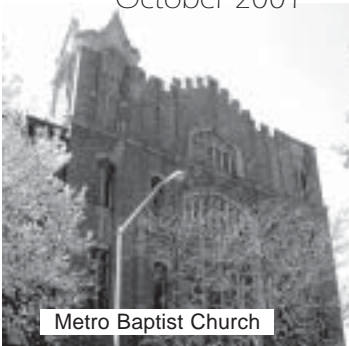


connections

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.

October 2001

Volume 4 Issue 10



Metro Baptist Church

Marti Williams had been on the job as associate pastor of Metro Baptist Church in New York City for less than two weeks when the World Trade Center was attacked. But it took her only moments to post hand-lettered signs of welcome to all people on the church's door. The sign said "Open to All for Refuge and Prayer."

Responding to need doesn't have to be heroic

In the face of crisis two miles to the south, David Waugh doesn't think Metro Baptist Church in mid-town Manhattan did anything unusual. "All we did was open the doors of the church to all people for refuge," he said.

And by doing that, the church has gotten publicity and inquiries from a number of media outlets, including Vatican Radio. "That has given a lot of us around here survivors' guilt," he said. "We're getting all this attention like we're doing something great but it's just what we should be doing all the time."

"Folks want to come up here and do heroic things," said David, an Alliance board member who has been pastor at Metro for eight years. "But responding to need, whatever or wherever it is, doesn't have to be heroic. All we did was open the doors. We housed 30 people overnight for a couple of nights. It didn't cost us a lot. We need to be churches that open our hearts and minds and doors at any time. A lot of Alliance churches do that on a regular basis, not just in a crisis."

Trapped for 45 minutes in the subway

when the planes hit, David didn't know until he reached the street what had happened. "I started thinking immediately about getting to the church and became anxious about what we would need to do," he said. "By the time I got here, our staff of volunteers led by Marti Williams had already posted signs and opened the doors. Ronnie Adams, leader of the CBF Urban Ministry Team who works in partnership with Metro, was already thinking of ways for

Alliance board member David Waugh, pastor of Metro Baptist Church in Manhattan, and Marti Williams, the church's new associate pastor, second from left, debrief other church members a week after the Sept. 11 tragedy, and make plans for anticipated future needs. The church is two miles north of the World Trade Center.



us to provide food and shelter should it be needed. All I had to do was coordinate and delegate. Our ministry team was wonderful, and other volunteers were soon seeking to join with us."

With all public transportation shut down, people walked north for miles and hours to find alternate ways to get home. The volunteers at Metro provided iced water and other beverages for people walking toward the ferry, and stew for those who were hungry. They

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POSTPONED: BOARD MEETING AND PACIFIC COAST MINI-CONVOCATION WILL BE HELD IN JANUARY

The Sept. 20-21 Alliance board meeting and the Sept. 22 Pacific Coast mini-convocation in Oakland were postponed because of the Sept. 11 attacks and subsequent disruption in air travel. The board meeting has been rescheduled for Jan. 10-11 and the one-day convocation will be held on Saturday, Jan. 12.

Message from Morocco

Alliance member Karen Thomas Smith works in Morocco among Muslims and Christians, and is a recipient of Alliance Mission Offering funds. Following the Sept. 11 attack on the U.S., she asked two things:

- 1) Tell people whenever it is appropriate that Arab Muslims in places like Morocco are faithfully praying for them.
- 2) Consider organizing and/or encouraging others to organize an interfaith prayer service, allowing people to experience these prayers. "I think this would be a powerful witness to Muslims in our communities if Christians approached leaders of Mosques about such prayer," she said. "They will appreciate the fact that they are not automatically seen by Christians as the enemy."

Statement from NC

Alliance member Alan Neely was attending the first board meeting of the Martin Luther King Center for Reconciliation in Raleigh, NC, the day of the attacks. Alan offered a statement to that body calling on people to "refrain from any tendency to assign blame, to target scapegoats, or participate in any act or any statement that stereotypes individuals who, because of their ethnicity, race, national origin or religious affiliations are assumed culpable for the violence witnessed today."

"Rather, let us be assured that no person or group of persons who understands and follows the highest principles of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam could or would inflict hurt and death on the innocent."

These were some of the people who took refuge at Alliance-affiliated Metro Baptist Church in New York City.



How to help? Get educated

(continued from page 1)

allowed people to use their phones to call anywhere in the world to tell loved ones they were safe. They tried as best they could to help people locate any kind of transportation that might still be running. "Everybody who possibly could found a way to get home that day," said David.

Still there was a need for some housing, and Metro with its dormitory space and food pantry was well-equipped to handle those who needed shelter. Mattresses were brought from the top-level dorm area down to the sanctuary. A family of Kurds, four Russians, a Moroccan Muslim, three from England, two Puerto Ricans, a Jewish woman from Israel and an assorted group of Americans stayed one or two nights in that sanctuary. "The mix of those people is what was amazing in all of this," David said.

Those refugees are long gone but Metro continues to house volunteers who have come to help, starting with a group of chaplains from South Carolina who serve on a crisis counseling team sponsored by the North American Mission Board.

David said many Alliance-endorsed chaplains have offered their help but he has asked them to wait and be available should they be needed later.

The best way to help now, David said, is for Alliance churches and people to educate

themselves. "If we are to work for peace, then churches across the country, within the Alliance and otherwise, have to start educating themselves about what other faiths believe," he said. "We would never say that all Christians believed one way based on what a few white supremacists might say. Yet we have been quick to label the

BAPTIST VOLUNTEER WALKED MILES FOR MEDICINE

Not only did people see the welcome sign and come for refuge at Metro Baptist Church, others saw the sign and came to help. One such person was Curry Roberts, a member of First Baptist Church in Richmond, VA. He discovered that one of the people who needed shelter also needed medicine which he didn't have with him. So Curry found a doctor to write a new prescription for the man, walked two miles to find a drugstore that was open, got the medicine, and brought it back.

Muslim community as fundamentalists."

Small-group interfaith dialogues are one of the best ways to get that education, David said. "Find adherents to Islam in colleges and communities around you," he said. He also suggests simply reading about other religions. The National Council of the Churches of Christ has material to help Christians understand Islam, and the National Conference for Community and Justice (National Conference of Christians and Jews) has printed materials about Judaism.

"The Alliance is called to interfaith work and understanding," David said. "We need to educate ourselves about the role we have played in causing people to hate us this much."

The question after Sept. 11: 'Why are we so hated?'

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, the question we most need to be asking is the one we are least likely to ask: Why is it that here and there around the world, there are pockets of people who hate us enough to kill thousands of our fellow citizens and themselves to make their case against us?

Please don't misunderstand the raising of the question. Like the vast majority of U.S. citizens, I am outraged. At times in the days immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, my gut instinct has been that we should strike back, that terrorists should be tracked down and eliminated, and that those who harbor them should be severely punished. Yet I can hope that such instantaneous sentiments represent the yet-to-be-redeemed side of my own sinful self.

What I fear is that our understandable desire for revenge will become the driving force that sets our diplomatic, economic and military agenda for years to come, especially with Arab nations. If vengeance becomes our agenda, we will surely fail, both morally and pragmatically. Morally we will prove ourselves no better than our enemies; pragmatically we will help fuel an unending cycle of violence.

Is it not in fact the relentless, vicious cycle of violence in the Middle East that in large measure has brought us to this awful state of affairs? In his Sept. 14 column in the *Washington Post*, George F. Will quoted Israel's former prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, as having said the day after the terrorist attacks: "The soldiers of militant Islam and Pan-Arabism do not hate the West because of Israel; they hate Israel because of the West." To which Will added, "And they hate America because it is the purest expression of modernity — individualism, pluralism, freedom, secularism." Perhaps it escaped him that the objects of the attacks were our foremost symbols of wealth and power, the very heart and soul of what we most value.

In his column two days earlier, Will wrote: "The acrid and unexpungeable odor of terrorism, which has hung over Israel for many years, is now a fact of American life. Yesterday morning Americans were drawn into the world that Israelis live in every day." To which someone needs to say that if this is true it is in large measure of our own doing.

We like to think of ourselves in this country as not only powerful and wealthy, but generous and good as well. Our politicians tell us so regularly. As I recall, it was President Eisenhower who first declared, "The American people are great because they are good." Presidents

of both parties have told us essentially the same. We seem to expect to be told so every bit as much as we believe we deserve to be the wealthiest and most powerful nation the Earth has known.

To be sure, now and again, when we've been at our best, our country has shown a truly generous side, perhaps never more so than when helping our vanquished foes following World War II to rebuild themselves from the ashes of defeat. As a result, both Germany and Japan became even stronger and more prosperous than before. And individual Americans of all kinds, from every walk of life and every creed, perform countless deeds of kindness every day, at home and abroad. These are not to be discounted; they show us at our best.

Yet overseas, in the endless pursuit of what we call our "national interests," be they economic or military, all too often we have shown another side. This is the side of our national agenda that some of the world's peoples so despise, that causes some to label us the "great Satan." Nowhere has this been more on display over the past half century than in the Middle East, where year after year we dispense a disproportionate percentage of our so-called "foreign aid" to support the military might of Israel. This year alone we are providing Israel with \$3 billion of such assistance with virtually no strings attached.

One of the angriest moments I've had since the attacks on our country by presumed agents of Osama bin Laden came when the current Israeli prime minister, Ariel Sharon, went on television to express his sympathy in what sounded as well like a sanctimonious statement welcoming the United States to the war on terrorism. This is the leader whose brazen march on Islam's third-holiest site, the El-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, touched off the current Palestinian intifada. So we shouldn't be surprised that three days following the attacks in New York and Washington, Mr. Sharon rebuffed telephoned appeals from President Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell to resume peace talks with Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority.

If it is true that politics-as-usual no longer offers solutions to seemingly intractable domestic problems, it is even more true in international relations. The ways of the past have failed us miserably, as the heartbreaking events of Sept. 11 attest to so horribly. Even as we grieve and vent our anger, we can no longer afford not to ask the hard question of why some of the world's peoples hate us so.

perspectives



By Stan Hasteley
Executive Director

Challenges of church leadership

North Carolina Alliance

A dialogue on the Challenges of Church Leadership will be held Oct. 5-6 at Wake Forest Divinity School in Winston-Salem, sponsored by the North Carolina Chapter of the Alliance of Baptists. A discussion on connections between the needs of the local church and a minister's education will be led by Brad Braxton, Wake Forest Divinity School; David Odom, Director, Center for Congregational Health, Winston-Salem; Jeanette Holt, Associate Director, Alliance of Baptists; and lay leaders in Baptist congregations. Contact Steve Jolly at Greenwood Forest Baptist Church, in Cary, NC, 919.467.0481.

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2001 Operating Budget

Through September 15

Needs: \$197,829
Receipts: \$177,625

2001 Mission Offering:

Goal: \$92,000
Receipts: \$53,890

October 2001

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



ZIMBABWE

Alliance Executive Director Stan Hastey dropped in on a child development center operated by the Hunyani Baptist Church, Harare, during his fifth visit to Zimbabwe to participate in the 38th Annual Congress of that southern African nation's Baptist Convention. Below left, newly elected officers of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe. Below right, outgoing President Rev. C.H. Chiromo (r) congratulates his successor, Rev. C. Chasara. The box exchanging hands contains the official convention gavel. They are pictured here outside the Tabernacle on the grounds of the Baptist Conference Centre, where the convention celebrated its 38th Annual Congress, Aug. 31-Sept. 2.



Martha Brahm has been called as pastor of the Alliance-affiliated **Prescott Memorial Baptist Church, Memphis**. Ordained as a Methodist, she was installed Sept. 9. She is a former businesswoman and a graduate of Memphis Theological Seminary.

Thelma (Tea) Pearson, a former member of the Alliance board of directors, died Aug. 27. She was a member of **University Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, MS**, a congregation affiliated with the Alliance.

Harry Carpenter, a founding director of the Alliance and second vice president, 1988-1989, died Aug. 29 in Melbourne, FL. A physician and former missionary to Haiti, he was 73.

Marti Williams, a 2001 graduate of BTSR, has been called as associate pastor of Metro Baptist Church in New York City.

Stephen Hyde has been called as pastor of Ravensworth Baptist Church in Annandale VA. Formerly he served churches in Maryland and Arkansas.

Triangle Baptist Church in Triangle, VA, is seeking a full-time associate pastor for children, youth and education. Please direct inquiries/resumes to: Triangle Baptist Church, P.O. Box 237, Triangle, VA 22172. Call 703.221.7191. Fax 703.221.8698.

Glendale Baptist Church in Nashville, TN, is looking to fill a new position of Associate Pastor to enhance and coordinate a broad spectrum of ministries to the traditional and non-traditional families that comprise Glendale's church body. Resumes to Search Committee, P.O. Box 128227, Nashville, TN 37212-8227, or or email to search@glendalebaptist.org

happenings