

# connections

March 1999

Volume 2 Issue 3

Our Mission is to make the worship of God primary in all our gatherings, foster relationships within and outside the Alliance, create places of refuge and renewal for those wounded or ignored by the church, side with the poor, pursue justice with and for the oppressed, care for the earth, work for peace, honor wisdom and lifelong learning, and hold ourselves accountable for equity, collegiality and diversity.



## bridges of hope

For the past eight years, we in the Alliance have taken a Mission Offering in order to build partnerships with others who also are called by God to embody the gospel of Jesus Christ. This year, we have a new theme, Bridges of Hope, and a higher goal, \$80,000. We increased the goal by \$5,000 so that we can provide vital funding to 20 projects that take risks to reach the neglected and forgotten in our own country and beyond.

Shown here is one of the children who directly benefits from our gifts. He is a participant in a program called Reconciliation, a ministry for prisoners and their families in the middle-Tennessee area and one of our 1999 offering recipients. That ministry, along with Strive in Chicago, is featured on the back page.

# 1999

Convocation

**March 12-14  
Richmond**

Northminster  
Baptist Church  
&  
Baptist  
Theological  
Seminary  
at Richmond

AND JESUS  
TAUGHT  
THEM  
SING

## special grant for cuba: we're halfway there

A longtime Alliance member from Louisiana has given \$5000 of mutual fund shares to the Alliance to help match a \$23,700 grant by a family foundation in Atlanta to our partner body, the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba. In making the gift, the donor expressed the hope it will encourage other Alliance people to make similar gifts. Combined with two earlier gifts from Alliance members in Greenville, SC, also made anonymously, the newest donation gets us past the half-way mark in matching the grant.

## military endorsement may come before board

Last September, the Alliance board voted to endorse chaplains serving in non-military settings. Since that time, numerous applications have been received by the

Endorsement Committee and several candidates have been endorsed. At the March board meeting, the issue of military endorsement will be considered.

The board of directors of the Alliance of Baptists will meet on March 11-12, prior to the beginning of the Convocation.

Board member Bill Sapp of Louisville, KY, who was instrumental in researching and recommending the endorsement procedures last year, has said he will recommend the board now consider endorsement for military chaplains.

Facing the Truth with *Bill Moyers*, premiering Tuesday, March 30, on PBS (9-11 p.m. EST), reports the gripping story of how the people of South Africa, through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, are trying to create a new and hopeful future from the bitter legacy of violence and hatred. Discussion guides will be available at the Richmond convocation or from the Alliance office.

## happenings

Alliance member *William F. Brosend II*, pastor of First Baptist Church, Rochester, NY, is one of 13 recipients of the Louisville Institute Study Grants for Religious Leaders for 1999. Bill's project, *What Matters in Ministry*, will examine churches that are excelling in one or more of several key indicators of congregational health. He is the only Baptist chosen this year by the Lily Foundation-sponsored program.

Alliance member *Dwight M. Lundgren* has been appointed director of Reconciliation Ministries, a program of the Board of National Ministries of the American Baptist Churches in the USA. Most recently the pastor of First Baptist Church of Philadelphia and former pastor of the First Baptist Church in America, Providence, RI, Dwight will be responsible for encouraging and participating with American Baptists in direct activities for reconciliation in various settings.

## alliance officers

The 1998-99 officers of the Alliance have been C. Welton Gaddy, president, of Monroe, LA, and Washington, DC; Genie Dyer, left, vice president, of Waco, TX; and Sue Poss, secretary, of



Greenville, SC. Welton and Genie are eligible for re-election. Sue is completing a second term and cannot be re-elected. The election of officers will be held during the annual meeting, Saturday afternoon at the Convocation.

## cuba and zimbabwe

A group of 12 students from Mars Hill College, led by Alliance members Paula Clayton Dempsey, Stan Dotson and Kim Christman, will travel to various parts of Cuba May 17-26.

Between 18 and 20 members of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC, will visit their sister congregation, First Baptist Church of Matanzas, March 17-26. The large Pullen group will help the Matanzas church celebrate its centennial.

A Partnership Mission Trip to Zimbabwe is planned July 15-Aug. 3. For information, contact Bonnie Dixon, 217 Lochside Drive, Cary, NC 27511. 919/851-6577. Fax: 919/859-1745. E-Mail: [bjadixon@aol.com](mailto:bjadixon@aol.com).



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The Alliance Women in the Church Committee met in Charlotte, NC, in February to continue its visioning work for a task group studying gender equity in the church. A survey administered to the Board of Directors and staff of the Alliance was the result of this visioning time. The information gathered concerning gender equity — the things churches are doing well and not doing well — will form the basis for a more general survey to be given to the entire Alliance membership at a later date.

If you are interested in more information about the survey or the work of the Women in the Church Committee, contact Wanda Burton-Crutchfield, P.O. Box 1135, Warsaw, Virginia 22572, [bcrutch@sylvaninfo.net](mailto:bcrutch@sylvaninfo.net). The survey will also be used in a workshop titled, "Submission and Dominance: Power Issues in Church," which will be offered at the Alliance convocation.

Across a decade of service to the Alliance, I've found myself continually amazed at the many ways the grace of God has been lavished on our movement. Among our richest blessings have been numerous opportunities to join in partnerships with causes beyond our own. "Bridges of Hope," the theme of the 1999 Alliance Mission Offering, reminds us that others look to us for affirmation of their sense of mission.

But besides asking you to respond generously again this year, I must thank you for your response in 1998. Before the books closed on last year's Offering at the end of January, we had met and surpassed the goal of \$75,000, a marked improvement on our performance in 1997. In behalf of the Board of Directors and all 19 recipients of last year's Offering, I commend and thank you.

One reason we met last year's challenge, I'm convinced, was the emphasis given our partners month by month in our newsletter. The brochure and envelope inserted into this issue of *Connections* provide us our first opportunity in 1999 to build bridges of hope to this year's 20 recipients. You will have other such reminders in future issues. At the same time, let me remind you that because we are making our appeal in the pages of the newsletter throughout the year, you will not be receiving other appeals in the mail.

Although she never seeks the spotlight, *Connections* Editor Sue Harper Poss deserves much of the credit for the higher profile given the Mission Offering during the past year. She has designed the promotional brochure for the Offering each of the last two years and has been the author of the articles featur-

ing Offering recipients. In addition, she has served for the past two years as the Alliance's recording secretary. Elsewhere in this issue, in a photo featuring our 1998-1999 officers, you have a chance to know what Sue looks like!



One of our principal partners, the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, has collaborated with the Alliance in producing a significant new curriculum resource, *Pursuing Justice*. Author Cathy Tamsberg, a current member of the Alliance Board of Directors and long associated with BPFNA, has turned her passion for justice into a much-needed product for use in churches.

In 10 well-designed lessons, Cathy invites discussion of poverty in the United States; workers' rights; classism and consumerism; criminal justice; racism; sexism; heterosexism and homophobia; peace; global poverty; and the environment. Drawing heavily from the classical Hebrew prophets, she has done outstanding exegetical work in providing biblical background for each session.

Cathy also invites teachers and learners to engage in spiritual exercises during each session. In addition, teachers and group leaders will appreciate her helpful suggestions on how to deal with the material, including appropriate music and extensive bibliography.

Each Alliance-affiliated congregation will receive a free copy of *Pursuing Justice* upon request. Representatives of churches may pick up the resource at the Alliance exhibit during the Richmond convocation. Individuals may purchase it at the convocation for \$15. Or it may be ordered from the Alliance office for \$20, postage included.

## perspectives



By Stan Hastey  
Executive Director

## c o n v o c a t i o n w o r k s h o p s

Since last month's listing of Richmond convocation workshops, missing details on two of the 20 offerings have been provided.

Sammy Williams, pastor of Richmond's Northminster Baptist Church, and Paige Chargois, national associate director of Hope in the Cities and staff member at St. Paul's Baptist Church in Richmond, will co-lead a workshop titled, "Healing the Legacy of History: Countering Racism in the Capital of the Confederacy."

Tim Shirley, pastor of Virginia-Highland Baptist Church in Atlanta, will convene a panel of representatives from various churches in a workshop titled, "Gay and Lesbian Christians in the Church: The Process of Reconciliation."

## Housing

If you still need housing for the Convocation, call the Holiday Inn Central in Richmond, 804/359-9441

**Budget Gifts YTD:**

Operating Income: \$49,334  
Budget Needs: \$39,272

**Bridges of Hope YTD:**

Goal: \$80,000  
Receipts: \$5,104

**Cuba Grant:**

Challenge: \$23,700  
Receipts: \$12,500

Using almost the same words, the director of Reconciliation in Nashville and the board chair of Strive in Chicago described their ministries as giving hope “to the least of these.”

Both ministries will be recipients of the Bridges of Hope offering this year. Reconciliation works primarily with the families of prisoners in middle-Tennessee. “They face ostracism in the community, loneliness in their homes, financial difficulties and emotional turmoil,” said director Karen Fletcher. “They are five times more likely to end up in the criminal justice system themselves.”

Reconciliation wants to prove that statistic wrong by giving children of prisoners a chance to go to summer camp and providing places for families to stay while visiting imprisoned relatives. But right now the two primary areas of emphasis are on supplying “Kids’ Corners” in the prisons and beefing up the children’s and teens’ educational programs.

Volunteer coordinator Mary McKinney is heading up the Kids’ Corner project where churches and individuals are being asked to provide toys for the visiting areas of prisons. “Having toys available gives

children a means of relating to the parent they’re visiting,” Fletcher said.

One Nashville-area child recently had a birthday party and all the gifts received at the party were given to the Kids’ Corner project.

Ivan Mitchell, the new director of the children’s and teens’ programs at Reconciliation, is putting a new focus on educational achievement. To improve the chance of success in school, Mitchell has visited the teachers of the students to try to bridge the gap between school and home and to evaluate the needs of the students. “I want to see the children in our program reach their full academic potential,” Mitchell said.

“Our budget is very small,” said Fletcher, “and if it were not for gifts like that the Alliance gives us, we wouldn’t be able to operate.”

The same is true for Strive, a ministry based in Cornell Baptist Church that serves at-risk children and youth on the south side of Chicago. Peggy Sanders is a member at Cornell who has steadily worked her way through the ranks from volunteer tutor to chair of the board.

She is excited to have a new director, Renee Rilo, who came from a similar, and larger, program in Pittsburgh. “We’re going through a period of transition, but we’re looking forward to growing our program under Renee’s leadership,” she said.

Forty to 60 kids benefit from Strive and all of them are looking forward to getting four donated computers up and running.

The training the children will gain from the computers is just one of the educational aspects of Strive. One-on-one tutoring is provided at all grade levels. Students are encouraged to develop their talents, on whatever playing field, and ballet and jazz are important aspects of the program.

“We operate on a limited budget so every penny we receive from the Alliance is significant,” said Sanders.



**Reconciliation:**  
\$1,000  
**Strive:**  
\$3,000