given homecoming. To God be the glory ... great things He has done!

Your goals include empowering the local community and creating long-term relationships as well as meeting the needs. As the visiting team, you are no longer the outsider, the superior group, the “I know what’s good for you” team.

Doing ministry and missions together in partnership builds relationships, creates leaders, brings about transformation, sensitizes us to have more compassion for suffering, and overall enables us to be more comfortable with diversity.

God is already at work in the world! Let’s join God, continue doing good, loving all of God’s people, and nurturing our own healthy congregation. “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!”

How can I help my church address mission and ministry in a more effective way? Are our ministry and mission endeavors what God has called the congregation to do?

Helpful resources:

Use CBF’s new resource, **Maximizing Your Church’s Engagement**, to evaluate your missions and ministry.

Read together **When Helping Hurts** (Small Group 4 week curriculum on www.whenhelpinghurts.org).

Order **Pivot** from the CBF store. It’s a great resource for short-term mission trips and local ministry.