

# connections

September 1998

... a movement of progressive congregations and individuals committed to historic Baptist freedoms, the larger church of Jesus Christ, authentic discipleship, biblical authority and open inquiry, and the proclamation of God's good news to persons and society.

## MARIE MASON:

**She's been in the Alliance since the beginning. Now she's retiring from Meredith.**



Marie Mason, who was in charge of the first Alliance Convocation in 1987, retired Sept. 1 as Director of Campus Activities at Meredith College in Raleigh, NC, where that first convocation was held.

She joined the staff at Meredith 29 years ago in 1969, as Dean of Students and taught for 17 years in the psychology department.

Marie has been an active Alliance member since its beginning. In 1997, she again helped organize the Convocation at Meredith as co-chair of the local arrangements committee. She has served as treasurer of the North Carolina Alliance for several years, and has also planned many of that state's meetings.

A member of Millbrook Baptist Church in Raleigh, Marie is a deacon and chair of the missions committee. After graduating from Meredith College, she completed her graduate studies at the University of Kentucky before returning to her native hometown of Raleigh.

**The Tabernacle of the Baptist Conference Centre was the site for late-August sessions of the 35th Annual Congress of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe.**



C.H. Chiromo, left, president of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe, delivers his report to the Congress. An interpreter translates convention proceedings into English and Shona, the prevalent tribal language in most of Zimbabwe.

## zimbabwe

Some 200 delegates representing nearly 80 churches convened Aug. 21-23 for the 35th Congress of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe.

Alliance executive director Stan Hasteley addressed the congress twice. The Baptist Theological Seminary of Zimbabwe this year will receive \$8,500 from the Alliance's Frontiers of Hope Mission Offering.

The annual meeting is held at the Baptist Conference Centre, 20 kilometers outside of the city of Gweru in the heart of Zimbabwe. Baptist convention headquarters are located in Gweru. C. H. Chiromo is president of the convention. He is pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Harare, the capital.

**A**lliance board member Kathy Manis Findley has taken on a new responsibility. She is now the Coordinator of Volunteers for the Central Arkansas Sexual Assault Center, a part-time position. She will continue as pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Little Rock. Kathy earned a bachelor's degree in Human Services from the University of Alabama and a Master of Divinity from Southern Seminary. She also completed three years of pastoral care residency at Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock.

**happenings**

Kathy is a novice in the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans; is on the board of Stillpoint School of Spiritual Direction in Little Rock; and is a board member and trustee of the Arkansas Interfaith Alliance. She is also on the board of Baptist Women in Ministry, where she served two years as president, and one as vice president.

For the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Kathy serves on the Worship Resources Network, the Reference and Referral Task Force, and the national Coordinating Council.

She recently completed her second book on domestic violence and abuse and the response of the faith community, which will be published by Smyth & Helwys in the fall.

*Sue Enoch* has been called as pastor of Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, Memphis, TN, beginning Sept. 20. Sue has been Associate Pastor for Education and Administration at Highland Park Baptist Church, Austin, TX.

*James G. Shoopman* has been called as pastor of Indigo Lakes Baptist Church in Daytona Beach, FL, beginning Sept. 1. James is a graduate of Stetson University, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Florida State University.

**alliance calendar**

- Sept. 17-19:* Alliance Board meeting, Washington, DC.
- Oct. 2-3:* North Carolina Alliance Fall Convocation, Knollwood Baptist Church, Winston-Salem. Susan Tumbleston, 828/264-7147.
- Oct. 9-10:* Georgia Alliance Fall Convocation, Mercer University, Macon. Rachel Gooch, 770/382-5175. E-mail [rlgooch@juno.com](mailto:rlgooch@juno.com).
- Jan 11-23, 1999:* Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America friendship tour to Mexico. 828/456-1881.



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**I**delight in the development of the Alliance, far exceeding the visions of those of us who were around at the beginning. The Covenant provided some ground under our feet and we saw a direction — that's about all.

I was quoted as saying that while the Pullen exclusion from the SBC because of our inclusion of gay Christians was traumatic, "I was willing to risk for the gospel."

"Risking for the gospel" more

**cuba**

**A**n Alliance delegation will be visiting Cuba for the annual meeting of the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba in November. The departure date is Nov. 4. The suggested return date is Nov. 11 but groups or individuals may return at their convenience.

Alliance members will attend the annual meeting in Havana, then visit one or more congregations, especially those looking for partner churches.

Anyone interested in going should contact the Alliance office immediately.

Necessary information must be received in the office by September 30 so that the appropriate legal documentation can be obtained from both the U. S. and Cuban governments.

The U. S. Treasury Department will issue a license to travel to Cuba for humanitarian and religious reasons.

Stan Haste will lead the Alliance delegation.

*There will be a Youth Convocation next March. Details later.*

**alliance history**

accurately describes an action of the Alliance board in the spring of '92. Sharing this piece of Alliance history may be of interest especially to the more recent members.

At the very time of the heated, controversial debate about Pullen's consideration of a ritual of blessing of same-sex unions — kept alive by the media — the Alliance was

When the Alliance office was moved from Charlotte to Washington nearly 10 years ago, the shape of my job was largely unknown to me. The title was new, not only to me but to the Alliance as well, and the tasks related to the job have grown and changed as the program and ministry of the Alliance have grown and changed.

But no area of my job has been more gratifying than responding to requests related to the Alliance placement service. The response of individuals looking for places of ministry convinced the leadership of the Alliance in its earliest days of the need for such a service. And almost immediately I came to understand the increasing need within our network to help ministers find or change their places of ministry and assist churches in search of ministerial staff.

This need has only increased over the years as old support systems for placement help have broken down — and, of course, the old system never did work well for some folks. The climate in today's Baptist world makes the search for church leadership uncertain at best and sometimes treacherous.

We do not endorse candidates whose resumes we send nor do we weigh one over another. We simply pass along the resumes that are sent to us. We do encourage churches to move beyond discrimination based on gender, age, marital status, race or region when considering candidates for ministry.

In addition, the staff of the Alliance is available to consult with congregational leadership about how to conduct a search. We have gathered informative materials that have been helpful to numerous churches as they have searched for new staff leadership — booklets, questionnaires and other materials developed by the Alban Institute, the United Church

of Christ and various local congregations to aid in the search process.

Also available are resources on the intentional interim pastor, clergy ethics, job descriptions, comparative salary information, the work of a pastor relations committee and other related topics.

The resources of the Alliance are available to any church that requests help, whether affiliated with the Alliance or not. I would estimate that nearly half of our congregational requests come from churches that

have no formal ties to the Alliance. We do, however, require that any minister who wants to use the placement service be a member of the Alliance. And minister and search committee alike can rely on the confidentiality of all communications.

## perspectives



By Jeanette Holt  
Associate Director

The Alliance in no way seeks to influence the final outcome of a local church's search process. We believe strongly in the freedom of each congregation and wish only to be of service by furnishing information and resumes upon request.

Finally, ministers, search committees, congregations can be assured that they will be in our prayers, and that we stand ready to assist in any way that is helpful and appropriate. Our goal is to provide a channel for open and honest communication between churches and individuals so as to serve the work of the Holy Spirit in matching ministers and places of ministry.

For more information, call the Alliance office at 202/745-7609.

Mahan Siler, recently retired pastor of Pullen Memorial Church in Raleigh, NC, provided a little Alliance history in response to the article about him in *connections* in July.

gathering in Charlotte for its fifth anniversary. The board, as was our custom, met the few days prior to the Convocation. I was scheduled, along with Pat Long, to lead one of the workshops at the Convocation titled 'The Church's Response to Homosexual Persons.'

I suggested to the board that we cancel our workshop. I feared for

the welfare, if not survival, of our young, vulnerable network. Given my experience, I anticipated that the media coverage of the Convocation would focus on our open dialogue about homosexuality. And they did. And it was costly.

But most of the board, along with Stan, insisted that we proceed as planned...that the Alliance must not allow the fear of negative ramifications to deter us from being a safe place for gay Christians and an open

space for struggle with this pressing ethical challenge of our day. Furthermore, the board proceeded to establish a committee to study and produce a report on human sexuality, particularly homosexuality. And we did.

On that pivotal day it was the Alliance board, not I, that was willing to risk for its perception of the Gospel. It is an example of why I am thankful to share in this hope-filled history.

**Operating Income**  
YTD: \$150,935  
**Budget Needs YTD:**  
\$154,935



**Frontiers of Hope**  
**Mission Offering**  
**Goal: \$75,000**  
**Receipts: \$41,825**

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**T**wo organizations focusing almost exclusively on women's issues are receiving financial help from the 1998 Frontiers of Hope Mission Offering: Baptist Women in Ministry, based in Kansas City, MO, and Women in Christian Leadership Inc., based in Richmond, VA.

Pam May is the center administrator for BWiM, a 400-member group organized in 1983.

About this time last year, the Alliance missions committee approved a contribution to BWiM to publish worship resources in *Folio*, its quarterly magazine mailed to 2,000 homes. Those resources will first appear in the fall issue of *Folio*.

Susan Miller of Kansas City is editing the four-page insert, which is funded entirely by the Alliance gift. She is interested in receiving worship materials that can be used in the publication. "We need material for our winter issue on topics such as Ash Wednesday, Lent, Palm Sunday and

## Alliance dollars at work: Women in Christian Leadership • Baptist Women in Ministry

Easter," said May. Miller is also looking for other materials, such as information on how churches have utilized inclusive language.

Any submissions should be short: No sermons are needed.

In other areas, BWiM is sponsoring its annual preaching conference Nov.

12-14 in Nashville. Topics to be covered include worship design, creative worship and sermon preparation.

At last year's Convocation in Washington, DC, BWiM sponsored a reception that included women from a wide Baptist background, including Progressive National Baptists, the DC Baptist Convention, and women seminary students. A similar reception will be held in 1999 in Richmond.

BWiM holds its annual meeting each year prior to the

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly. Becca Gurney of Austin, TX, is president.

Women in Christian Leadership used its 1998 Alliance grant to purchase a new computer system that has allowed it to maintain all of its records and start producing its own newsletter, *The Water Jar*, the first issue to be mailed at the end of September.

A board of 18 oversees the work of this organization, supported by seven denominations. Kathyeryne L. Goodman, former associate executive presbyter for Shenandoah Prebytery, has been director for about a year.

The Center, with a \$65,000 budget, sponsors a variety of programs throughout the year.

"We define women in ministry broadly," said Goodman. "We try to offer help to clergy, to laywomen, to everybody."

Upcoming is a two-day conference on the pastoral response to domestic violence, designed to equip professional ministers to deal with this issue.

Preaching symposiums, led by outstanding female preachers, are held monthly in conjunction with the theological seminaries in the Richmond, VA, area.

Occasional special events with the seminaries are also planned, such as the "Laughing with Sara, Weeping with Hagar" workshop Oct. 22-24 that focuses on the joys and challenges of women's ministry in the 21st century.

"Faith of our Foremothers," a one-night program on Sept. 29, honors women who were pioneers in Christian education.

The center also offers an ongoing mentoring program matching women currently in ministry with students, and a support group for women faculty members in the Richmond area.

Women in Christian Leadership	\$3,000
Baptist Women in Ministry	\$5,500

