

# connections

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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.

## *Bridges of Hope Offering helps in Ecuador*

# The HOPE of Bastion: To do things they never imagined

The Alliance's Bridges of Hope Mission Offering is, for the third year, helping the "Hope of Bastion" provide an education for 137 children.

The Hope of Bastion is La Bastion Popular, a Christian school that serves an impoverished neighborhood in Guayaquil, Ecuador. "We noticed a lot of children not in school and discovered there were serious economic reasons that meant parents couldn't afford to educate their children," said Lil Horne, who with her husband Tim directs the school.

"There were no government schools in the squatters area and the level of education the children were receiving was very sub-standard," she said. "Our school is a way to lessen pressures being felt by families and to give hope to a generation of kids." The school is associated with a non-denominational Christian fellowship in the same community through an association with the Plymouth Brethren.

The school became connected with the Alliance when Susan Aldrich, a member of Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte,

NC, made an application on behalf of La Bastion Popular. A group from that church had been going to work in the school for several years, and was committed to help fulfill the mission of providing free education to children in an urban slum of Guayaquil.

The school is free for all students, and all the children receive breakfast, uniforms, and books. Free health care is provided for each child and the child's family. "We are very thankful for any assistance that we receive as the budget for the school is more than \$50,000 annually," said Tim Horne. "All of our funds come from donations from individuals and churches in the US and Canada. It is a faith project. We have no guaranteed income and we do no advertising or fundraising. We believe that if a ministry is of God, he will take care of providing for it."

The Alliance's \$1,000 contribution helps pay the \$2,500 salary of a teacher. What would happen without it? "Hard to say," Tim Horne said. "At times we have thought we might have to close down one of the grades at the school because we don't have enough to pay a teacher's salary. But we've not had to make that decision because of gifts like the one you have given to us. Each contribution helps us to keep the school going, and we know it is a big help to the families in Bastion."

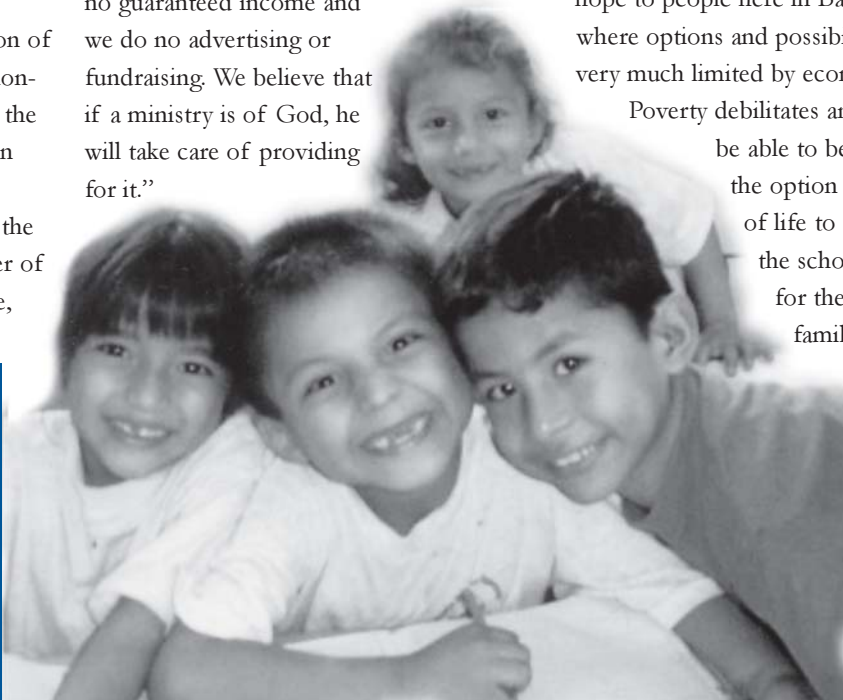
The Hornes have been in Ecuador for 11 years after working 10 years in prison ministry in Canada. They have three children, Bethany, 18, Katie, 16, and Jono, 13. "There is nothing more important to us than to help others to know and serve God," Lil said.

"Our school is called Hope of Bastion," Tim said. "We are committed to bringing hope to people here in Bastion, a place where options and possibilities for life are very much limited by economic hardship.

Poverty debilitates and we are glad to be able to be here and to offer the option of a different way of life to the students in the school. It is our desire for them and their families that they

might know that God has a plan for their lives and that with him they can be different and do things they would never have imagined."

These are just four of the students at the Hope of Bastion Popular School in Guayaquil, Ecuador. Erik, on the right, is deaf. The school serves some of the city's poorest students. Alliance Mission Offering funds of \$1,000 for 2004 will help pay the salary of one teacher for a year.





## Hernández elected president of Fraternity

Estela Hernández, pastor of William Carey Baptist Church in Havana, was elected president of the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba in November. She is shown with her predecessor, Francisco (Paco) Rodés, professor of church history and director of the Baptist studies program at the Evangelical (Protestant) Seminary of Cuba in Matanzas. Hernández is the second woman to be elected to the Fraternity's top post. Alliance Executive Director Stan Hastey represented us at the annual meeting.

## Retzer is pastor of Community of Grace; Dipboye retires

Former Alliance director **Don Retzer** is the new pastor of the Alliance-affiliated **Community of Grace Church, Richmond, VA**. In notifying the Alliance office of his call, Retzer wrote: "The Alliance has always been near and dear to me even though I have spent most of the past dozen years in the realm of commerce. I continue to work as a consultant for my primary vocation. Community of Grace covenants with me to prepare worship experiences and to function in a limited way as a teaching elder. They are a remarkable congregation and continue to be a bright light in the Richmond area."

Alliance member **Larry Dipboye** has resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church, Oak Ridge, TN, effective Dec. 31, following 15 years of service. The

happenings

congregation was one of the first to affiliate with the Alliance.

Alliance member **Pam Taylor**, lead pediatric chaplain at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, presented the first of two liturgical quilts to the Volunteer Auxilary at its annual recognition luncheon recently. The quilt, made by Alliance member Terry Thomas Primer, will hang in the chapel as a symbol of hope and comfort. The second quilt will be ready in the Spring of 2004.

**Circle of Mercy** in Asheville, NC, an ecumenical congregation rooted in the Baptist and Congregational traditions, has affiliated with the Alliance. The church is led by past Alliance president Nancy Sehested and her husband Ken, past executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.



## 2004 Convocation Alliance Singers

As always, we will gather a volunteer choir for this year's convocation. Suzanne Pence of Highland Park Baptist Church in Austin, TX, will conduct the choir, and Brooks Whitmore, also of Highland Park, will be guest musician. For those of you who are planning to sing with us, please purchase the following anthems, and come to Dayton with a bit of practice time put in, if at all possible.

### For Friday evening worship:

1. "Plenty Good Room on the Glory Train," by Kirby Shaw. Hal Leonard Publication # 08661851 (\$1.50)

2. "Down by the Riverside," by John Rutter. Oxford Press # 3430495 (1.95)

### For Saturday evening worship:

1. "You Shall Love the Lord Your God," by Michael Horvit. Transcontinental Music Publications # 991214 (1.75)

### For Sunday morning worship:

1. "God Has Gone Up With A Merry Noise," by James McCray. Shawnee Press # MF 2092 (1.95)

To obtain copies of these anthems, call American Music Company at 1.800.369.2731. They have all of the pieces in stock.

REGISTER NOW!



# 2004 CONVOCATION • APRIL 16-18

DAYTON, OHIO

SITE: **First Baptist Church**

HOST CHURCH: **CROSS CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH**

**7:15 P.M. FRIDAY, APRIL 16,**

**THROUGH WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, APRIL 18**



# 'Under God:' A threat to separation of church and state?

Nearly a century ago, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., wrote, "Great cases like hard cases make bad law." *Northern Securities Co. v. United States*, 193 U.S. 197, 400 [1904]. If the renowned Supreme Court justice was right, we soon might be saved from some really bad law.

There is also a legal misconception that is nonetheless widely believed, namely, that only hard cases make it to the Supreme Court for final resolution

Next year, exactly 100 years after Justice Holmes delivered his legal adage, the Supreme Court will decide what hopefully turns out to be an easy case in the field of church and state. If so, to invert Mr. Holmes' adage, this easy case will make for good law. What's more, it may end up saving the nation from church-state chaos.

This case, to put the matter bluntly, has to do with a monumentally stupid challenge to the phrase, "under God," in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag on the grounds that it violates the First Amendment's prohibition of an establishment of religion.

Furthermore, the case is being brought by one who insists on representing himself, thereby proving yet another legal adage — the one about the lawyer who had a fool for a client. Here's how foolish this case is. The plaintiff's name is Michael Newdow, a California atheist who is waging legal war not on one or two or even three fronts, but in four separate and simultaneous court battles.

Self-designated as the Rev. Dr. Michael A. Newdow, Esq. — physician, lawyer and founder of the First Amendmist (no typo here) Church of True Science — this litigant has what Charles Lane of the Washington Post calls "a restless, uncompromising mind, a mind that dissents radically from many widely accepted aspects of American life, from the pledge to family law to gender-specific pronouns in the English language," one who uses "ree" instead of "he" and "she," and "rees" instead of "his" or "her."

Newdow brought his case against the pledge in behalf of his 9-year-old daughter in spite of the fact that the child does not live with him and that neither she nor her mother agrees with him. His

claim of parental standing to challenge the reference to God in the pledge has in turn been challenged by his former girlfriend, Sandra Banning, along with others, and the Supreme Court has agreed to deal first with this aspect of the case before deciding on its constitutional merits.

Herein lies the best hope for avoiding what could become a constitutional fiasco. The nine justices, minus Antonin Scalia, should rule that Newdow in fact has no standing and dismiss his case on that basis alone. (Justice Scalia, perhaps the most intemperate judge to sit on the Supreme Court in modern times, uncharacteristically yet rightly has recused himself from the case for publicly lambasting the split decision below upholding Newdow's challenge.) This is the outcome we all should devoutly hope for.

This is not a hard case — or a great one. It is in one sense a petty case and one easily resolved, provided the court rules the plaintiff has no standing to represent his daughter. Should the court uphold his standing, however, the case instantly will be transformed into a hard one whose outcome could make for disastrously bad law.

Such a result is easily imaginable no matter the decision on the merits. Think of the reaction in the country should a Supreme Court majority declare "under God" unconstitutional. This is an add-on phrase, after all, wedged into the pledge by President Eisenhower during the Cold War and intended as a declaration to the world that the United States is anything but atheistic, that ours is a de-facto Christian nation. Strictly scrutinized it is a transparent violation of the Establishment Clause. If the court were to say so, one can readily imagine a mad rush to amend the Constitution so radically as to turn the nation into a theocracy.

So the question becomes whether the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is a sufficiently significant offense to the Constitution to risk scuttling the entire principle of church-state separation. From my perspective it is not.

perspectives



By Stan Hasteley  
Executive Director

Orestes Roca (left, at podium) leads in a litany of dedication for the new officers and board of the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba during the closing session of that body's annual assembly at William Carey Baptist Church in Havana. Standing to Roca's left is Estela Hernández, pastor of the host church and newly elected Fraternity president



alliance **f**inances

Through November 30

### 2003 Operating Budget

Needs: \$275,143  
Receipts: \$272,949

### 2003 Mission Offering

Goal: \$111,000  
Receipts: \$66,909

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## GOOD NEWS FOR CUBA PARTNERSHIP

# Treasury Department issues license to allow Alliance travel

The U.S. Treasury Department has issued a new license authorizing Alliance people to travel to Cuba. Effective immediately, the new authorization extends through Nov. 30, 2005. It is the fourth such license issued to the Alliance since 1999.

“This is good news indeed,” said Alliance Executive Director Stan Hastey, “especially in light of certain new restrictions on some categories of travelers recently announced by the Bush administration.”

Among groups whose travel is being limited are institutions of higher education, which are prohibited by new Treasury Department rules from traveling to Cuba for purely cultural reasons. Colleges and universities are now required to demonstrate to federal officials that Cuba-related travel has to do with academic requirements.

President Bush, in a highly publicized speech from the Rose Garden in October, also announced his government’s determination to crack down on unauthorized travel to Cuba by imposing stiff new fines

on violators. Cuba is one of seven nations currently under economic sanctions by the United States. Travel to the seven countries is regulated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Department of the Treasury through the issuance of licenses.

Sanctions against Cuba have been in effect since 1962, when President Kennedy broke off diplomatic relations with the Caribbean nation at the height of the Cold War. These have included general bans on trade and travel, enforced through executive orders by nine successive U.S. presidents. The sanctions were strengthened several years ago when Congress passed the Helms-Burton Act, meaning that substantial changes in U.S.-Cuba policy now must be made by Congress as well as the president.

“Despite the Alliance’s longstanding opposition to U.S. policy toward Cuba,” Hastey said, “we have chosen to seek authorization to travel in order to protect individual travelers, their congregations and the Alliance itself from possible prosecution for violating our nation’s irrational ban



Yhanco Monet, a seminarian and pastor, led a workshop on youth ministry during the annual assembly of the Alliance’s partner group, the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba, held in November in Havana. Monet was elected coordinator of youth ministries.

on travel to Cuba.” He added: “The day will come, hopefully soon, when licenses to travel to Cuba no longer will be necessary, when our leaders once again will respect our fundamental right to travel wherever we wish except under truly extraordinary circumstances of a compelling nature.”