



**Southeast RLRI - Camp Dixie: Hosted by North Carolina State University
January 23-25, 2026**

Featured Speakers *(alphabetical order)*



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Briana Blackwelder, DVM

Dr. Briana Blackwelder graduated from North Carolina State University in 2025. Before starting vet school, she worked for several years as a physical therapist assistant. She is founder of Equine Muscle Works (<https://www.equinemuscleworks.com>) in 2018, which embraces the manual work and the power of touch with animals (myofascial treatment modality on horses)! While in vet school and running her business, Briana was still very active at NC State as a student. She was an E-board officer of many clubs, student body government, and a weekly devotion meeting host. She also had the opportunity to be part of three short-term mission trips through CVM. Now graduated, she works in equine sports medicine and lameness. Email: briblackwelderdm@gmail.com.



Natalie Cochrane BVetMed, DACVIM, CVA

Dr. Natalie Cochrane is a North Carolina native with over 20 years of experience as a large animal practitioner. She obtained her veterinary degree from the Royal Veterinary College then completed a Field Services Internship at the University of Georgia and a large animal internal medicine residency at the University of Tennessee. After holding a faculty position at the University of Illinois for a few years, she returned to private practice in North Carolina. She currently operates Chatham County Mobile Veterinary Services in central NC. She is also certified in Equine Spinal Manipulation and is a Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist. Email: chathamcochrane@gmail.com.



Samuel ("Dr. G") P. Galphin, Jr., BS, DVM, MS

Dr. G was born on May 8, 1951, in Holly Hill, South Carolina, and raised on a farm where his early experiences caring for animals and helping in his father's veterinary practice shaped both his vocation and his sense of calling. After earning a B.S. from Clemson University and graduating cum laude with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the University of Georgia, he served in the U.S. Air Force Veterinary Corps. He later completed a post-doctoral master's in nutrition and dairy management at Mississippi State University, where he also taught and led the Department of Economic and Performance Medicine. His career has spanned private practice, dairy ownership, international consulting, and agricultural innovation. Over the years, he's worked across the U.S. and around the world, always guided by a desire to serve others through veterinary medicine and food production—believing these are essential parts of God's provision for humanity. A devoted follower of Christ, Dr. G has spent more than 35 years partnering with organizations such as Christian Veterinary Mission, The United Methodist Church, Freedom Global, Heifer International, and the Boy Scouts of America. He has led and participated in dozens of mission trips, providing veterinary care, training, and service opportunities while encouraging others to develop a heart for service. His work through Agri-Science Opportunity now includes not only dairy and cheese operations but also an education and innovation center where research is underway to alleviate suffering through medical advancements. He considers his essential roles to be a steward of God's creation, a provider within the global food system, and a servant in the Kingdom—working to meet both physical and spiritual needs so that others may be more open to the message of God's love. He and his wife of over 48 years have three children and six grandchildren, and he continues to dedicate time each year to mission work, publishing, and mentoring others in faith and service. Email: sgalphindvm@gmail.com



Pastor Curtiss Gibbs, MDiv

Curtiss Gibbs serves as the Assistant Director of Workplace and Student Ministries and the West Region Rep. He joined CVM full-time after 12 years of pastoral ministry in the local church, mostly focused on youth, college students, and missions. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia and his Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary. Curtiss loves connecting people to their calling and working to see individuals and groups thrive as they serve God. He and his wife, Shannon, have been married since 2003, and Shannon is also on the CVM staff. They both served as part of

CVM Short Term Missions team to Kenya this past summer. They love to spend time outdoors and in the company of family and friends. Email: cgibbs@cvm.org



Robert (Bob) Hott, DVM

Grew up in Chicago in a Christian home and trusted Christ as Savior as a child. I was baptized in college (Purdue) where I met and married my college sweetheart in 1976. This year, Karen and I will celebrate 50 years of enjoying each other's company! We have three wonderful adult children and 4 adorable grandchildren. (I have pictures to prove it). I graduated from the University of Illinois with my DVM degree in 1984 and worked in rural practices in IN and MI for the next 35 years except for 3 years in Nepal as CVM Long Term field worker where I taught vocational agriculture. I also served on CVM staff as our first director of Student Outreach from 1999-2003. We're now retired and make our home in Charlotte, NC. When not chasing the grandkids around, we keep busy with our local church, local home school groups, old cars, ballroom dancing, and rooting for the Detroit Tigers. I also serve on the CVM Board of Trustees. Email: bobkaren76@outlook.com



Luke Martin, DVM

Dr. Luke Martin grew up on a beef cattle farm in western North Carolina, where he developed an early love for animals and rural life. His call to veterinary medicine began in high school while working as a veterinary assistant, and that experience ultimately shaped his career and passion for serving others through animal care. After earning both his undergraduate and veterinary degrees from NC State University, Dr. Martin returned to Boulevard Animal Hospital—the practice where his journey began—as an associate veterinarian. He now serves as Chief of Staff, leading a dedicated team that focuses on mentorship, teamwork, and high-quality, compassionate medicine. In addition to his hospital leadership, Dr. Martin serves as a Chief of Staff Advisor (COSA) with VetCor, supporting other practices across the region in leadership development and operational success. Faith plays a central role in Dr. Martin's approach to life and work. For over a decade, he has served with Christian Veterinary Mission, participating in short-term mission trips to the Navajo Nation and mentoring students in integrating faith and service within the profession. Dr. Martin lives on his family's cattle farm with his wife and daughter. Outside of work, he enjoys woodworking, farm projects, and playing golf. Email: lukemartindvm@gmail.com



Melanie Martin, DVM

Dr. Melanie is a 2020 North Carolina State College of Veterinary Medicine graduate. There, she was first introduced to Christian Veterinary Mission and captivated by the opportunity to serve Christ and others through veterinary medicine. She quickly joined in outreach ministry to fellow students and missionary work in Yup'ik villages (Alaska) and the Navajo Nation (Arizona/Utah). She continues to serve the Lord through annual CVM mission trips to the Navajo and through participating in Real Life Real Impact retreats. Since graduation, Dr. Melanie has worked as an associate veterinarian at DocTerra Mobile Veterinary Services, a mobile mixed

animal practice in Western North Carolina. Her favorite aspects of veterinary medicine are surgery, large animal medicine, and accompanying clients as they care for and learn about their animals. Dr. Melanie was born in White Plains, NY, yet raised in Charlotte, NC embracing lots of school, softball, and horseback riding. She earned her bachelor's degree (Biology) from the University of Notre Dame while becoming a very passionate "Fighting Irish" football fan! When not working with animals, you can find her hiking, trail riding, or working in her enormous vegetable garden with her husband Luke and their daughter, Clare. Email: melanie.runkle.1@gmail.com



Gerald Mitchum, DVM, MVSc

Dr. Gerald Mitch is a DVM from the University of Georgia 1968; However he got his MVSc from Massey University New Zealand. He participated in an Rotating Internship at Colorado State University followed by a Residency Kansas State University. He celebrated sixty years of marriage to Frances this past June. He enjoyed practiced in Montana, Virginia, and North Carolina and spent 30 years with CVM in Mongolia with Mongolia VET Net NGO. Email: gmitchum.gm@gmail.com



Nancy Moore, DVM, MA

Dr. Moore is a Nebraska native. Scholastic blessings led her to the University of Florida for vet school, graduating in 1995. Small animal private practice and a love for the Lord propelled her into short-term missionary work with CVM's Native American Reservations and Urban Outreach. In obedience to the Lord, she completed a master's degree in Ministerial Leadership at Southeastern University in 2020. She is based in Tampa, Florida now with her family. While Dr. Moore continues with CVM as a short-term missionary, she also serves with CVM as the US Southeast Region Representative. She connects and ministers to veterinarians, professors, vet students, technicians, donors and prayer partners encouraging them to fix their eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. In addition, she helps leverage them in their positions to love the Lord and others through veterinary medicine across her region of nine states. She is blessed to witness how the Lord multiplies His power through His people for His Kingdom. Email: nmoore@cvm.org



Danielle Mzyk, DVM, PhD, DACVCP

Dr. Danielle Mzyk is a field service clinical veterinarian in the Department of Population Health and Pathobiology at North Carolina State University (NCSU) College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM). Dr. Mzyk received her PhD (2018) and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degrees from NCSU CVM (2019) as part of NCSU's DVM/PhD program. In 2025, she became a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Clinical Pharmacology. Prior to her current appointment, she practiced as a mixed animal veterinarian in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin specializing in small ruminant health. In addition to her research and clinical appointment, Dr. Mzyk is deeply committed to teaching and mentorship and integrating evidence-based pharmacology into veterinary curricula and clinical training. She currently serves as the faculty advisor for the NC State CVM Club and has joined with the CVM on short term missions serving the Yu'pik in Alaska as well as the Navajo and Cherokees Nations. Email: daniellemzyk@gmail.com



Rocky Oakes, DVM

Rocky Oakes graduated from NCSU Veterinary School in 2009. While in vet school he met and fell head over heels for his fellow classmate Jessica. Within two years they were married. While in school, Rocky served as the president of the CVF. Rocky and Jessica participated in two CVM trips to the Navajo Nation and a short term mission trip to Mongolia. After vet school, they worked together in a mixed animal practice in rural northeast Georgia for six years before moving closer to Jessica's family in the Piedmont area of NC.

Drs. Rocky and Jessica Oakes opened Oakes Animal Hospital in Winston Salem, NC in 2017. They have 4 kids and a herd of pets. They continually work to serve the Lord through their veterinary work and in their local church. Email: rockyoakes@gmail.com



Shane Rootes, PhD

Pastor Shane Rootes serves as CEO of Christian Veterinary Mission, inspiring veterinarians worldwide to live out their calling where faith and skill meet in service. A transformational leader with more than two decades of global experience, he is passionate about advancing mission, mentorship, and impact through the veterinary profession. Read more at: our CVM website <https://cvm.org/our-team-detail/shane-rootes>. Join him

on mission or invite him to a speaking engagement. Email: srootes@cvm.org



Bliss Steele

Bliss Steele lives in Lancaster, South Carolina with his wife, Jessica, and five dogs. Bliss has worked with teenagers and adults for over three decades in both the church, mission field and corporate world. Bliss is currently the Senior Corporate Chaplain for Nutramax Laboratories in Lancaster, SC serving their 800+ employees. Bliss uses his unique experiences from growing up on the mission field traveling the world, to serving in the local church and corporate world, along with his years as a

dog trainer to combine biblical truths and practical application showing what it means to be in an obedient and dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ. Email: bliss.steele@gmail.com



Fred Van Gorkom, DVM

One month after vet school graduation (Washington State University (1983), Dr. Gorkom went to Ethiopia with Christian Veterinary Mission. While working in veterinary projects, famine relief, refugee and discipleship ministries, he met his wife, Vicki (also a veterinarian – graduated Oregon State University, 1982). They married in 1986, returning immediately to remote southwestern Ethiopia where they raised their four children while doing community development and church planting among unreached people groups. In 2008 they moved to CVM's home office where Vicki

served in Donor Services until retiring in 2024, and Fred continues to serve as deputy director for missions, helping mobilize and mentor others for the privilege of international missions. Fred also serves in CVM global security and CVM affiliate ministry—mobilizing Christian veterinary

professionals in other countries for the Great Commission. Fred also speaks in a number of churches and is passionate about sharing God's heart for all peoples. Email: fvangorkom@cvm.org



Page Wages, DVM, MA

Dr. Page Wages is the lead veterinarian at Care First Animal Hospital; a busy, progressive small animal practice in Raleigh, NC. She graduated veterinary school at NC State in 2005, completed her Masters in Executive Leadership through Liberty University in 2014, and a Bachelors in 2001 from St. Lawrence University. Dr. Wages is passionate about rescue animals and has been actively involved in community service; serving as the overseeing veterinarian for Second Chance Pet Adoptions and intermittently for the Wake County SPCA. She is also highly involved with the veterinary students at NC State, as the

Advisor of the Christian Veterinary Mission Fellowship group. She has been leading trips through Christian Veterinary Mission for the last 23 years to the Navajo Nation, to Cherokee in North Carolina, and serving the Yup'ik Eskimo Villages in Alaska. She is currently serving as the past Chairman of the Board for Christian Veterinary Mission. For fun, Dr. Wages has a little Funny Farm of 92 animals including 2 pigs, 12 dogs, 4 ducks, 7 peacocks, 7 rabbits, 70 something chickens, and 5 goats -many of the animals have special medical needs and keep her busy at home! She was nominated 2 years in a row and won 3rd place as America's Favorite Veterinarian and recently won 2nd place in Raleigh's Favorite Veterinarian. Email:

drwages@gmail.com

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