

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Please read this to your Church as soon as possible.

The Lord has richly blessed us in Virginia, with the opportunity to purchase property in Spotsylvania County, VA. This property is not only vital to our Mission efforts in Virginia, but is a part of our Baptist heritage. Without making this letter an entire history lesson, and without trying to confuse the reader, I will do my best to convey my conviction and to summarize why this opportunity should be of great importance to all of you.

The Baptist in Virginia originated from 3 primary sources. The first were emigrants from England, who settled in the southeastern parts of the state around 1714. The second were from Maryland and formed a settlement in the Northwest region around 1743. The third, which has the most direct interest, came from New England and were part of, what was then called, the New Light Stir. You may better be acquainted with this movement by the break out of one of the greatest Revival's in our Nation's history called, "The Great Awakening". Their success was so great that the parish clergymen (Church of England/Episcopalian) banned them from using their meeting houses and procured a passage of law from England to confine all preachers and parishioners to their own parishes. However, once the people had tasted true, vital religion, they would refuse to go back to the cold, dead, formalized religion. So, rather than diminish the cause, this stirred the heart of the people, brought about true revival, and eventually fueled the spirit of revolution that gave birth to our blessed country. This area of Virginia became a Baptist stronghold and while the nation was being formed and deciding her great destiny, one of our Preachers, John Leland, met with James Madison and forged a union that will live in infamy. John Leland gave his full support to Madison and the Baptist elected him into office, thus making Madison a member of the constitutional convention. Without Madison's presence, the Constitution of the United States would have never been ratified.

The new light movement grew so fast and so strong that they quickly formed a society called, Separate Baptists, about the year 1744. A product of this movement was a man named Shubal Stearns. He became acquainted with the Baptist of New England in 1751 and was immediately convinced of his duty to Believer's Baptism. In the same year, he was ordained as a Baptist preacher and took the Pastoral care of his first Church.

According to Robert Semple's History, Shubal Stearns as well as most of the Separates had a strong faith in the immediate teachings of the Holy Spirit. In other words, they believed that God, through his Spirit, directed the paths of Men, and gave impressions of his divine will, even when it appeared contrary to human reason. So being led of the Spirit, in 1754 Shubal Stearns left to go westward, traveled through Virginia, and eventually settled in Guilford County, North Carolina where they established Sandy Creek Baptist Church. It started with 8 members and within a few months had swelled to over 600. This work spread quickly and carried over into Virginia and in 1760 the first Separate Baptist Church in Virginia was formed under the care of Dutton Lane. An association was soon formed with well over 5000 people attending the first meeting. People all over Virginia began to beg and plead for these truly God called men to come to their homes and communities, and the Gospel spread like wild fire.

Two notable men, Samuel Harris & James Read, were sent as missionaries into the uttermost parts of Virginia. James Read was so moved by the need of the Gospel in Virginia, that he found himself restless in his Spirit and his wife stated that often he would cry out in his sleep, "O, Virginia, Virginia, Virginia". On Nov, 20th, 1767 these men, assisted by Dutton Lane, helped to constitute the first Separate Baptist Church between the James River and Rappahannock River. They were constituted with 25 members and became a Mother to many other Churches. On June 2nd, 1770, the Upper Spotsylvania Baptist Church selected Lewis Craig as their first Pastor.

Lewis Craig, Elijah Craig, John Waller, James Childs, John Burrus, & a host of young preachers, set fire to these regions of Virginia with their Holy Spirit filled preaching. Most of them were illiterate, but people were saved by the hundreds and even thousands, and England with its established religion didn't like it one bit. They sent their magistrates & mobs, priests & sheriff's, courts & prisons, but nothing could silence these faithful men of God.

Persecution raged and mobs tried to silence their meetings by yelling, laughing, throwing rocks, beating drums, and a whole host of Satan's devices. The first actual instance of imprisonment took place in Spotsylvania, County on June 4th, 1768. Lewis Craig, John Waller, James Childs, & others were seized by the Sheriff and hauled to the Upper Spotsylvania Baptist Church yard, where 3 magistrates bound them in the penalty of 1000 pounds each, and to appear in court 2 days later. At court they were arraigned as disturber's of the peace. At their trial they were vehemently accused by a lawyer who said to the court, "May it please your worships, these men are great disturbers of the peace; they cannot meet a man upon the road, but they must ram a text of scripture down his throat." They offered to release them if they would not preach in the county for a year and a day. They refused and were sent into close jail in Fredericksburg. As they moved through the streets in chains they sang the following hymn, "Broad is the road that leads to death.....". While in prison they preached through the grates and many were affected and saved through their preaching. The mobs would use every effort to silence them but to no avail. These men loved not their own lives but rather chose to suffer with Christ. You and I are enjoying our freedoms today because of the price these men paid.

In 1781, Lewis Craig told his congregation that the Lord had called him to the wilderness of Kentucky. They all decided to go with him. Approximately 400 people took the treacherous journey across Virginia's wilderness into Kentucky. They were unharmed by the untamed region and became known in history as the Traveling Church. Many of our Churches have either directly or indirectly descended from this Church.

This brings me to the main point of this letter. We are trying to purchase the property where these men were first arrested and imprisoned here in Virginia. Not only is there a historical marker there verifying this truth, but the original foundation of the Upper Spotsylvania Baptist Church house is there also. After obtaining the tax plat from Spotsylvania County we have now also discovered there is an old Church cemetery there as well.

Several weeks ago Bro. James Shoulders approached me with tears flowing down his cheeks and said that God had told him we need to move forward and try to obtain this property. This is what we have all wanted, but some were skeptical of the timing. We do not have the money for the land purchase and are a small band of people at about 20. We immediately formed a committee to pursue this cause and Bro. James called the property

owner. The property owner stated that they were meeting the next day to sign a contract with another man who wanted the property to build a house and shop. They had been trying to reach us for several weeks and had lost our contact information. In prior talks with the property owners, they had committed to give us the first priority if the property was to sell. We believe that by God's strong hand he has lead us to this moment in time.

A couple of years ago the property owner had mentioned selling the 5 acre property for about \$200,000. After we met and discussed our desire for the property, the owner has agreed to sell it to us for \$150,000. In an effort to secure the property and take it off the market, we have secured it with a lease to purchase option. We are currently paying \$800 a month. If we can close on the property within 3 months, commencing on July 1st, all of the rent payments will be applied to the principal of the property. That means we have until Oct. 1st to close on the purchase and exercise this option. There is also a mobile home on the property which the property owner previously leased for \$800 a month.

Bro. James Shoulders has agreed to use the equity in his home to secure a loan for the property if necessary. We have called several banks and they have all told us, in this current economic climate, it will require at least 35% down. If you do the math, 35% of \$150,000 equals about \$52,500.

I find myself in a very awkward position as I write this letter. I have never asked for money or assistance from our Churches for any work that I have been engaged. But this is a monumental opportunity, not only to secure a piece of our history, but to engage the community of Spotsylvania, Virginia, with the truth of God's word that once filled this land. I also believe that this is an act of faith on our part. We realize that there are many wonderful and deserving efforts on foreign lands but if the Lord is speaking to your heart, please pray and help your Brethren in Virginia to re-claim what was once the Lord's. With many tears, prayers, and an overwhelming burden from my God, I have written this letter. If you would like additional information or have more questions please do not hesitate to call me. My contact information is attached. I thank you for your prayers and support.

Elder Brad Foster
Phone: 703-789-4992
7430 Snow Hill Dr
Spotsylvania, VA 22551
Upper Spotsylvania Missionary Baptist Mission

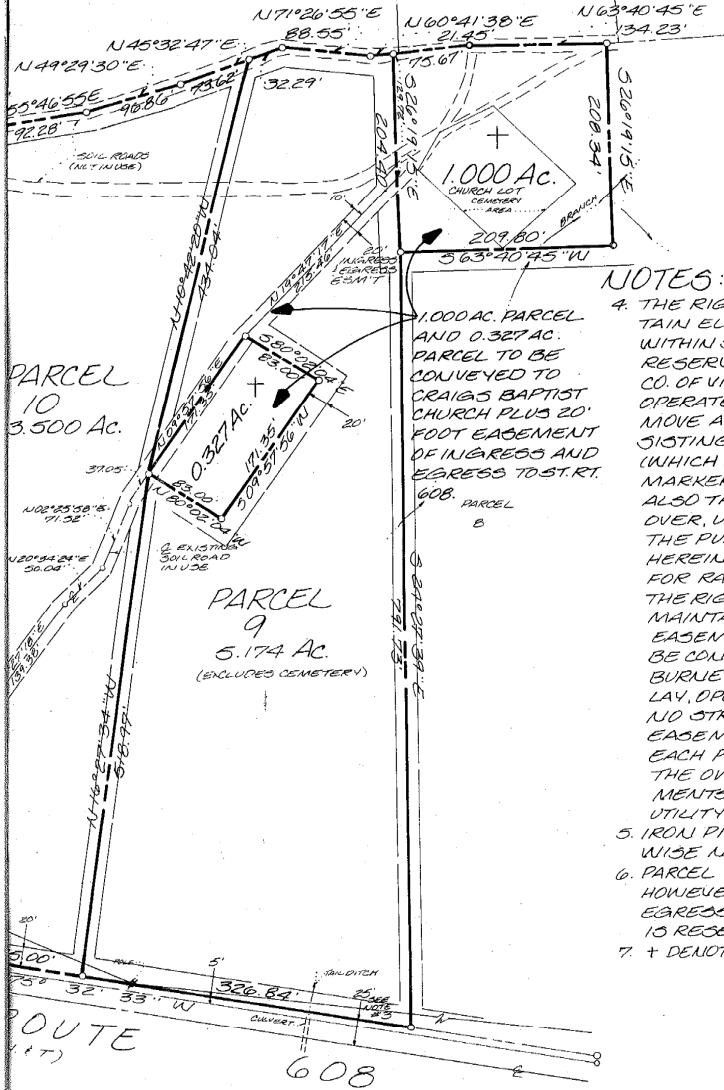
Current Financial Status as of this letter:

Building Fund = \$8,036

General Fund = \$3,189

HOPENWELL
N.C.
E 39

CRAIGS BAPTIST
CHURCH
OLD SITE



NOTES: CONTINUED FROM SHEET 1 OF 2

4. THE RIGHT TO LAY, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN ELECTRIC AND TELEPHONE LINES WITHIN SAID EASEMENTS, AND FURTHER RESERVES FOR CONTINENTAL TELEPHONE CO. OF VIRGINIA THE RIGHT TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE, MAINTAIN, REPLACE AND REMOVE A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM CONSISTING OF CUCH CABLES, WIRES, TERMINALS (WHICH MAY BE BURIED) AND LOCATION MARKERS, AS FROM TIME TO TIME REQUIRED, ALSO THE RIGHT OF INGRESS AND EGRESS OVER, UNDER AND ACROSS SAID LAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXERCISING THE RIGHTS HEREIN GRANTED, AND FURTHER RESERVES FOR RAPPAHANNOCK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE THE RIGHT TO CONSTRUCT, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN ELECTRIC LINES WITHIN SAID EASEMENTS, BUT NOTHING HEREIN SHALL BE CONSTRUED AS TO IMPOSE ON SILVER & BURNETT LAND DEVEL. INC., THE DUTY TO LAY, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN SUCH ITEMS. NO STRUCTURE IS TO BE BUILT ON SAID EASEMENT. THE EASEMENT AREA OF EACH PARCEL SHALL BE MAINTAINED BY THE OWNER EXCEPT FOR THOSE IMPROVEMENTS FOR WHICH A PUBLIC AUTHORITY OR UTILITY COMPANY IS RESPONSIBLE.
5. IRON PIN ON ALL CORNERS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.
6. PARCEL 8 INCLUDES TITLE TO CEMETERY HOWEVER RESERVATION OF INGRESS AND EGRESS AND MAINTENANCE OF CEMETERY IS RESERVED BY THE LUMSDEN FAMILY.
7. + DENOTES CEMETERY.


SILVER & BURNETT LAND DEVL. INC.
LUMSDEN TRACT

LIVINGSTON DISTRICT
SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY, VIRGINIA

SCALE: 1" = 100'
SHEET 2 OF 2

OCTOBER 1983

E.W. KUISELEY SURVEYS
703 CAROLINE STREET, ...


 E.W. Kuiseley
 Surveyor, Virginia