

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.



Convocation speakers bring varied backgrounds, expertise to ecumenical/interfaith theme

2004 CONVOCATION APRIL 16-18

DAYTON, OHIO



Charles Kimball and Stephanie Ford, featured in this issue, are just two of the speakers for this year's convocation, to be held at First Baptist Church in Dayton. Others will be highlighted in the next issues of *connections*.

Covenant Address

Charles Kimball

7:15 p.m. Saturday

Charles Kimball is the author of the best-selling book, *When Religion Becomes Evil* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), is an expert on interfaith relations, and has studied extensively in the Middle East.

Since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001, Kimball has been interviewed by more than 150 TV and radio stations as well as major newspapers and broadcast outlets throughout the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, France, Australia and South Africa.

Kimball is chair of the Department of Religion at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC. He is a graduate of Oklahoma State University and holds the M.Div. degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. An ordained Baptist minister, he received his Th.D. from Harvard University in comparative religion with specialization in Islamic studies.

He is a frequent lecturer and expert analyst on issues related to the Middle East, Islam, Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations, and the intersection of religion and politics in the United States.

Before joining the Wake Forest faculty in 1996, Kimball taught for six years at Furman University where he also served as the Director for International Education. From 1983-1990 he was the Director of the Middle East Office at the National Council of Churches, based in New York. He has made more than 35 visits to the Middle East and worked closely with Congress, the White House and the State Department during the past 20 years.

His articles have appeared in a number of publications, including *Sojourners*, *The Christian Century*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Boston Globe*. Other books he has written include *Striving Together: A Way Forward in Christian-Muslim Relations; Religion, Politics and Oil: The Volatile Mix in the Middle East*; and *Angle of Vision: Christians and the Middle East*.

Morning Prayers

Stephanie Ford

8:30 a.m. Saturday and Sunday

Stephanie Ford roots herself geographically in North Carolina, but in fact, she grew up all over the States. Likewise, while rooted in the Baptist tradition, she has been nourished by Methodist, Catholic, charismatic and Quaker streams. In 1993, after several years of teaching
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2004 Mission Offering

Four groups are first-time recipients this year

A month into a New Year, it is time once again to start thinking in earnest about our mission partners overseas and next door who benefit from our Bridges of Hope Mission Offering.

Our 2004 goal, as established by the Missions Committee and approved by the Board of Directors, is \$113,000. We have 26 recipients who will benefit from our gifts.

Among those 26 are four recipients new to the list this year.

- Community Church of the Midlands in Columbia, SC, will receive \$1,000 for pastoral support.
- Farley Community House at Ginter Park Baptist Church in Richmond, VA, will receive \$1,500. Farley houses five seminary students or spouses who together engage in reflection and spiritual development; outreach in the community aimed at drawing the community into the church and the church into the community; and involve themselves in the life of Ginter Park Baptist Church through service and leadership.
- Baptist Churches of the Dominican Republic will receive \$500 to help young ministers who are serving in 15 churches in economically marginalized areas without textbooks or transportation.
- X-Changes Community is a new

church start in Richmond, VA, that will receive \$1,000 for pastoral support. X-Changes is in an emerging neighborhood in downtown Richmond where there is currently no church of any denomination.

Our international partners are major recipients of our funds.

Our oldest international partner, the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba, will receive \$22,000 to help with its work throughout the country. The allocation includes \$2,000 for a women's conference.

The Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe and the seminary there will each receive \$10,000. Sri Lankan Baptists, our newest international partners, will receive a grant of \$10,000 for the purchase of property for new church starts, our partner group's number one priority.

The International Center of Bethlehem will receive \$8,000 to help educate both Christian and Muslim children. The Baptist Union of Georgia will get \$5,000 to help fund theological education among pastors

in that country. A ministry with Christian students in Morocco will get \$2,000. And a school in Ecuador will get \$1,000.

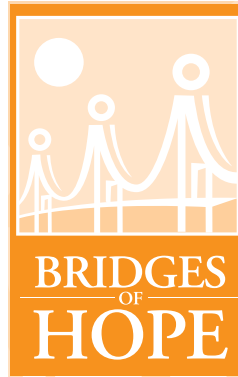
Other recipients in 2004 include Advent Spirituality Center, \$3,000; the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, \$7,500; Baptist Youth Camp, \$2,500; a Latino ministry in Washington, DC, \$3,500; Center for Healing and Hope in Little Rock, AR, \$3,000; Circle of Mercy Church in Asheville, NC, \$2,000; Emmaus House in Raleigh, NC, \$3,000.

Jeff Street Community at Liberty in Louisville, KY, \$2,000; Oakhurst Recovery Program in Decatur, GA, \$4,000; Rauschenbusch Metro Ministry in New York City, \$2,000; Reconciliation Ministries in Nashville, TN, \$1,700; Sabbath House, \$500; Strive in Chicago, \$3,300; and Synergeo in Richmond, VA, \$3,000.

You are invited to read more about each of these organizations in the 2004 Mission Offering brochure, and on our website at www.allianceofbaptists.org.

While the individual amount of our gifts to each group might be small, in many cases it makes a world of difference in their ability to carry out their ministry.

Please consider what you can do to help us meet our goal in 2004.



alliance finances

Through December 31

2003 Operating Budget

Needs: \$300,156
Receipts: \$321,716

2003 Mission Offering

Goal: \$111,000
Receipts: \$84,711

These are the unofficial final numbers for 2003. As you can see, we met our operating budget but fell significantly short of our Mission Offering goal.

Henry names Alliance reps for UCC partnership team

Alliance President Craig Henry has named three representatives to a new panel charged with overseeing the new Partnership in Mission and Ministry with the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Two of the three were members of the joint Alliance/Disciples/UCC Dialogue Team that brought the recommendation to create the ongoing partnership among the three bodies.

Named to the panel were Steve Lucas, pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church, Austin, TX; Kristy Arnesen Pullen, West

Chester, PA, an American Baptist communicator and consultant; and Cathy Tamsberg, Raleigh, NC, minister of outreach and education at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church. Tamsberg and Lucas are holdovers from the previous dialogue team. Lucas and Pullen currently serve on the Alliance Board of Directors. Executive Director Stan Hastey will be co-convenor of the panel, along with the Disciples and UCC ecumenical officers, Robert Welsh and Lydia Veliko, respectively.

The panel's organizational meeting is scheduled for Feb. 16-17 in Washington.

The New Baptist Chasm

From now on Baptists throughout the world will have to decide between the Baptist World Alliance and the Southern Baptist Convention. That is indeed the bottom line in the impending and now inevitable decision of the SBC to withdraw from the BWA following the recommendation of a blue-ribbon panel comprised of nine members of what is the functional equivalent of a Roman *curia*.

Despite the accusations of liberalism that comprise the core of the Southern Baptist complaint against the BWA, the real reason was the latter's decision last year to approve the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship as a member body of the worldwide fellowship. As is customarily the case with the fundamentalist overlords, their true reasons are cloaked in falsehoods. The simple truth is, the Southern Baptist Convention is run by tyrants who employ all the tools of tyrannies everywhere, deception first and foremost.

Although the leaders of the Baptist World Alliance were wise in letting the SBC decide when and how to leave, what they need to know now is that the BWA will be better off. Just as the Baptist Joint Committee a decade ago had to go through the withdrawal of the SBC with its hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual contributions, so now the BWA. But the good news is that it will survive — and then thrive — as a result. That is true both spiritually and financially.

Spiritually the Southern Baptist Convention had become a cancer on the worldwide body of Baptists. Its representatives on the BWA were constantly carping and criticizing. Their tactics with BWA were identical to those employed earlier in the disengagement from the BJC. People of supreme power in the convention, headed by the always malicious and ever-vindictive Paul Pressler, drove the process. During the earlier drive to leave the BJC, the same Pressler was the principal inquisitor, just as he turned out to be this time around.

For Pressler and his cohorts, the issue now and always has been control, pure and simple. One of Pressler's proteges, SBC executive Richard Land, declared during the process leading to withdrawal from the BJC that he once heard W.A. Criswell advocate that "not one dime of Southern Baptist money should be beyond the control of Southern Baptists." That was and is a cancerous attitude. Spiritually speaking, the BWA is better off

with its excision.

Financially, the BWA can and will do far better without the SBC. Should it choose to do so, CBF can make up overnight the \$300,000 lost with the SBC exodus. Others will pitch in as well, as in the case of the BJC a decade ago. The latter went through a couple of lean years, to be sure, but to its enduring credit went about its task with customary courage and due diligence.

When the dust settled its income had risen. In my view that will be even truer in the case of the BWA, as Baptists both in this country and around the world rally to its support.

As one who lived through the early stages of the SBC withdrawal from the BJC as a staff member of the latter, I can say all these years later that my lingering grief over the eventual outcome was that the Baptist witness to religious freedom was fractured. For half a century in the nation's capital, official Washington knew the Baptists stood together for the Christ-mandated and time-honored

principle that God's reign and Caesar's are to be separate. In the 10 years since, the Southern Baptist Convention has abandoned utterly its Christian heritage in religious freedom to go after the ephemeral glitter of Caesar's gold. In the end the price it pays will be fearful.

Now the BWA will have to deal with the reality of a rival body. In its report to the SBC Executive Committee, the special study panel hinted broadly it will seek to create a new alliance of like-minded Baptists and others around the world. This does not mean it will succeed. My prediction is that nearly all Baptist bodies around the world will elect to remain in the BWA and reject the SBC entreaty to abandon it in favor of a new organization to be run out of the hip pockets of those who engineered the withdrawal.

Already the signs are everywhere that the philosophy of domination now being practiced by the SBC International Mission Board is being summarily rejected. One convention and union after another around the world is rejecting this new form of colonial paternalism and seeking instead new partnerships in the so-called developed world. That trend will do nothing but accelerate now that the Southern Baptists have turned their backs on the Baptist World Alliance. 🍊

perspectives



By Stan Hastey
Executive
Director

MEMBERSHIP

Individuals are invited to become members of the Alliance at any time. Annual membership dues are \$40, individuals; \$60, families; \$125, sustaining; and \$20, students/low income. You may use the enclosed envelope to send in your dues. Just be sure to indicate that the funds are for annual dues.

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Clergy registry ‘provides a clear place to be’

The Alliance of Baptists is in the process of publishing an official registry of ordained clergy. Such a registry will be a helpful instrument for Alliance staff, clergy, and churches.

“The Clergy Registry is a service both to the clergy and to the churches of the Alliance,” said Tom McKibbens, chair of the Alliance’s Affiliate and Member Services Committee. “For the clergy it provides a clear place to be. It is a clear designation that a clergy person is part of the Alliance neighborhood and therefore breathes the fresh Alliance air. For the churches it provides a place to start, a roster, a listing of the available team members.”

“For both clergy and churches, it is also a written confirmation that one is not alone in a world that often isolates and condemns,” McKibbens said. “The registry

should not be confused with endorsement. Endorsed chaplains, for example, would likely be in the registry, but not all clergy in the registry are endorsed chaplains. Endorsement is a separate process.”

The registry will be kept in the Alliance office and will enable staff to verify credentials for potential employers, educational institutions and other interested parties as needed. “Clergy will benefit in that we will have their credentials readily available to distribute,” said Associate Director Jeanette Holt.

Holt said she expects the first edition of this new registry will be published in time for distribution at the 2004 Convocation, to be held at First Baptist Church, Dayton, OH, April 16-18. It will be updated annually.

Clergy will be asked to keep the Alliance updated on their whereabouts and all other

relevant information concerning professional status. “These mutual efforts to keep the registry up to date will help all parties involved,” Holt said.

To be included in the first edition, you must be an individual member of the Alliance, complete the proper paper work (available from the Alliance office) and provide a copy of your ordination certificate.

Completing a profile form is one of the requirements and will be used to assist individuals seeking Alliance help in placement with congregations and church-related organizations.

“We hope you will agree that this new service holds great promise for Alliance clergy,” Holt said. “Its usefulness, however, will depend on the participation of our clergy.”

Stephanie Ford (continued from page 1)
 English as a Foreign Language to college students, Stephanie felt a clear call to study at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. She later decided to pursue doctoral studies in spirituality at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, for the purpose of strengthening her gifts in teaching and spiritual direction.

Fort now teaches Christian Spirituality at Earlham School of Religion, a Quaker seminary in Richmond, IN. In addition to teaching, she offers spiritual direction, has written for the Upper Room, and provides leadership with the Academy of Spiritual Formation. Her ordination to ministry was affirmed by her home church, Pullen Memorial Baptist, and by the Alliance of Baptists in May 2000.