

connections

November 1998

... a movement of progressive congregations and individuals committed to historic Baptist freedoms, the larger church of Jesus Christ, authentic discipleship, biblical authority and open inquiry, and the proclamation of God's good news to persons and society.



final push on to make \$75,000 mission offering goal

It took a plea from the floor of the Alliance's annual meeting last March to fulfill the requests of 18 groups counting on our annual mission offering in 1997.

This year our plea, our prayer, is that individuals and congregations will send in their gifts by Dec. 31 so that we can assure our mission partners that their expected grants will indeed be forthcoming.

Here's where we are: Our mission offering goal for 1998 is \$75,000, the same as last year. At the end of October, gifts totaled nearly \$50,000, about two-thirds of the goal. The recipients already have received two checks from us in 1998, so we're ahead of where we were last year at this time.

Among the recipients of the 1998 offering are three international partners. The Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba (\$13,000) and the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zimbabwe (\$8,500) have been prior recipients of our gifts.

The Fraternity is a group of 40 churches and missions that uses our funds for its overall work of strengthening churches and their members. At the Zimbabwe seminary, our grant will fund the full salary of a professor.

A new international recipient in 1998 is the Kariobangi Baptist Youth Centre (\$4,000), located in the slums of Nairobi. The Centre works to improve the plight of young Kenyans by setting up production areas to manufacture small items that can be sold.

The rest of our offering recipients are within the U.S.:

Baptist Women in Ministry (\$5,500), provides emotional and spiritual support to women who answer God's call to ministry.

Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America (\$7,500) helps Christians make the connection between biblical faith and the suffering in creation and offers practical ways of addressing these issues.

Union Mission Children's Services (\$5,000) offers homeless children and their families a range of services, including development studies, academic enrichment and cultural awareness, in Savannah, GA.

Other recipients:
Center for Women in Christian Leadership, Richmond, \$3,000.
Brite Divinity School Baptist Studies

Program, Fort Worth, \$2,500.

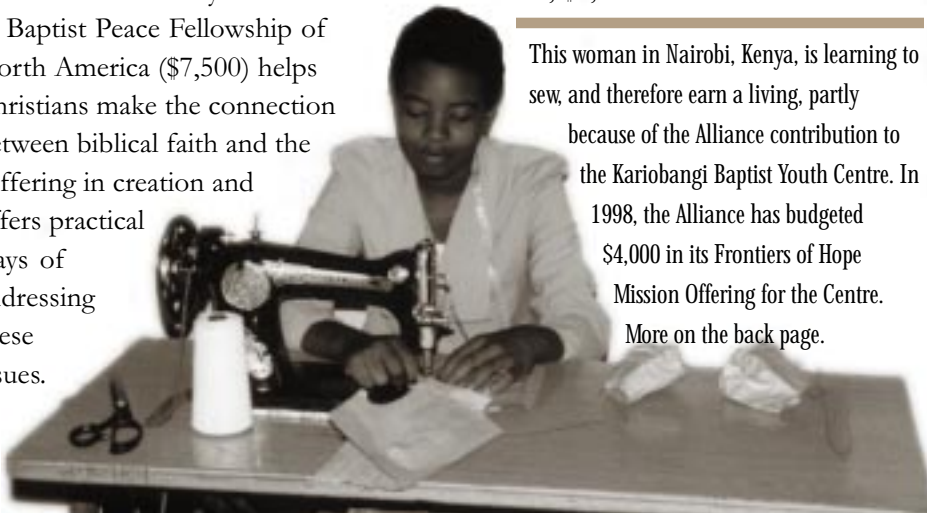
Cross Creek Community Church, Dayton, OH, \$2,000.

Emmaus House, Raleigh, NC, \$3,000.
Northwest Corridor Chaplaincy, Chicago, \$2,000.

Reconciliation, a program for families of prisoners in middle Tennessee, \$1,000.

Jeff Street Baptist Community, Louisville, KY, \$3,500.

Oakhurst Recovery Program, Atlanta, \$4,000



This woman in Nairobi, Kenya, is learning to sew, and therefore earn a living, partly because of the Alliance contribution to the Kariobangi Baptist Youth Centre. In 1998, the Alliance has budgeted \$4,000 in its Frontiers of Hope Mission Offering for the Centre. More on the back page.

Providence Baptist Church, Little Rock, AR, \$3,000.

Dolores Street Baptist Church, San Francisco, \$1,000.

San Leandro Baptist Church, San Leandro, CA, \$3,000.

Strive, an agency in Chicago that provides academic assistance and support for at-risk children and youth, \$3,500.

Stan was in Rochester, NY, to preach at First Baptist Church on Oct. 25. On Oct. 26, he spoke about the Alliance at the quarterly meeting of delegates of the Rochester/Genesee Region, American Baptist Churches in the USA. Following a question-and-answer session, the delegates voted without dissent to authorize a dialogue between their Region and the Alliance, the purpose of which will be to explore avenues of cooperation.

Re-membering Church was the theme of the North Carolina Alliance Convocation, held at Knollwood Baptist Church, Winston-Salem NC, Oct. 2-3. The program featured presentations and conversations about what church has been, led by Roger Crook of Cary; what church is, led by Steve Boyd of Winston-Salem; and what church may become, led by Stan Hastey. Bob Albritton, pastor of Millbrook Baptist Church, Raleigh, was elected president; and Gail Coulter, associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Asheville, was elected vice president.

Several Alliance members participated in the conference of Roger Williams Fellowship of American Baptists held at Central Baptist Seminary, Kansas City KS. Ken Sehested, Molly Marshall and Darrell Adams were among the program leaders. Representatives from a variety of Baptist groups from the U.S. and Canada were invited to come together to discuss what it means to be Baptist on the eve of a new millennium. Jeanette Holt brought greetings from the Alliance to the gathering.

The Georgia Alliance of Baptists met at Mercer University Oct. 9-10. The theme of the weekend was "Living Out the Vision: The Alliance Mission Statement." Keynote speaker was Cathy Tamsberg, an Alliance Board member and author of the new curriculum "Pursuing Justice: A Social Justice Curriculum," a joint project of the Alliance and the Baptist Peace Fellowship. Stacey Simpson, pastor of the Fellowship Baptist Church of Edison, GA, was elected president.

Jeanette Holt represented the Alliance of Baptists and led in worship at the fall meeting of the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship held at the First Baptist Church of Port Williams, Nova Scotia, Oct. 2-3. Furman Hewitt, director of the Baptist House of Studies, Duke Divinity School, was the featured speaker, talking about theological education for laity and clergy.

Stan participated in the Interfaith and University Forum on Religious Liberty Oct. 23-24 at Roger Williams University in Bristol, RI. The event was co-sponsored by RWU and the Rhode Island State Council of Churches, whose executive minister, James C. Miller, is an Alliance member. Other Alliance members on the program were keynote speaker and Roger Williams biographer Edwin S. Gaustad and the Baptist Joint Committee's James M. Dunn.

On Sunday, Nov. 1, Stan preached at Metro Baptist Church in New York City. The following day, he met with representatives of the Ministers and Missionaries Board of the American Baptist Churches to discuss a preliminary proposal that group has made to include Alliance churches in its retirement plans.

From Nov. 4-16, Stan led an Alliance delegation of 14 to the annual assembly of the Fraternidad de Iglesias Bautistas de Cuba. Following the meeting, the delegation visited in several Fraternidad churches.

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When Northminster Church in Monroe, LA, was organized about 10 years ago, it met in a synagogue. Last month, Northminster returned the favor. An electrical problem at B'nai Israel synagogue, which serves all of northeastern Louisiana, occurred just two days before Yom Kippur, meaning no electricity and no place to meet. Northminster volunteered its facilities and even removed the Christian symbols for its Jewish neighbors. "That touched us even more deeply than words can convey," said Barbara Kline, wife of Rabbi David Kline. "We're very grateful for their sensitivity."

"This is about a Jewish congregation and a Christian congregation loving and respecting one another," said church member Craig Henry. "Through the years our congregations have remained close. We have shared services together, Rabbi Kline has preached at our services, and led a seder meal at Northminster."

In what is becoming a tradition, members of Northminster will join with members of the Temple on the Friday after Thanksgiving for a service and Thanksgiving celebration.

In its usual spot on Page 4 — in the box updating our finances — you'll see we've taken in about two-thirds of this year's Alliance Mission Offering. And you'll be pleased to know these funds have been forwarded to the 1998 Offering recipients — two months ahead of last year's second distribution. That's very good news!

Now we need to make that last push to get us over the top. Some congregations affiliated with the Alliance have yet to receive the Offering and will do so during the traditional Christmas season of giving to mission causes. To these, and to all other churches that have promoted and received the Offering, a sincere word of thanks!

Besides asking Alliance congregations to support the Offering, I'm asking you as an individual member to do so as well. Perhaps you've noted that instead of sending you letters this year asking for contributions, we've wrapped our Mission Offering appeal into *Connections*. So the envelope enclosed in this issue, along with these lines, represent our final appeal for 1998.

perspectives



By Stan Hastey
Executive Director

Please take a moment now to get out the checkbook and make the Alliance Mission Offering one of your first gifts in this season of giving. It won't surprise you to hear that from my perspective, this will be one of the most satisfying checks you write this Christmas. You'll have the satisfaction of knowing you've put first things first.

As we await your response here in the office, do know in advance of the gratitude of each of the 18 recipients of the 1998 Offering. Think of it. If your gift will help Jeanette and me and our Missions Committee enjoy the season, how much more that can be said of our partners in Cuba and Zimbabwe and all others who will benefit from your generosity.

Our friends at the Baptist Peace Fellowship and colleagues at Baptist Women in Ministry will thank you. And so will homeless men in Atlanta and Raleigh and needy children and families in Chicago and Nashville and Savannah.

"Let hope keep you joyful; in trouble stand firm; persist in prayer. Contribute to the needs of God's people, and practise hospitality." (Romans 12:12-13, REB)

zimbabwe

A trip to Zimbabwe is being organized for next July. Contact Alliance board member Bonnie Dixon in Raleigh, NC, for details. 919/851-6577

church staff needs

Highland Park Baptist Church in Austin, TX, is looking for a Senior Minister. Interested parties should contact Herb Wilson Jr., chair of the committee, at 5206 Balcones Drive, Austin TX 78731. Deadline is January 15, 1999.

Oakhurst Baptist Church in Atlanta is seeking an Associate Pastor to provide staff leadership in Christian Education, Missions and Youth. Send profiles by February 1, 1999 to: Search Committee, Oakhurst Baptist Church, 222 East Lake Drive, Decatur GA 30030.

urban HANDS

Churches interested in teaching youth and adults about poverty and urban ministry can find a unique opportunity at Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, DC. Calvary is a 136-year-old American Baptist congregation located in Chinatown in the inner city. The church hosted the 1998 Alliance Convocation.

Through a program called "Urban HANDS" (Helping Another in Need by Demonstrating Servanthood), church groups of youth and adults can spend time in the nation's capital learning first-hand about the challenges of the inner city and ministries that offer hope to the poor.

A package of accommodations, meals, outreach opportunities, and special speakers is provided. During the day, Urban Hands participants work in soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and other community ministries. At night, they reflect on what they have learned and how it fits into our mission of working as the hands of God in the community.

If you are interested in this opportunity for spring break or summer 1999, contact Paget Rhee, Director of Youth and Outreach, 202/347-8355, ext. 30. Call soon. The schedule is typically booked by January.

1999 convocation:

March 12-14 at Northminster Baptist Church in Richmond and Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. A simultaneous Youth Convocation is also planned.

NEWS MEMBERSHIP

This newsletter is mailed to Alliance-affiliated churches and individual members. Please let us know if your church would like to get more or fewer copies.

Annual membership dues are \$40, individuals; \$60, families; \$125, sustaining; and \$20, student/low income. Some members choose to make regular gifts to the Alliance above and beyond annual dues.

Operating Income
YTD: \$182,721
Budget Needs YTD:
\$193,026

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Frontiers of Hope
Mission Offering
Goal: \$75,000
Receipts: \$49,339

New among the Alliance mission offering gift recipients this year is the Kariobangi Baptist Youth Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. Our gift of \$4,000 is making it possible for the Centre to teach dressmaking and carpentry skills to young people, giving them a means to earn a living.

“Our ministry at the Centre is to provide technical skills to the community, equipping them with the necessary support so as to alleviate their abject poverty,” said David M. Kiatu, manager of the Centre. “Our ultimate goal is to restore hope to people in despair. This will eventually cultivate an environment conducive to teaching them about the gospel of Jesus Christ and the satisfaction he brings to humanity.”

The two primary skills offered at the Centre are dressmaking and carpentry. Students learn skills to make items, which are sold and the money used to support the Centre and offer scholarships to students.

Currently there are 17 trainees in each program. “This number has gone down due to

Alliance dollars at work: Kariobangi Baptist Youth Center

the slump in our national economy this year,” said Kiatu. “It is our intention to provide full or partial scholarships to everyone but we cannot, partly because of the poor economic conditions. So our production unit is operating below capacity.”

At the time Kariobangi made its request for 1998 mission offering funds, the Kenya economy was stronger. The dressmaking division of the Centre was getting orders for school

uniforms, clothes, company uniforms, choir uniforms and college uniforms. The carpentry unit was receiving substantial orders from Christian organizations, schools, institutions and individuals for making classroom desks, tables, beds, chairs, wardrobes, cabinets, office desks, and benches.


“These orders are very helpful since they generate income and help sustain the activities and needs of the

youth and the Centre,” said Kiatu. Since the students actually make goods that are sold, they learn the challenges of quality and quantity productions that they will later encounter after graduating, he said.

In the sewing area, the Alliance gift helped purchase five heavy-duty sewing machines and some textile materials. In the carpentry area, our gift helped buy woodworking machines and materials. The gift also helped pay one sewing and one carpentry instructor salaries of about \$133 a month.

Our link with Kariobangi was developed through the Africa Exchange, a Nairobi organization that seeks to find partners for projects like Kariobangi and to foster dialogue between Africans and Americans.

“The funds donated through Africa Exchange to be used by Kariobangi Baptist Youth Centre are very much appreciated,” said Sam Harrell, Director of the Africa Exchange. “Thank you so much for your support of that work to enable the ministries of your colleagues in Africa.”

<p>Kariobangi Baptist Youth Centre Nairobi \$4,000</p>	
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This man learned carpentry skills at the Kariobangi Baptist Youth Centre, partly because of Alliance mission gifts.

