

connections

August 1998

The Alliance of Baptists is dedicated to the preservation of historic Baptist principles, freedoms, and traditions, and to the expression of our ministry and mission through cooperative relationships with other Baptist bodies and the larger Christian community.

PEACE AND JUSTICE

sexual orientation packet

The development of a packet of information that would help churches communicate on the subject of sexual orientation will be a part of the discussion when the Alliance's Peace and Justice Committee meets in September. The development of such a curriculum is a possible joint project with the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.

BPFNA director Ken Sehested, a member of the Peace and Justice Committee, has offered the proposal to develop the project to encourage local congregations to plan intensive conversations on the subject of sexual orientation and Christian faith.

Sehested believes now is the time to develop such literature because:

- The inclusion of gay/lesbian people in the life of the church is a matter of justice for oppressed people;
- Both the Alliance and the BPFNA have clearly stated positions and are in positions of leadership in their respective congregational networks;
- The conversation is already breaking out in many congregations;
- Given the volatility of this issue, providing guidance and resources will both increase the number of congregations involved in the discussion and encourage a dialogue process which minimizes violent forms of communication.

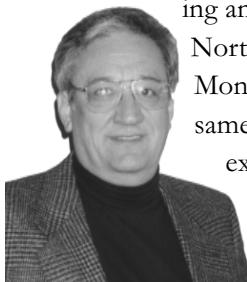
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Five-year-old Toni showcases a Union Mission effort in Savannah, GA. Children's Services participants nurtured and cared for tomatoes planted in a shared courtyard by men residing in Union Mission's Grace House. Union Mission receives funding through the Frontiers of Hope Offering. More on page 4.

DUAL ROLE FOR ALLIANCE PRESIDENT WELTON GADDY

Welton Gaddy will probably become the most traveled of Alliance presidents. Welton will remain as pastor for preaching and worship at Northminster Church in Monroe, LA, while at the same time continue as executive director of the Interfaith Alliance, based in Washington, DC.



Welton had been pastor of the 200-member Monroe church prior to taking the Washington position in March. He has continued to commute there on

weekends to preach.

His responsibilities and schedule with the Interfaith Alliance are flexible enough to make this arrangement possible.

Search committee chair Craig Henry said the committee feels good about its decision, which was endorsed by the congregation on July 26.

Northminster has begun a search for an associate pastor for spiritual formation and pastoral care.

Welton will maintain his residence in Monroe and commute to Washington.

alliance calendar

alliance board meeting

Sept. 17-19: Washington, DC.

Agenda items include chaplaincy endorsement, the Alliance relationship with the United Church of Christ, the 1999 budget, setting of the 1999 mission offering goal and projects, approval of the 1999 Nominating Committee, and further planning for the 1999 convocation.

north carolina alliance fall convocation

Oct. 2-3: Knollwood Baptist Church, Winston-Salem

The theme of the convocation will be "Re-Member Church" focusing on sociological and historical concepts of church. Stan Hasteley will be featured speaker. "Reinventing church" will be the subject of a panel discussion on creative worship ideas. Advance reservations are needed for meals. Contact Susan Tumbleston, 828/264-7147.

georgia alliance fall convocation

Oct. 9-10: Mercer University, Macon

The theme of the convocation will be

Applications for grants from the 1999 mission offering must be received in the Alliance office by September 15 in order to be considered by the Missions Committee. For forms and guidelines contact the Alliance office.

"Living Out the Vision: The Alliance Mission Statement." Alliance board member Cathy Tamsberg of Alexandria, VA, will be guest speaker. Registration fee: Couple, \$80; Individual, \$45; Student, \$25. Subtract \$10 for early bird registration by September 21. Mail to Virginia-Highland Baptist Church, 743 Virginia Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306. Hotel accommodations available at Comfort Suites (\$51-\$55). For reservations call 912/746-8855, ext 462 by Sept. 9. For more information contact Rachel Gooch, 770/382-5175. E-mail rlgooch@juno.com.

BPFNA trip to mexico

Jan 11-23, 1999

The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America will sponsor a friendship tour to Mexico to view the social, economic, political, and cultural life there. The trip will give particular attention to Mexican Baptists and other Protestant groups. Cost is \$750 and includes all meals, lodging, and ground transportation while in Mexico. For information: BPFNA P.O. Box 280, Lake Junaluska, NC 28745. 828/456-1881.

Contributions from several Alliance members and friends have made possible the purchase of a computer and printer for the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe. The convention will now be able to maintain its membership list, print labels, and keep its accounting records on computer. The convention has not previously had computer capabilities.

zimbabwe

Alliance board member Bonnie Dixon is planning a two-week trip to Zimbabwe next July. She is looking for volunteers for a church leadership training team and for a team that could help with dormitory renovations at the seminary. Contact Bonnie at 919/851-6577.

Executive director Stan Hasteley will be in Zimbabwe August 17-28 for the convention's annual congress, where he will be the primary speaker. He will also be visiting churches and meeting with John Mazvigadza, executive secretary of the convention, to further define and develop the partnership between the two groups

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LeDayne McLeese Polaski, former minister of youth at Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC, is the new managing director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, effective July 20. Between now and early next year, she will commute between Charlotte and Lake Junaluska, NC, where BPFNA offices are located. In early 1999, BPFNA will move its operations to a yet-to-be-designated site in Charlotte. LeDayne is a graduate of Duke Divinity School.

Mel Williams was honored recently on his 10th anniversary as pastor of Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, NC. In a festive atmosphere he was feted with skits and songs and presented gifts that included a volume of his sermons, laptop computer and cash.

The North Carolina Alliance has Alliance of Baptists sweatshirts available for \$15 plus shipping and handling. Contact Susan Tumbleston, 828/264-7147. Proceeds benefit the Alliance.

happenings

As this issue of *Connections* arrives in your mail box or church, I'm scheduled to be in Gweru, Zimbabwe, representing the Alliance during the 35th Annual Congress of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe. It is an assignment I've anticipated eagerly for months.

The BCZ/Alliance connection is the latest of our significant relationships with other Baptist bodies and the larger Christian church, relationships that more and more are shaping our movement and sense of mission. As I never tire of saying, each of these has enriched the Alliance far beyond anything we could have imagined.

Concerning Zimbabwe,

Alliance people — particularly those with skills in construction — have an outstanding opportunity to look forward to. Next summer, Alliance board member Bonnie Dixon will be leading a delegation back to Gweru to assist in the repair and renovation of the office building housing the Baptist Convention and a dormitory on the campus of Baptist Seminary of Zimbabwe. The team also is to help complete an administration/library/classroom building at Zororo Primary School.

It's not too early to begin making plans to be part of this working mission team. Bonnie will be happy to know of your interest and answer questions. You may write, call or send a facsimile message to: Bonnie Dixon, 217 Lochside Drive, Cary, NC 27511, 919/851-6577, fax 919/859-1745.

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Another of our overseas partners, the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship of the maritime provinces in Canada, has announced that Alliance member Furman Hewitt will be the principal speaker during its Fall Assembly, to be held Oct. 2-3 with the Port Williams United Baptist Church, Port Williams, Nova Scotia.

Hewitt, director of the Baptist House of Studies at Duke Divinity School, will deliver two lectures on educating laity and clergy theologically, the working theme for the assembly program.

Also representing the Alliance will be Associate Director Jeanette Holt.

As an Alliance member, you too are invited to attend and participate. Numerous Alliance people have said they would like to be with ABF folks, just as they are with us annually at the convocation.

Nova Scotia is a spectacularly beautiful place. Travel to and from Halifax, the provincial capital, is convenient and relatively inexpensive. It's a trip to remember. Jeanette and I can provide further details.

perspectives



By Stan Hastey
Executive Director

sexual orientation packet

(continued from page 1)

"In the end, it is our conviction that the sheer frequency of such conversations will move us toward our goal of full inclusion of gay/lesbian people in the life of the church," Sehested said.

Material is already available and the committee's task would be "careful selection" to communicate best with Baptist Christians.

The proposal is that a packet of materials be gathered, reprinted or written that would include four kinds of information:

(1) A statement describing the principles of how to plan for and structure such a

conversation—a summary of strategic and pastoral wisdom on how to prepare for this dialogue.

(2) A basic set of resource materials, including a series of elementary articles on Bible study, theological reflection, scientific/medical information, and Christian history; personal

testimonies of gay/lesbian Baptists; and statements from Baptist and other

Christian institutions, congregations, assemblies, etc.

(3) An annotated bibliography, with descriptions and ordering information

for additional print and audio-visual resources.

(4) A list of resource people to whom churches could turn for additional planning advice. These would be clergy and lay leaders

with experience in just such a congregational discernment.

Richard Cook of Hunt Valley, MD, is chair of the Peace and Justice Committee for the Alliance. "I am pleased to be able to coordinate this part of the committee's work with Ken Sehested and the Fellowship. As thoughtful and hard working as Ken and his colleagues are, the Fellowship obviously has a lot to contribute," Cook said.

Carol Blythe and Rick Goodman will serve on the committee on behalf of the Fellowship. The committee will meet as part of the Board of Directors semi-annual meeting Sept. 17-19 in Washington, DC.

'... it is our conviction that the sheer frequency of such conversations will move us toward our goal of full inclusion of gay/lesbian people in the life of the church.'
— Ken Sehested

Operating Income
YTD: \$137,470
Budget Needs YTD:
\$135,189



Frontiers of Hope
Mission Offering
Goal: \$75,000
Receipts: \$39,978

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While they go at it in different ways, Reconciliation and Union Mission are both committed to strengthening families and are helped in their efforts by the Frontiers of Hope Mission Offering.

Reconciliation is an independent agency in Nashville, TN, whose focus is working with the families of inmates. Union Mission is in Savannah, GA, with a focus on homeless families and children.

Reconciliation's primary service is a guest-house that it makes available to families visiting their prisoner-relatives in the middle Tennessee area. The house will accommodate up to 15 people and is often full on weekends. It can also be used as temporary housing for families of inmates relocating to the Nashville area.

"We want to keep families together," said

Alliance dollars at work: Reconciliation • Union Mission

Anne-Marie Moyes, the adult program director for Reconciliation. "It has been shown that inmates who receive regular visits and consistent family support during their period of incarceration are up to six times more likely to succeed following their release."

A new program of Reconciliation involves production of a drama that depicts the experiences of teens whose lives have been affected by a family member going to prison. The drama, funded by a special government grant, will be presented in several churches this fall.

Reconciliation also sponsors weekly support groups in Pikeville, Knoxville, and Memphis. This year it sent 20

children of inmates to summer camps. It also serves as an advocate for families in the state legislature, explaining to legislators the effect prison policies will have on families. In Savannah, Alisa Monfalcone

directs the Children's Services division of Union Mission, where Alliance funding is directed.

Four teachers work daily with volunteers at the Magdalene Center. There, homeless children receive developmental screenings, academic enrichment, drug and violence prevention training, cultural awareness skills, and literacy enhancement activities.

Pre-school children


receive developmental screenings through the Kidstart program.

Parents receive education, counseling and training directed at enriching themselves and their children.

"Homeless children need to be given hope that their future will be brighter than their past," said Monfalcone. "Hope must come in the forms of education, emotional, social and spiritual support."

"Our goal is to expand their horizons and let them know that there is something more to strive for," she said. "We want to build a relationship with children and parents, assess where they are and develop a plan to guide them to reach their God-given potential."

"The Alliance funding is important to us because it has been consistent and it allows us to direct the money where we need it most," said Monfalcone.

Reconciliation Nashville	\$1,000	
Union Mission Savannah	\$5,000	