Sergeant’s honesty saves church funds

By MIKE DART
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It’s a pretty good testimony for a person when a minister characterizes him as an “honest man.”

That’s the way the Rev. Dick Whitley described Master Sgt. Dan Bennett of Camp Johnson. It seems Bennett called Whitley this morning with some good news, namely that he had found more than $700 belonging to the minister’s church, Centerview Baptist Church on Piney Green Road.

The church’s teller, who Whitley declined to identify for fear of embarrassing the man, lost the money on his way to work at Camp Lejeune this morning.

The man was going to deposit the money at a base bank, as he often does, when he lost it in the Piney Green Road area, Whitley said. “He was driving down the road and it fell out of his car,” the minister said.

Bennett, of 87 Sterling Road, found the money on the road shortly after, Whitley said. “Realizing what it was, he looked inside when he got to the office to see who owned it,” the minister continued.

“My name was on one of the checks and, since it said pastor, he figured I was the head of the church and, of course, I am,” Whitley said. “He called me; my telephone number was on the check.”

The teller and his family were in a panic when Whitley called his wife to tell her of Bennett’s 7 a.m. call, the pastor said. “She said she was in prayer,” the minister reported.

The woman had been driving back and forth trying to find the money after the teller told her it was missing, Whitley said. “When she got home, I called her and told her it was found,” the pastor said.

How the money fell out of the car is still a mystery to the church members, Whitley said. “We couldn’t figure out how it fell out,” he said.

The incident was strange, Whitley said: “This teller’s been making deposits for years. It never has happened before.”

Bennett is going to give the money to a church member who works at Camp Johnson, Whitley said.
Centerview Baptist Church on Piney Green Rd. is celebrating its sixth anniversary and will hold special services on "Anniversary Sunday" Aug. 4 at 11 a.m. Dinner will be served on the grounds after the service. A "Singspiration" will then be held featuring the "New World Singers" and the "Boys from Bethlehem". The new building will be dedicated at the 11 a.m. service, the first to be held there. The public is cordially invited.