

connections

December 2000

Volume 3 Issue 12

Our Mission is to make the worship of God primary in all our gatherings, foster relationships within and outside the Alliance, create places of refuge and renewal for those wounded or ignored by the church, side with the poor, pursue justice with and for the oppressed, care for the earth, work for peace, honor wisdom and lifelong learning, and hold ourselves accountable for equity, collegiality and diversity.

Alliance accepted into National Council of the Churches of Christ

The Alliance of Baptists has become the 36th member of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. by a unanimous vote.

“We in the Alliance have eagerly anticipated this day,” said Executive Director Stan Hastey. “Our admission into the NCCC indicates our determination to live out our covenant commitment to the larger body of Jesus Christ.”

The Nov. 16 vote culminated a three-year process that began when the Alliance board voted to seek membership in NCCC through its Membership and Ecclesial Relations Committee. At last year’s NCCC meeting, the application for membership was received without objection.

“Although we are a small ecclesial body, we’re going to let our light shine,” Hastey told the delegates, meeting in Atlanta. Also representing the Alliance at the meeting were Vice President Craig Henry of Monroe, LA; Secretary David Gooch of Nashville, TN; board members Martha Barr of St. Davids, PA; Millard Eiland of Houston; Cathy Tamsberg of Raleigh, NC; immediate past president Welton Gaddy of Washington, DC; and Alliance members Judy Gaddy of Washington and Tommy Justus of Mars Hill, NC.



Stan Hastey addresses the NCCC meeting with other Alliance representatives looking on.



Stacey Simpson, pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Edison, GA, with some of the afterschool club kids.

ALLIANCE CONGREGATION OF 25 IS ONE OF THE COUNTRY’S BEST

FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

Fellowship Baptist Church, an Alliance congregation in Edison, GA, has been named one of America’s outstanding Protestant churches in a nationwide study funded by the Lilly Endowment. The study identified 300 Protestant congregations and 300 Catholic parishes that “nurture the human spirit, draw people closer to God, bring them into loving service, and exemplify what is best in local churches throughout America.”

The church will be included in the book *Excellent Protestant Congregations: The Guide to Best Places and Practices* (Westminster, John Knox), due out in March 2001.

Fellowship is a small congregation of 25. It has added seven new members in the last three months, one of whom is Shirley Rayburn, now the music minister, who will be ordained in December.

The church’s biggest ministry is its Kids’ Club. Members go once a week to a nearby trailer park for an afterschool club with Bible stories, games, songs, crafts, and snacks for about 20 kids. This summer, the church had its second annual “Kidsfest” (its version of Vacation Bible School) for three days. The first day 21 children showed up; the second day, 39; the third day, 58! “I fully believe that if we had gone all week, we would’ve hit 100,” said Stacey Simpson, the church’s pastor

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MISSION OFFERING

Please consider making a gift to our annual Mission Offering in support of 20 organizations. Our 2000 goal is \$82,250.

Alliance member **Melissa Rogers**, General Counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, has resigned that position, effective Oct. 31. She is now Executive Director of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, a new venture being funded by Pew Charitable

happenings

Trusts. Melissa is a member of Ravensworth Baptist Church, Annandale, VA.

Indigo Lakes Baptist Church in Daytona Beach FL, has changed its name to **Indigo Community Church**, in part to distinguish it from identification with the Southern Baptist Convention. The pastor is Jim Shoopman.

James Wm. McClendon died at his home on Oct. 29. McClendon was selected to deliver the Covenant

Address at the Alliance Convocation earlier this year but was unable to attend because of declining health. His memorial service was held on November 11th at Shiloh Baptist Church in Mooringsport, LA. Alliance Board member, Kyle Childress, officiated. McClendon recently completed the final volume in his series on systematic theology. Published by Abingdon Press, the other volumes are "Ethics" and "Doctrine." Memorial gifts may be sent to the Shiloh Baptist Church Building Fund, 10395 Blanchard Latex Rd., Mooringsport LA 71060.

ALLIANCE FOUNDER SUSAN LOCKWOOD NOW IN ANOTHER NEW VENTURE

Susan Lockwood was a founding member of the Alliance and now she is the pastor of a new church — Faith Station Chicago. The church has been included in the 2001 Alliance Mission Offering. "From the very beginning, Faith Station Chicago intends to be a church that is committed to mission beyond its own self-interest. . . I consider it a privilege to have journeyed with the Alliance of Baptists over these years and look forward to the days ahead as we undertake this new partnership in ministry," she said.

Edgar V. McKnight, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Religion Emeritus at Furman University, is serving this year as Visiting Professor of Biblical Studies at the Divinity School of Wake Forest University.

Sharon Snow has recently received chaplaincy endorsement by the Alliance. She is a chaplain at Forsyth Medical Center in Winston-Salem, NC.

Dan Ivins has resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church, Silver Spring, MD, after more than 10 years of ministry with the Alliance-affiliated congregation. In December, he begins a new ministry as senior

pastor of Bellevue Heights Baptist Church in Sun City, AZ. This congregation is affiliated with American Baptist Churches. Dan, one of the founders of the Alliance of Baptists, and his wife Libby have both served on the Board of Directors.

Rebecca Gurney has accepted a position as a chaplain at Providence Portland Medical Center in Portland, OR. Becca is a past president of Baptist Women in Ministry.

Nicki Royall has been called as minister of administration and youth by Yorktown Baptist Church in Yorktown, VA. Nicki is a graduate of BTSR.



GEORGIA CHAPTER

Mary Sue Brookshire is the president of the Georgia chapter of the Alliance. She is a graduate of Candler School of Theology and is the program associate in Ethics and Servant Leadership at the Baptist Center for Ethics at Emory University in Atlanta. The Georgia chapter held its annual meeting Oct. 20-21 at Cohutta Springs Retreat Center in Crandall, GA.

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

Roberta and Richard Bondi were the worship leaders for this year's meeting of the North Carolina chapter of the Alliance. Roberta is professor of church history at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and read selections from her new book, **Houses**. Richard is a pastoral psychotherapist at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Atlanta and former assistant professor of ethics at Candler.



The North Carolina chapter elected Steve Jolly as its president during its Oct. 6-7 meeting. Past President is Gail Coulter. Other officers are: President-elect, Diane Hill; Vice-President and Corresponding Secretary, Rebecca Askew; Recording Secretary, Elizabeth Laney; and Treasurer, Marie Mason. At-large members of the Board are Paul Hannemann, Jerry Jarrell, John Kent, Nancy Noel, Susan Aldrich, and John Crutchfield.



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Warren Hasteley had a passion for life. Everything he did, he did passionately. Whether the cause or project was short-term or long, he went all out in pursuing its completion. As a teenager he was passionate about justice in his adopted Mexico — justice for the poor, the oppressed, the forgotten. That passion for the downtrodden he pursued his whole life.

Today we gather to celebrate his life and his leave-taking. We do so with eyes wide open, having faced head-on the ravages of the fearful disease that claimed him. We now have joined the millions of other families around the world who know firsthand the horror of HIV/AIDS.

When Warren called me some 15 years ago to say he was coming out of the closet to his family, I promised to support him. This I did despite my own predisposition to consider homosexuality by definition a sin. Yet Warren's coming out forced me to begin reading and, more important, to begin listening and learning about same-sex orientation.

Some of you who have heard me tell of Warren's story, which I did with his permission and our parents', know that I consider myself no prophet on the subject of homosexuality. No, everything I've learned about the matter I owe to Warren's openness with his family and a consequent willingness to listen to the stories of other gay people and their families. Only then did I come to a point of being able to deal with those of a same-sex orientation as they truly are — as fully human and fully reflective of the image of God.

When sometimes I despair at the slowness of our understanding and acceptance of our gay brothers and sisters, I remind myself of my own gradual progress. More than that I find consolation in the simple fact that homosexuality is best understood and accepted within families like our own.

However this difficult subject is approached or addressed, it is at root a family matter. Every man or woman of a same-sex orientation is someone's child or sister or brother, or cousin or niece or nephew, or grandson or granddaughter. Therein lies our best hope for understanding and acceptance. That is most assuredly the experience and testimony of this one family.

From the moment of his AIDS diagnosis three years ago, Warren accepted responsibility for the actions that in his case brought on the dreadful disease. He never blamed anyone else. If he was angry, which undoubtedly he was, his anger seldom flashed. Mostly he was reflective and, yes, repentant,

openly speaking of and laying claim to God's amazing grace. His sense of utter calm in the face of death was, in the end, a true gift of grace to the rest of us.

This son and brother of ours, this uncle and cousin and nephew, was above all else a beloved child of God. So to the God who created him and accepted him as he was, to the Christ who gave himself up for him and for all of us, and to the Spirit who intercedes for him and for us all, we now return him with thanksgiving.

perspectives



By Stan Hasteley
Executive Director

Warren Hasteley died Oct. 26 in Richmond. These are excerpts from remarks given by his brother at the memorial service.

Fellowship Baptist Church (continued from page 1)

for five years. "The kids were really excited about it and spreading the word."

"Usually, our programs draw mostly African-American children," Stacey said. "But this year, we also had 10 white children, and two Latinos. The church realized a dream we had had from the beginning — to have kids of different ethnicities and different backgrounds playing and learning and worshipping in our church. It was a high point for all of us."

Shirley, the music minister, hopes to begin a community children's choir with the children in the program.

Stacey said she didn't think much about the questionnaire she filled out from Paul Wilkes, the director of the 'best churches' project. "It said that our church had been identified as a *successful* church and that he was doing research on what makes a church

successful. I took serious issue with the terminology. *Successful* belongs in the corporate world, but not in the church world, in my opinion. I knew by the usual standards of success — number of people, amount of money, size of buildings — we would not be deemed successful. I wrote all that in the questionnaire and then went on to explain what I thought was great about this church. A few weeks later, a research assistant called to interview me about the church's history, its ministries, its vision, its makeup, and so forth."

"I still didn't think it was a big deal," she said. "And then we got this packet a few days ago with all this information — it was funded by the Lilly Endowment, we would be in a book, we were invited to a "Pastoral Summit..."

"I was most especially pleased to see that

they had changed the language from that of *successful* to that of *excellent* and *outstanding*," she said.

"I really believe this is a good news place," Stacey said in explaining why she thinks the church was selected. "We are committed to faithful preaching and worship, to nurturing our children, to caring for each other, and to reaching out to the community in concrete, creative ways. Being here has taught me that size and location really do not matter when it comes to doing the work of God — what matters is how much the people are willing to let the Spirit do its work. The people here are very willing. It is a tough place to be our kind of church (non-traditional, non-Southern Baptist, having a female pastor, being open to all races, etc.), and yet we have tried to remain faithful."

2000 Operating Budget:

Needs: \$227,802
Receipts: \$217,480

2000 Mission Offering

Goal: \$85,250
Receipts: \$57,680

December 2000



By Steve Boyd

Steve is a member of the Alliance's Gender Equity Task Group and Wake Forest Baptist Church. He teaches historical theology at Wake Forest University.

**GRACIOUS SUBMISSION IS NOTHING NEW:
THE SUBTLE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CALVIN AND LUTHER**

As we move toward the Convocation, I want to shine a little historical light on recent developments in Baptist life, particularly the "gracious submission" statement of the SBC and the reaction of many in Alliance churches. Our disagreements are by no means new.

In fact, our differing positions on the nature of women and men and our relation to one another reflects a subtle distinction that separated John Calvin and Martin Luther in the Reformation period.

Both affirmed that women were made in the image of God, but Calvin said that, in creation, God intended there to be a "liberal and gentle subjection" of women to men. In other words, male priority, if not supremacy, was God's order of creation. Luther disagreed. He believed that God established equality between men and women in the Garden and that we lost it in the Fall (Gen. 3:16). For him, patriarchy was the order of the Fall, not creation.

Both reformers deplored the constant wrangling, quarreling and enmity that characterized many marriages in the sixteenth century. But they had different diag-

noses of the problems and prescriptions for the cure. Calvin believed that the "harsh servitude" of women that followed the Fall led to much of the wrangling. Christ's redemption made possible a return to a more "benificent patriarchy" by men (and "gracious submission" by women) that would heal it.

On the other hand, Luther believed that women's unhappiness and attempts to wrest from men the power they lost in the Fall was understandable. Christ's redemption restores the equality of women and men and, thus, the possibility of peace between us. However, Luther believed that sin had so corrupted us that the original equality and peace would only be restored in the eschaton. For now, we have to live with the tragedy of hierarchical relations between men and women. This kept a modicum of order that allowed the Gospel to be preached.

In this as in other areas, more radical reformers challenged Luther's reluctance or inability to follow the insights of the Scriptures to their logical conclusions in this world.

More about that in the next *connections*.

KAIROS has rescheduled tour

The Cuban singing group KAIROS has rescheduled its tour of the southeastern United States. The group will arrive in Miami on Jan. 2 and will be available for concerts through mid-February. Contact Alliance president Paula Dempsey, pdempsey@mhc.edu, or trip coordinator Donna Goddard, djgoddard@mindspring.com, for details.



Individuals are invited to become members of the Alliance at any time. Annual membership dues are \$40, individuals; \$60, families; \$125, sustaining; and \$20, students/low income.

**a still more
excellent
way**

**April 20-22
Atlanta area
CONVOCATION 2001**