

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.

Work in Zimbabwe: One teaspoon at a time

Alliance board member Marian Berky summed up what so many others have found after doing missions in far away places: "Things here look so different after being there."

Marian was among five Alliance members who spent June 29-July 18 in Zimbabwe.

The trip was planned to offer the second Pastoral Training Institute at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Gweru, to renovate/paint at the Baptist Conference Center, and to visit the Baptist hospital, primary, and secondary schools in Sanyati.

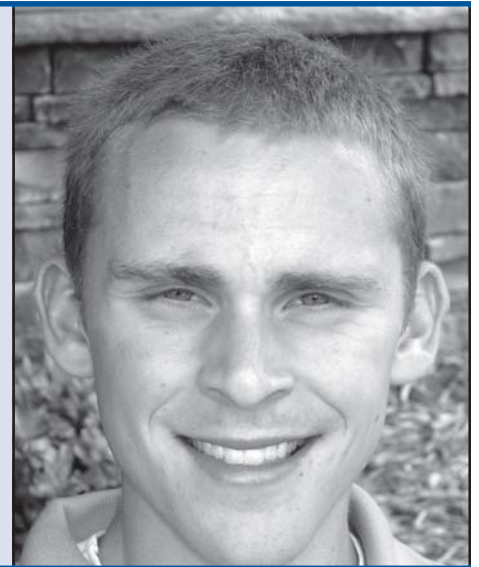
Marian was accompanied by former Alliance board member Bonnie Dixon of Cary, NC; Todd Davis, a junior at the University of South Carolina; Bernie Cochran, a retired professor from Meredith College; and Leigh-Ann Johnson, a university freshman from Charlottesville, VA.

"The underlying theme for me was how quick the Zimbabweans are to love," said Todd, who worked several days in primary and secondary schools in different cities, and

Todd Davis, 20, a mechanical engineering major, said he was challenged at every turn during his stay in Zimbabwe. "We went with the idea that we would mold ourselves to their culture rather than change them to fit our molds. This put me out of my comfort zone. When I had to stay in the home of a Zimbabwe family, it was very stressful at first. I felt so out of place and all alone. But I challenged myself to embrace that discomfort and reach out rather than draw inward."

at the Baptist Seminary of Zimbabwe (a recipient of Alliance Mission Offering funds). "It fascinated me how deep their faith is. It goes beyond the traditional worship setting. They are much more in tune with nature and therefore more connected to God."

"I was drawn to go on this journey because of the teaching piece of the plan,"



said Marian, a Ph.D. graduate in ethics from the Department of Religion at Vanderbilt. "When I learned that a second faculty person for the pastoral training institute was still needed, I felt I had the experience and education that equipped me to fill that need."

Todd saw so many needs – and so much
(continued on the back page)

**Saturday
September 18**

One-Day Convocation

First Baptist Church • Worcester, MA

Contact the Alliance office to register. The only fee is for the meal.

WORKSHOPS

10:00 a.m. Get-acquainted fellowship including a continental breakfast
11:00 a.m. Plenary session with C. Welton Gaddy as keynote speaker
Noon Lunch (\$7.00)
1:30 p.m. Workshops
3:15 p.m. Worship with Peggy Campolo preaching

- (1) The Alliance of Baptists: Its Mission and Ministry, led by Jeanette Holt, Associate Director, Alliance of Baptists
- (2) Challenges and Opportunities in Interfaith Relations, led by Shanta Premawardhana, Associate General Secretary for Interfaith Relations, National Council of Churches
- (3) Nurturing the Faith of Children and Youth in Progressive Congregations, led by Scott Cousineau, Minister of Education and Youth, First Baptist Church, Worcester
- (4) Election 2004: Religion's Rightful Role, led by C. Welton Gaddy, Executive Director, The Interfaith Alliance

Peterson called to Vienna

Vienna Baptist Church in Vienna, VA, has called **Jennifer Peterson** as associate pastor for youth and children. Peterson is a graduate of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

Heaton accepts call to UCC church

Joy Heaton has resigned as pastor of Antioch Baptist Church of Enfield, NC, an Alliance-affiliated congregation. She has accepted a call as pastor of Waverly Congregational Christian Church near Richmond where her husband, Tom, plans to begin studies for the Master of Divinity in Church Music at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond in the fall.

Coffman takes new counseling position

James Coffman, who serves on the Alliance Endorsing Committee, has accepted a call to serve as the executive director of the Samaritan Counseling Centers of the Mid-South in Memphis, TN. Coffman previously served as a pastoral counselor in Nashville.

Hammonds resigns at BTSR

Warren Hammonds has resigned as director of student life at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, a position he

held for seven years. Hammonds plans to remain in the Richmond area.

Ivins is interim pastor

This month Alliance founder **Dan Ivins** begins service as interim pastor of the Central Baptist Church of Warwick, RI. Previously Ivins has served congregations in Oregon, Arizona, Maryland and Alabama.

Bass accepts new job

Alliance board member **Willard Bass** has accepted the position of

40 YEARS LATER

Addie Davis, left, preached Aug. 8 at Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham in celebration of her ordination by the church 40 years ago. She is pictured with Watts Street pastor Mel Williams and Associate Minister with Adults Diane Hill.



organizer for Interfaith Partners for Advocacy and Reconciliation, a new interfaith, interracial initiative of the Winston-Salem Institute for Dismantling Racism. Bass, a graduate of Wake Forest University Divinity School, is also the assistant pastor of outreach at Green Street United Methodist Church. Bass represents the Alliance of Baptists on the National

Council of Churches Interfaith Commission and is co-chair of the Interfaith and Ecumenical Relations Committee of the Alliance board.

Maryland church calls Stinson

Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church in Silver Spring, MD, has called **Connie Stinson** as pastor. Previously Connie served as an associate pastor at McLean Baptist Church in Virginia. She began her service at Luther Rice in August.

Hawn publishes new book

Michael Hawn, professor of church music at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, has published a new book on congregational worship and cultural diversity titled *One Bread, One Body*. The book is available from the Alban Institute.

Endorsing Committee meets — face-to-face for the first time

The Alliance's Endorsing Committee — a group of volunteers — has been faithfully meeting for four years. In July, they finally got to see each other face-to-face.

Until this summer, all of the committee's meetings to discuss issues related to endorsement of pastoral counselors and chaplains had been held in cyberspace and via conference calls.

On July 19-20, four of the five members of the Alliance's Endorsing Committee met together in Winston-Salem, NC.

"We want to say thanks to the Alliance board for making it possible for us to meet," said Jay Foster, chair of the committee. The board allocated funds in the

2004 budget for the meeting.

Karen Moore, Ann Charles-Craft, David Morton and Foster met in person while Jim Coffman participated by phone.

"The first hours of our meeting were spent in getting to know one another," Jay said. These hours were well-spent indeed—it was enriching and valuable to connect with one another around our experiences in ministry and our hopes for the Alliance."

"The rest of our time was given to a more careful crafting of policy and procedure for our work together," he said. "This work will be submitted to the board for their approval, and will certainly

help us serve those who seek endorsement with the Alliance."

Institutions that utilize chaplains or pastoral counselors, as well as the certifying bodies that set standards for competence in the field, rely on each faith group to state whether a candidate for such a position is in good standing with that faith group.

"Clearly, many persons whose views resonate with the Alliance Mission and Covenant would not be able to maintain their ministry with integrity if they had to seek endorsement with another Baptist body of believers," Jay said. "Thank you to the Alliance for your support of our ministry."



“I spend one week a year there and the other 51 weeks wishing I was there.”
 — Paul Davis, a high school junior from Glendale Baptist Church in Nashville, TN:

BAPTIST YOUTH CAMP 2004



Stephen Crouse, Ashe Peters, and Ben Fowler from Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, GA.

Baptist Youth Camp helps youth be truer to who they are. I appreciate the way BYC has introduced contemplative prayer into all aspects of camp, including morning prayer.”

— Nathaniel Reuter, age 16, Oakhurst

People I had never seen before became my closest friends in just one week. There was so much diversity among us, yet somehow we seemed to be all the same.”

— Mary Elizabeth Ingram, a ninth grader at Northminster

I was amazed to find a group I could feel such a part of so quickly. Not only did these new friends share most of my beliefs, but they were open and respectful of everyone’s ideas.”

— Jimmy Rountree, a 10th grader at Northminster

BYC was wonderful. The worship was a new and amazing experience for me, and every one there added diversity, kindness, and an open atmosphere.”

— Matthew White, Adult Leader, Glendale Baptist Church

With a theme of “Made...in the making” that focused on creation and our role as co-creators, Baptist Youth Camp was held June 27-July 2 at Laurel Ridge Moravian Camp in Laurel Springs, NC. A total of 144 people (119 youth, 25 adults) from seven churches participated in the camp, sponsored by the Alliance of Baptists.

Activities included daily age-graded Bible study and interest groups on worship planning, music, drama, visual arts, newspaper, outdoor adventures, sports and games, and photography/videography. Worship services planned by the participants were held every evening.

Brian Dixon, pastor of Dolores Street Baptist Church in San Francisco, was camp director.

Participating churches

Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, NC • Glendale Baptist Church, Nashville, TN • Myers Park Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC • Northminster Baptist Church, Monroe, LA • Oakhurst Baptist Church, Decatur, GA • Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC • Wake Forest Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC



One of the daily interest groups at Baptist Youth Camp.

DIVERSITY EMBRACED: *Camp musician sees a new way to encounter God*

Camp Musician Don Schlosser from Glendale Baptist Church in Nashville had quite an experience at Baptist Youth Camp.

“The camp was a profound signal event for me for three main reasons,” he said. “First, I got to experience a new paradigm for ministry to students. After an entire career in evangelical churches and denominational work, I was able to witness a new way to approach the process of students encountering God. It wasn’t just a matter

of inclusion or theology; it was rooted in respect and authenticity and grace like I had never experienced before.”

“Second,” he said, “I was able to have my gifts validated for the first time since I was fired. Losing my job was not just a loss of income; my employer and my community of faith discounted my gifts, declaring all ministry I had ever done as invalid. Having the opportunity to participate in worship and be transparent was unforgettable.”

And third, he said, “I had the opportunity to celebrate intimacy with my own two teens. This was a landmark event for our family, as my twins and I were able to cry together, play together, worship together, dance together, and be embraced by God’s people together.”

“It was so liberating to see diversity embraced,” he said. “It’s so exciting to celebrate the fact that we are all welcome at the table.”

BTSR alum preaches at former President's church in Plains

It began as a church field trip to hear former President Jimmy Carter teach Sunday school. But it became an occasion that Bonnie Decuir will never forget.

Bonnie is pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Edison, GA. She asked Dan Ariail, pastor of Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, GA, for a schedule of when former President Carter would be teaching and told him her entire congregation was planning a church-wide field trip. Dan replied, "Well, if you are coming for Sunday school, why don't you preach?"

"My immediate reaction was, 'NO!' After all, I have only been a pastor for about a year and a half and am just beginning to overcome my fears of inadequacy in preaching – an awesome responsibility that I hope I never take for granted," Bonnie said. "Then, after a week or two of praying about it, I decided that God had provided this incredible opportunity for a reason, and I could not pass it up."

Bonnie and most of the Edison congregation (plus a few friends) loaded into their cars for the 50-mile trip to Plains. They found two pews reserved for them.


The Carters had just returned the day before from Connecticut where they participated in the christening of the USS Jimmy Carter, a nuclear submarine. Upon their return to Plains, they learned of the death of President Ronald Reagan.

"I was touched by the kind words President Carter shared concerning Mrs. Reagan and the remarkable skills of President Reagan, 'the Great Communicator,' Bonnie said. "We all appreciated his dedication to teaching the adult Bible study class at Maranatha in the midst of a global travel schedule."

"The lesson was clear and articulate – as was his passion for the gospel," Bonnie said.

Following the class led by the former president, Bonnie brought the message,



Bonnie Decuir, pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church in Edison, GA, is shown with other members of the congregation following worship at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, GA. Bonnie is standing beside former President Jimmy Carter on the left. 

"Seeking a Larger Truth," based on John 16:12-15.

"I was quite nervous – until I walked up to the pulpit," Bonnie said. "As I looked out over the congregation of a couple hundred worshippers, a sense of peace came over me. There were President and Mrs. Carter on one side of the sanctuary and my congregants in the same pews on the other side of the room – the cameras and Secret Service seemed to melt away and I realized that we are all just the same, all children of God, all seeking to hear His Word.

"It was an amazing experience — hearing President Carter teach, meeting him and Mrs. Carter personally, having our picture taken with them," Bonnie said. "Later, when I listened to the audio tape of my sermon, I knew that I was exactly where I have been called to be ... in a pulpit, preaching to the people of God."

Bonnie earned a Master of Divinity degree from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond in May 2002 and began her pastorate at Fellowship Baptist Church in November 2002. She has written curriculum for 3rd and 4th graders for Smyth & Helwys and an article in the upcoming October issue of *The Baptist Studies Bulletin*, an e-mail publication of the Center for Baptist Studies

at Mercer University.

Fellowship Baptist Church is a nine-year-old congregation situated in a storefront church in downtown Edison. With a membership of approximately 25, the church is affiliated with both the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Alliance of Baptists.

In September 2003, Bonnie founded the Calhoun County Ministers' Alliance, which brings together pastors and other ministers from a variety of traditions and denominations for monthly prayer breakfasts, mutual encouragement and support. The Alliance has sponsored a community Thanksgiving service, a children's Easter egg hunt and the county's celebration of the National Day of Prayer.

"As we have worked together, God has blessed our community with a growing bond of fellowship and mission," Bonnie said. "As pastors in small rural churches, we often need the contact, support and encouragement of other servants of God. Though our theologies and our styles of worship may differ, our commitment to reaching the world for Jesus Christ does not. We honor and respect our differences as we seek unity in our message to the community."

Christian principles in an election year

Much has been written already about the role of religion in this election cycle. Some of it has to do with quite blatant violations of the federal tax code's ban on the endorsement of candidates by churches. Both presidential candidates have courted the votes of the churchgoing public, often bumping up against the line that separates the legal from the illegal. Their presence in churches is, of course, legal. But their enticement of endorsements from churches tempts the latter to illegality. For their part, churches of all kinds should simply say no.

Yet churches should refuse steadfastly to endorse candidates for public office not so much to preserve their tax-exempt status as to save their souls. Theologically speaking, churches should not allow themselves to be divided over partisan politics. Any pastor who feels so passionately about a given candidate as to endorse that candidate ought to be held to account by the church itself. Good pastors don't endorse political candidates. It's that simple. Knowing that politicians are sinners who more often than not fall short of fulfilling their promises should dissuade pastors and churches from endorsing them. The credibility of their witness is at stake.

This does not mean churches and pastors should have nothing to say during an election year. On the contrary, their prophetic vocation demands that they speak clearly to power. This year the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA has issued the following statement I commend to Alliance churches and pastors for publication in newsletters and posting on bulletin boards:

Our Christian faith compels us to address the world through the lens of our relationship to God and to one another. Public discourse is enhanced as we engage civic leaders on the values and ethics affirmed by our faith. At the same time, religious liberty and the integrity of our democracy will be protected as candidates refrain from using faith-based organizations and institutions for partisan gain. We offer these ten principles to those seeking to accept the responsibility that comes with holding public office.

1. War is contrary to the will of God. While the use of violent force may, at times, be a necessity of last resort, Christ pronounces his blessing on the peacemakers. We look for political leaders who will make peace with justice a top priority and who will actively seek nonviolent solutions to conflict.

2. God calls us to live in communities shaped by peace and cooperation. We reject policies that abandon large segments of our inner city and rural populations to hopelessness. We look for political leaders who will rebuild our communities and bring an end to the cycles of violence and killing.

3. God created us for each other, and thus our security depends on the well-being of our global neighbors. We look for political leaders for whom a foreign policy based on cooperation and global justice is an urgent concern.

4. God calls us to be advocates for those who are most vulnerable in our society. We look for political leaders who yearn for economic justice and who will seek to reduce the growing disparity between rich and poor.

5. Each human being is created in the image of God and is of infinite worth. We look for political leaders who actively promote racial justice and equal opportunity for everyone.


6. The earth belongs to God and is intrinsically good. We look for political leaders who recognize the earth's goodness, champion environmental justice, and uphold our responsibility to be stewards of God's creation.

7. Christians have a biblical mandate to welcome strangers. We look for political leaders who will pursue fair immigration policies and speak out against xenophobia.

8. Those who follow Christ are called to heal the sick. We look for political leaders who will support adequate, affordable and accessible health care for all.

9. Because of the transforming power of God's grace, all human beings are called to be in right relationship with each other. We look for political leaders who seek a restorative, not retributive, approach to the criminal justice system and the individuals within it.

10. Providing enriched learning environments for all of God's children is a moral imperative. We look for political leaders who will advocate for equal educational opportunity and abundant funding for children's services.

Finally, our religious tradition admonishes us not to bear false witness against our neighbor and to love our enemies. We ask that the campaigns of political candidates and the coverage of the media in this election season be conducted according to principles of fairness, honesty and integrity. 

perspectives



By Stan Hastey
Executive Director

alliance **f**inances

Through July 31

2004 Operating Budget

Needs: \$198,864

Receipts: \$154,863

2004 Mission Offering

Goal: \$113,000

Receipts: \$57,863

Donate online at www.allianceofbaptists.org.

September 2004

Executive Director: Stan Hastey
Associate Director: Jeanette Holt
(202) 745-7609
Toll-free: (866) 745-7609
Fax: (202) 745-0023
info@allianceofbaptists.org
www.AllianceofBaptists.org

Newsletter Editor:
Sue Harper Poss
P.O. Box 25461
Greenville, SC 29616
(864) 848-3346
Fax: (864) 848-5258
editor@allianceofbaptists.org

Alliance gifts to Zimbabwe are critical

(continued from the front page)

faith – everywhere he went that he was quickly overwhelmed. He saw hundreds of children orphaned because AIDS had claimed the lives of both parents, and many of the children themselves were carriers of the disease. He saw 10-year-olds going home from school to do the cleaning and cooking because there was no one else to do it; their parents were dead, the whole community was decimated and there was no one to care for them. He saw hospitals without doctors or supplies. He saw nurses working long hours but with no anesthesia, few bandages, no pain killers, no sterile gloves. He saw mass graves where hundreds of bodies had been packed in together.

He also saw people ready to embrace their faith and learn. He saw pride and hope in

the nurses working with no supplies. He saw high school students interested in the physics that he taught them in the public school and in the scripture that he taught them in Sunday school. He was amazed at how open teenagers were to discussing their problems with him, some of which are common to teenagers in the US, others like the problems of AIDS or hunger that he had no experience with.

“Given all the needs, I came to realize just how critical the relatively small amount of money given by the Alliance is for the continuation of the ministry of the Zimbabwe convention,” Marian said. “Our participation as financial partners with the convention really makes a difference.”

“I also recognized how much more we can do with this partnership,” Marian said. “It can be developed in many interesting ways, including involving people in our local churches in projects that can contribute significantly to the life of the churches and other institutions there.”

“What the Alliance is doing in Zimba-




One person said to me as we parted at the airport, “Thank you for helping us to achieve our dreams.”

— Marian Berky

bwe, little though it be by our standards, is huge for them,” Todd said. “Even with the passion of Alliance members, what we are able to do is like trying to fill a swimming pool with a teaspoon.”

“We need to get as many people as possible there to see the needs and meet as many people as we can who visit us from Zimbabwe,” he said. “We need to open ourselves to listen to the sounds of another culture, to hear their cries and their voices.”

And a lot can happen. One teaspoonful at a time. 



The Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe and the Baptist Theological Seminary there will each receive \$10,000 from the 2004 Mission Offering.