

connections

October 1999

Volume 2 Issue 10

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.

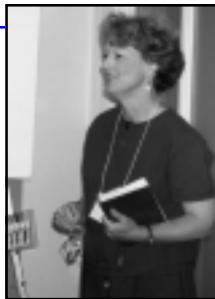
National Council of the Churches of Christ COMMITTEE APPROVES MEMBERSHIP

The Membership and Ecclesial Relations Committee of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA voted on Sept. 13 to recommend to its General Council that the Alliance application for membership be approved. The vote to approve the committee's recommendation will come during the NCC's 50th anniversary meeting Nov. 9-12 in Cleveland. An Alliance delegation including Welton Gaddy, Stan Hastey and others, will be present, and provided the vote is favorable the Alliance will be received into membership at that meeting.

Alliance participates in ABC strategy session

Executive Director Stan Hastey was the keynote speaker at a consultation on Baptist principles held in Boston Sept. 1-3. Twenty-seven participants were invited to devise strategies to deal with the crisis caused by the exclusion of four northern California churches from their region, American Baptist Churches of the West. These four churches had appealed to the General Board of ABC/USA to stay in the national body even though they had been excluded from their region. Their appeals were rejected.

Alliance member Tom McKibbens, pastor of First Baptist Church in Newton Centre, MA, and Ralph Elliott, an American Baptist leader since his firing at Midwestern in 1963, were among the presenters. Past Alliance president Nancy Hastings Sehested led a devotional.



Nancy Sehested



Ralph Elliott



The 1999-2000 officers of the Alliance are C. Welton Gaddy, right, president; Genie Dyer, vice president; and David Gooch, secretary.

Adopts budget and offering goal Board endorses M&M plan

The Board of Directors of the Alliance, meeting Sept. 16-18 in Washington, DC, has endorsed the offer of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of American Baptist Churches to participate in its retirement/death benefit plan as an "affiliated group" and will commend the plan to churches affiliated with the Alliance.

In a statement endorsing the offer, the board also said, "We further express our gratitude to the M&M board for its prior inclusion of Alliance personnel in its retirement/death benefit plan." The endorsement followed a presentation to the board by Richard Huber, associate executive director of the M&M board.



Huber

The Alliance board also approved an operating budget of \$245,681 and a mission offering goal of \$85,250 for fiscal 2000.

The Convocation Committee announced the theme for the 2000 Alliance convocation at University Baptist Church in Austin, TX, as "Living..On the Boundary." The covenant address will be given by theologian James McClendon. The convocation will be April 27-29.

MISSION OFFERING

As you can see on the back page, our 1999 Mission Offering goal is \$80,000 and through mid-September gifts totaled \$40,417. Twenty churches and organizations are counting on the Alliance offering to fund their programs of work this year. If you would like more information about the offering, please contact the Alliance office. If you would like to make a contribution, an envelope is enclosed in this issue of *connections* for your convenience.

Alliance director *Kyle Childress* completed 10 years as pastor of Austin Heights Baptist Church, Nacogdoches, TX, in August. Kyle is 1999-2000 chair of the Alliance Convocation Committee, charged with planning next year's big event, to be held April 27-29 in Austin, TX. His 10th anniversary is to be celebrated Oct. 24, when the guest

happenings

preacher will be Stanley Hauerwas, professor of theological studies at Duke Divinity School.

Alice Goddard, mother of Alliance Web site designer Larry Goddard, and mother-in-law of former Georgia Alliance president Donna Goddard, died Sept. 8 in a traffic accident in San Angelo, TX. Mrs. Goddard's

husband, J.L., also survives. Condolences to Larry and Donna may be sent to 1622 Northlake Springs Ct., Decatur, GA 30033.

Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC, is hosting two of the most influential New Testament scholars in the world this fall. N. T. Wright, recently appointed canon of Westminster Abbey, will lecture at Myers Park Oct. 8-10, as part of the church's "Jesus the Christ at 2000" series. Described by Myers Park Minister of Education William L. Dols as "the most articulate critic" of The Jesus Seminar, Wright is co-author of *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*, with Marcus Borg. Coming to

2000 TRIP TO ISRAEL EVOLVED FROM 1995 CONVOCATION

Former Alliance President John Ewing Roberts has announced a trip to Israel for June 18-28, 2000, through the auspices of the Melitz Institute in Jerusalem, which will provide guides and scholars throughout the visit. Special features of the trip are to include a night at Nes Ammin, a Christian kibbutz in northern Israel; a night at Nof Ginosar, a Jewish kibbutz on the Sea of Galilee; and seven nights at the Mt. Zion Hotel opposite the Old City in Jerusalem.

The trip is one of numerous outcomes of the 1995 Convocation, during which the Alliance adopted *A Baptist Statement on Jewish-Christian Relations*. The statement was officially presented during that year's historic closing session at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

Approximate cost of the trip will be \$2,400, including round-trip air fare on El Al, with departure from Baltimore-Washington International Airport. For a brochure or further information, write or call John Roberts at Woodbrook Baptist Church, 25 Stevenson Lane, Baltimore, MD 21212-1296; 410/377-2350, ext. 15; johneroberts@home.com.

the Charlotte church Nov. 12-14 is John Dominic Crossan, one of the founders of The Jesus Seminar and professor emeritus at DePaul University in Chicago. For more information or to register, call 704/334-7232; fax 704/332-5150; or write Jesus the Christ at 2000 Series, Myers Park Baptist Church, P.O. Box 6006, Charlotte, NC 28207.

June 17 marked the 20th year of ministry at First Baptist Church, Oberlin, OH, for co-pastors *Mary and Stephen Hammond*. The church is affiliated with the Alliance, American Baptist Churches and the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.

Alliance member and former Vice President *Lee Gallman* has been called as

pastor of Ginter Park Baptist Church in Richmond, VA. His first Sunday will be Oct. 17. He moves to Richmond from Decatur, GA, where he has been pastor of Columbia Drive Baptist Church.

Alliance member *M. Dennis Herman* is now senior minister of Greystone Baptist Church in Raleigh, NC. He was formerly senior minister of Calvary Baptist Church in Roanoke, VA.

Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, NC, is looking for a Minister of Music (15-25 hours weekly) to direct the chancel choir and coordinate the music education program. For a job description and salary information, visit www.pullen.org or call 919/828-0897.



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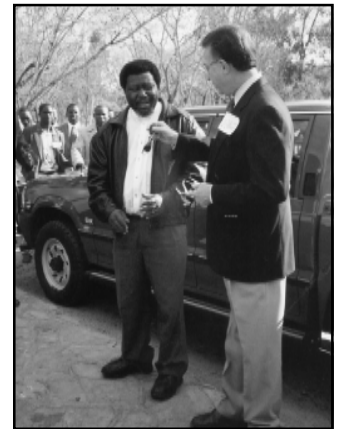
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Executive Director Stan Hastey attended the 36th Annual Congress of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe in late August. As part of his visit, he officially presented Henry Mugabe, principal of the Baptist Seminary in Gweru, with the keys to a utility vehicle that was purchased for the convention with a gift from Central Baptist Church in Newnan, GA.



These are some of the participants at a retreat held at Shalom Place, the North Carolina home of Mahan and Janice Siler.

It is the first weekend in September and I'm back in town and preparing to teach my Bible study class for the first time in weeks. This summer has been unusually busy with out-of-town travel — both business and pleasure. For me that is not a clear distinction since most of the Alliance-related travel is also a distinct pleasure.

In preparing for my class I found we were beginning a new series of lessons based on Paul's letter to the church at Philippi. The commentary writers all emphasized how much Paul loved the folks in this church and his desire to encourage them in a time of ostracism and persecution. The teacher's helps suggested contemporary events that might provide a point of reference to focus the class on the central theme of the joy and strength of Christian community.

Nothing off the front page of the newspaper seemed as relevant to the topic at hand than were the stories I had heard just one week earlier at a retreat held at Shalom Place, the North Carolina home of Mahan and Janice Siler. Several have called this retreat "historic" and I do not think such a designation is hyperbolic.

The participants represented 13 congregations that have undergone conversations about how they, as communities of faith, are dealing with the issue of sexual orientation. These particular churches are in Maine, North Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, California, Texas and Minnesota. They are Alliance-affiliated congregations and churches related to the American Baptist Churches in the USA.

Each congregation's story is special — the event that precipitated discussion, the process followed, the resulting decisions, and the fallout within the congregation and with other communities of which each was a part.

The goal of this retreat was to produce a resource packet for churches planning a dialogue on sexual orientation. The resource is to be published jointly by the Alliance of Baptists and the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. Included in the

packet will be the wisdom gleaned from the experiences of churches which have struggled to be faithful to the gospel, to be inclusive and reconciling. The work is to be edited by Mahan Siler and will be introduced at the Alliance Convocation in Austin, TX, April 27-29, 2000.

All present remarked on the encouragement derived from just sharing the stories of each congregation. Yes, there is pain and loss, ostracism and punishment. But there is also vitality gained from defining mission and identity, as well as renewed

energy for ministry.

As a part of the final worship and communion service, each congregation represented was given a beautiful pulpit Bible marker made by April Baker of Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill, NC, a symbol of hope and promise, a symbol of solidarity with these very special congregations which are experiencing what Paul wanted for the church at Philippi: ". . . that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best. . . ." (Phil. 1:9)

perspectives



*By Jeanette Holt
Associate Director*

The Fall Convocation of the Georgia Alliance of Baptists will be held Oct. 8-9 at Northside Drive Baptist Church in Atlanta. Ken Sehested, executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, is the keynote speaker. Cost is \$35 individual, \$60 couple, and \$20 student. For more information, contact Mary Sue Brookshire at (404) 377-6568 or e-mail her at mbroo03@emory.edu.

Operating Budget YTD:

Needs: \$176,724
Receipts: \$180,955

Mission Offering YTD:

Goal: \$80,000
Receipts: \$40,417

Cuba Grant:

Challenge: \$23,700
Receipts: \$23,012

Baptist Women in Ministry is using its 1999 Alliance Mission Offering grant of \$4,000 to organize and index historical resources such as ordination information, sermons, and other materials related to the ministries of Baptist women.

BWIM has already collected a large amount of historical material pertinent to the development and purpose of the organization and its members. The grant allowed BWIM to hire someone



Jennifer Dundas Judd

to enter data and organize materials to enhance the BWIM archive, and it will also make possible the indexing of Folio, the newsletter the organization has published since 1983.

In February, Jennifer Dundas Judd, a student at Central Baptist Theological Seminary and a 1998 Addie Davis Award recipient,

began data entry work for BWIM's archive. Utilizing specialized software, she is entering information about

Leading the ministry of Jeff Street Baptist Community in Louisville, KY, goes from the difficult to the exciting for pastor Cindy Weber, who has been a part of the church for the past 15 years.

The church has a number of ministries, including a weekday open house for the homeless, a home for women, and a new AIDS care ministry team. But its main emphasis is on working with children and teenagers.

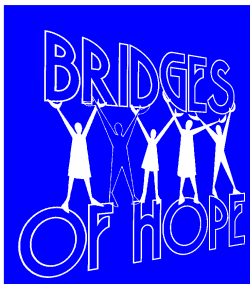
At one time, Jeff Street counted only one child among its congregation. Today 30 kids come to church regularly with their parents and another 15 participate in the community center programs. "The challenge for us now is to develop programs that meet the needs of the church kids as well as those who don't get much from their parents at home," said Cindy.

women's ordinations, Folio articles, newspaper articles, sermons, pictures, and other historical material housed in BWIM's archive.

"The BWIM archive is in dire need of indexing, so that the archive can truly be the rich resource it has the potential to be," said Becca Gurney, immediate past president of BWIM. "The Alliance has been and continues to be firmly in our corner, supporting BWIM philosophically, spiritually, and financially. You are truly partners in ministry with us."

The Alliance was the first organization to provide ongoing financial support for Baptist Women in Ministry, which was founded in 1983.

Raye Nell Dyer, hospital chaplain at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, is the new president of BWIM. David Olive, vice president for advancement at Pfeiffer University in North Carolina, is vice president; Karrie Ann Oertli, assistant director of pastoral care at Integris Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City, OK, is recorder; and Sally Burgess of Kansas City, MO, is treasurer.



**Baptist Women
in Ministry
\$4,000
Jeff Street
Community
\$3,000**

The Alliance funding this year allowed Jeff Street to increase the number of hours its children's minister works from 15 to 18 per week.

"In past years, most of the time and energy of the children's minister was devoted to the children who live in the neighborhood," Cindy said. "But as the number of children of church members has grown, the minister has had to devote much more time and energy to more traditional church programming. The Alliance funding allows her more time to focus on both traditional Christian education and nontraditional afterschool programming."

Peggy Foskett has recently been hired as the new children's minister. This summer, 20 members of Alliance congregation Kirkwood Baptist Church in St. Louis, MO, led a weeklong day camp for about 25 kids.