

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.



Worship Leader

Karen Thomas Smith

11 a.m. Sunday

Karen Thomas Smith has been Chaplain to the Christian Community at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, since 1996. She is also one of two Protestant delegates to Morocco's National Council of Churches, and she is a member of the "circuit-riding" pastoral team of the francophone Protestant Church.

It might seem like an unusual place for a small-town Kentucky girl to find herself.

A Baptist preacher's kid, Karen fell in love with the French language in high school and went on to study philosophy and French at Georgetown College, in Kentucky, and through Georgetown, at the University of Caen, France. She was also involved in cross-cultural ministry from early on, serving as a summer youth minister for Haitian churches in Montreal and as interim director of the Baptist Student Center in Ouagadougou,



2004 CONVOCATION APRIL 16-18

DAYTON, OHIO

Karen Thomas Smith and Jeremiah Wright, featured on this page, will be worship leaders for the Convocation, to be held at First Baptist Church in Dayton. Kate Campbell, profiled on the back page, will be the guest performer; and James Fowler, featured in the insert, will lead a dialogue session. Other Convocation information throughout this issue of *connections*.

Worship Leader

Jeremiah A. Wright

7 p.m. Friday

Jeremiah A. Wright Jr. has been pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, a church of more than 8,000 members, since 1972.

Wright holds a doctor of ministry degree from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH, where he majored in Black Sacred Music. He also earned master's degrees from Howard University and the University of Chicago Divinity School, and has been awarded seven honorary doctorate degrees.

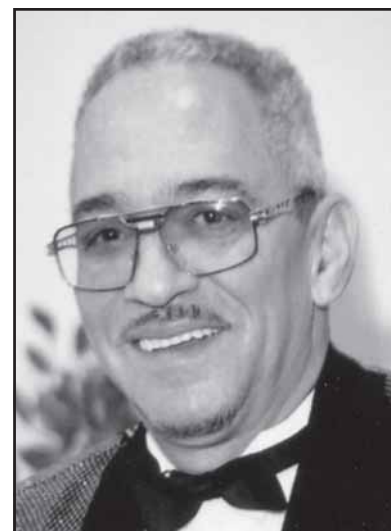
He has lectured at many seminaries and universities, and is recognized as a leading theologian and pastor. He has published four books and numerous articles.

Burkina Faso, for a year.

After marrying Kevin Smith, Karen worked in refugee resettlement in Atlanta for nine years with Vietnamese, Bosnian, Somali, and Iraqi clients and coworkers. During that time, she also completed an M.Div. at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, and did graduate work in theology at Emory. While in Atlanta, Karen and Kevin joined Oakhurst Baptist Church and became members of the Alliance. Karen served on the Alliance Board from 1992-1994.

Developing a strong interest in the Christian spiritual tradition, Karen went to St. John's University and Abbey in Collegeville, MN, to live and study with the Benedictines there, and completed an MA in Spirituality in 1995. In 1996, she was ordained to Christian ministry by Oakhurst Baptist Church, and left for Morocco a few months later.

Karen and Kevin, a professor of computer science at Al Akhawayn University, have one daughter, Claire Amal, age 4, born in Morocco.



Groves' story featured in *Baptists Today*

Former Alliance President **Richard Groves** and his spouse, **Rosie Groves**, are featured in the February issue of *Baptists Today* in an article by Editor John Pierce, titled, "Rosie's Story." In it, Pierce tells how Richard decided to turn Rosie's dramatic life story into a play, *Flight to Bertrandville*.

The one-woman show, featuring professional actress and licensed counselor Kirtan Coan, was produced by Richard. Rosie Groves was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease 14 years ago, at age 46. Richard told Pierce, however, "There's nothing about Alzheimer's in it," noting the play's major themes are mental illness, abuse and a woman dealing with her mother. *Flight to Bertrandville* premiered last August at the Ring Theater on the campus of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, where Richard is pastor of Wake Forest Baptist Church. It is scheduled for a run this year at his college alma mater, Baylor University, Waco, TX.

Rosie and Richard became grandparents on Jan. 28 with the birth of Simone Rose Gwynn, whose parents are Carrie Groves and Joel Gwynn of Somerville, MA.

Specialized work groups will meet during lunch on Saturday; if you're interested, plan to come

A key part of the implementation of the recently adopted Alliance Strategic Plan is to be played by specialists and others interested in a number of Alliance ministries, some of whom will be meeting during the Dayton Convocation on Saturday, April 17.

The gatherings will take place during lunch break on the convocation's middle day and scheduled between the Annual Meeting on Saturday morning and workshops that afternoon. They include:

- Children's and Youth Ministries: Chris Copeland; Tim Dean, conveners
- Student Ministries: Paula Clayton Dempsey; Dale Peterson, conveners

- U.S. Mission Partnerships: Daniel Pryfogle, convener
 - International Mission Partnerships: Louise Stanford, convener
- Shared experiences and ideas generated during these sessions will be forwarded to permanent work groups that will oversee the implementation of those aspects of the Strategic Plan having to do with their specialties. Furthermore, the work groups themselves essentially will be self-forming and undoubtedly will include those who participate in the Dayton conversations. You are invited to bring your passion for any of these endeavors with you to Dayton.

Information about the Convocation choir:

If you plan to sing in the Alliance choir at the Convocation, the selected anthems can be purchased through American Music Company by calling 1-800-369-2624 or at: www.americanmusiccompany.com Tell them you are in the choir for the Alliance of Baptist Convocation under the direction of Suzanne Pence. Selections are in stock.

Rehearsals for the Convocation choir are scheduled at 4:30-5:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday afternoons in the choir room of First Baptist Church. If you want to be a part of the Convocation choir, see the January *connections* or our website for information about music. You may also contact Suzanne Pence at 512.470.3080 or e-mail pence.sm@mail.utexas.edu

New Jersey church affiliates with Alliance

A warm Alliance welcome is extended to our newest affiliated congregation, **Our Savior Baptist Church**, Plainfield, NJ, where Alliance member **Ilan Mitchell-Smith** is pastor. The new church was organized last October.

The Alliance-affiliated **Ellis Avenue Church** of Chicago is seeking a new senior pastor to succeed Alliance Vice President Shanta Premawardhana. Applications or expressions of interest should be sent to Brenda Russell, 417 So. Jefferson, Apt. 207; Chicago, IL 60607. Applications and nominations also may be sent to the church website (www.ellisearch.org), where

additional information about the position may be found.

Alliance member **Tim Tutt**, pastor of United Church of Austin, TX, a congregation affiliated with the Alliance, United Church of Christ, and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), has been elected president of the Austin area Interreligious Ministries.

Alliance member **Robert Maddox** has retired as editor of the *Capital Baptist*, the monthly publication of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention, where he served for more than nine years. Maddox came to Washington in 1977 as a speechwriter for President Jimmy Carter. He later was executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Since 1992 he has been pastor of the Alliance-affiliated **Briggs Memorial Baptist Church** of Bethesda, MD.

The **Spirituality Mission Group** of Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, GA, has published a 160-page book, "Bless This Weary World, Prayers at Oakhurst" The volume, which sells for \$15 including shipping and handling, covers 24 years of prayers by church members. Readers will recognize many Alliance members in this unique collection and find identity with their own conversations with God. To order, write the church at 222 East Lake Drive, Decatur, GA 30030.

happenings

Convocation housing: Doubletree Hotel

\$89 per night, single/double; \$99 for a suite

937.461.4700

Dialogue

James W. Fowler

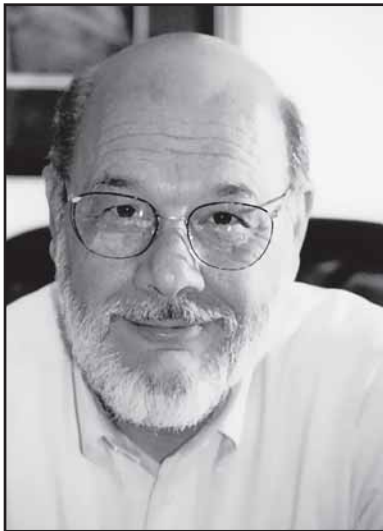
9 a.m. Sunday

James W. Fowler is Director of the Center for Ethics & Professor of Theology and Human Development at **Emory University**.

His pioneering research and the resulting theory of faith development have earned him international recognition. His best-known book, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Development and the Quest for Meaning*, is in its 38th printing, and has been translated into German, Korean, and Portuguese editions.

Fowler has written or edited 10 other books and more than 60 articles, contributing to the fields of practical theology and theological ethics. Four volumes of critical discussion of Fowler's research and theory have emerged from national and international seminars devoted to his work. He has received the Oskar Pfister Award from the American Psychiatric Association, "for enduring contributions to the dialogue between religion and psychiatry" and the William James Award from the American Psychological Association, "for contributions that advance the psychology of religion." Both awards came in 1994. In 1999 the University of Edinburgh awarded him a doctor of divinity degree, *honoris causa*.

He is a graduate of Duke University and Drew Theological Seminary and earned his Ph.D. at Harvard University in Religion and Society in 1971, with a focus in ethics and sociology of religion. He pursued post-doctoral studies at the Center for Moral Development at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (1971-72). He taught at Harvard Divinity School (1969-75) and at Boston College (1975-76). He joined the Emory staff in 1977. He is a minister in the United Methodist Church.



A tour of Dayton

Ohioan Joe Henry has offered to lead a tour of Dayton-area historical and religious sites on Friday afternoon before the Convocation. The tour will take approximately 3 hours, leaving First Baptist Church at 2 p.m. and returning one hour before the gathering reception. For additional information, contact Joe Henry at 513-745-9845.

Please note: The luncheons for students, chaplains, and for other special interest groups including those with our international guests, will be Saturday, not Friday as was listed in the convocation brochure.

The Alliance of Baptists

THE ALLIANCE OF BAPTISTS

18th Annual Convocation
April 16-18, 2004
First Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio

Meeting Registration

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Daytime phone _____

Email _____

Child care needs (ages/times) _____

Special dietary/access needs _____

Is this your first Convocation? Yes No

Are you staying at the Doubletree? Yes No

Registration Fees

_____ Individuals @ \$75 ea. \$ _____

_____ Students @ \$35 ea. \$ _____

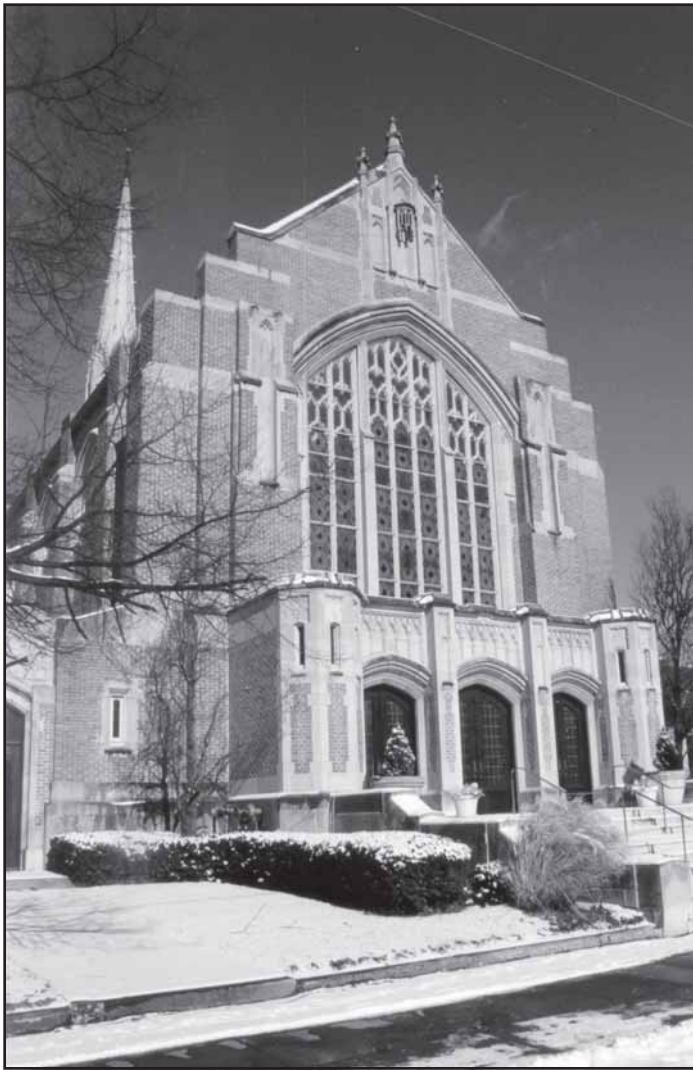
Total Enclosed \$ _____

*Mail registration form
with check to:*

**The Alliance of Baptists
1328 16th Street NW
Washington DC 20036**

(You may use the
enclosed gift envelope to send
in your registration.)





The Convocation will be held at First Baptist Church Dayton, shown here. Cross Creek Community Church, where Mike Castle is pastor, will be co-host.

Lifting Our Lights Together: Strengthening Our Commitment to Ecumenical and Interfaith Relationships

After September 2001, understanding other faith groups has taken on a new and critical significance. For the Alliance of Baptists, developing strong ecumenical and interfaith relationships has been a part of our mission from the beginning.

At our 2004 Convocation, under the guidance of experts **Charles Kimball, Jeremiah Wright, James Fowler and Karen Thomas Smith**, we'll explore ways to strengthen ecumenical and interfaith ties in our own communities and around the world. We'll be led in morning prayers by **Stephanie Ford**, a teacher at a Quaker University, and enjoy the songs of national recording artist **Kate Campbell**. We will also celebrate our partnership with the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Won't you consider joining us in Dayton to learn even more about what you can do to promote goodwill among all faiths while holding fast to your own beliefs?

Convocation Workshops:

Ecumenism 101: Conversation with Robert Welsh, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Lydia Veliko (United Church of Christ), and Stan Haste (Alliance of Baptists) about the why, what and how of ecumenical partnering.

A pastor and people's interfaith journey: Lanny Peters will share about the experience of his congregation's growing commitment to meaningful interfaith involvement. Peters is pastor of Oakhurst Baptist Church, Decatur, GA.

Raising our children to appreciate other faith traditions: Conversation with Karen Thomas Smith, protestant chaplain, Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco.

Racial reconciliation in church and community: Led by John Burns, pastor, and Jean Robinson Casey, associate pastor for community ministry, University Baptist Church, College Park, MD.

Every Church a Peace Church: Introducing a new curriculum for congregations. Led by Michael Westmoreland-Smith, Louisville, KY.

Dialogue with Ohio Interfaith Leaders: Led by David Waugh, pastor, Metro Baptist Church, New York, NY.

Stories from the front line: Led by Mica Togami, chaplain, Savannah, GA, this workshop will focus on the experiences of chaplains and pastoral counselors ministering in interfaith settings.

Networking for women in ministry: Conversations with women ministering in ecumenical and interfaith settings led Ginny Brown Daniel, pastor, Plymouth United Church (UCC), Spring, TX., and chairperson, Alliance's Women in the Church Committee.

Multiculturalism and ministry: Conversations with our international guests from Cuba, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe, led by Karen Thomas Smith.

Seasons of the Spirit: An introduction to a lectionary-based, ecumenical curriculum designed for the whole church.

Counseling conscientious objectors: Led by Stan Wilson, pastor, Northside Baptist Church, Clinton, MS.

Considering Anti-Jewish Texts in the New Testament: Led by John Ewing Roberts, former Alliance president and retired pastor in Baltimore, MD.

Additional workshop topics will be listed in the April newsletter.

A disgraceful decision

To a growing list of unreasonable denials of travel visas to citizens of other countries wishing to visit the United States can be added now the truly disgraceful decision to deny such a visa to a friend of the Alliance, the Rev. Raúl Suárez of Cuba. I for one am outraged.

Although first reports about the denial of Suárez' application for a visa to come to the U.S. in February to deliver lectures on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s influence in Cuba and beyond gave no official reason for the State Department action, our government since has acknowledged he was denied because he is a member of the Cuban parliament.

Raúl Suárez is precisely the kind of Cuban our government should want to travel in this country – and in part precisely because he is a ranking member of Cuba's unicameral legislative body, the National Assembly of People's Power. Several years ago he was persuaded by neighbors in his section of the Havana municipality of Marianao to be nominated as their representative. He was elected overwhelmingly then and has been reelected repeatedly since.

Here are some of his credentials. Rev. Suárez is pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Marianao. He is director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, which is adjacent to the church. Under his leadership, both church and center have played vital roles in repairing decaying houses in their municipality, in helping residents provide fresh fruits and vegetables in urban organic gardens, and by providing a wide range of social services for older citizens, including the homebound.

Ebenezer Baptist Church sponsors one of the finest musical and theatrical programs for children and young people to be found anywhere. Its chorales and theater groups are in wide demand, both in Cuba and in other parts of the world. The church's liturgy is fresh and alive. To worship there is to drink deep from living waters. Above all else, Raúl Suárez is a loving pastor and prophetic preacher who is making a difference in people's lives.

He is also a public figure and government officer. One of three Protestant clergymen currently serving in the National Assembly,

Suárez is both priest and prophet to his nation. His principal identity is that of pastor of the church he serves; most Cubans so know him. Within the inner circles of Cuba's leaders, God alone knows the depth of pastoral care he has rendered.

Yet Raúl Suárez is a prophet as well. More than once, both from his own pulpit and during annual meetings of the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba, I have heard him critique what he calls his government's "errors" and "excesses." For decades he was one in an influential circle of Cuba's clergy who openly objected to Fidel Castro's denial of a robust free exercise of religion. Finally in 1992, this group was granted an interview with their president they had demanded for years. Over the course of several hours, they laid out their grievances in painstaking and presumably risky detail.

As a result, that very year the Cuban constitution was amended to remove a section that 30 years earlier had declared the island nation an atheistic state. Previous career restrictions on Christian young people were rescinded, making it possible for them to pursue vocations in law and journalism, to name two previously prohibited fields. What I have described as a persistent pattern of petty harassment of the churches by neighborhood committees for the "defense of the revolution" was ordered stopped. Church people no longer were accused of being counterrevolutionaries, thus beginning a process to remove a significant stigma previously used to keep Christians down.

Over the past decade, these developments led to the historic January 1998 visit of Pope John Paul II to Cuba and, 15 months later, a two-month "evangelical celebration" that resulted in sweeping revivals in both Catholicism and Protestantism across the breadth of the island. Today the churches are filled to overflowing. The Spirit of God is at work in every stratum of Cuban society. None of this would be true were it not for the courageous leadership of Raúl Suárez and others like him, patriots all who care about their country but who at once are supremely loyal to Jesus Christ.

Shame on us and our government for not being willing to listen to them and learn from them.

perspectives



By Stan Hasteley
Executive Director

alliance finances

Through January 31

2004 Operating Budget

Needs: \$28,859
Receipts: \$17,975

2004 Mission Offering

Goal: \$113,000
Receipts: \$20,336

BTSR sponsors sixth annual preaching/worship conference

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond announces its sixth annual Chester Brown/Hampton Baptist Church Preaching and Worship Conference. Guest preachers will be Thomas Troeger and Sarah Jackson Shelton. The exciting new schedule begins the conference on Monday afternoon with breakout sessions and ends with a worship service on Wednesday morning. The conference will be April 19-21. Call 804.204.1241 for more information.



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.

March 2004

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2004 CONVOCAATION SPECIAL: Singer/songwriter Kate Campbell will join us for worship on Saturday evening, April 17, and perform at a reception afterwards.

Kate Campbell – Twang On A Wire

Since making her recording debut in 1995 with *Songs From The Levee*, singer/songwriter Kate Campbell has since put together a body of work matched only (perhaps) by Emmylou in consistency, Lucinda Williams in terms of pure, wrenching, honest self-examination and self-revelation and no one for its sheer display of broad-based, intimate artfulness.

Her vocal delivery, gift for storytelling and command of a full-range of American music styles have combined to earn Campbell recognition as a formidable talent by critics, musicians and a discerning public. Kate's *Moonpie Dreams* (1997) and *Visions Of Plenty* (1998) each garnered "Folk Album Of The Year" nominations from the Nashville Music Awards, and *Rosaryville* (1999) *Wandering Strange* (2001), and *Monuments* (2003) extended the upward-bound arc.

Campbell has played at the Cambridge Folk Festival (England), Merlefest, Philadelphia Folk Festival, and Port Fairy Folk Festival (Australia), been featured on National Public Radio's Morning Edition, All Things Considered, Live From Mountain Stage, and had her story included in the debut issue of The Oxford American's ultra-hip Southern Music series. An interview with Kate also appeared in the fascinating book *Solo: Women Singer-Songwriters In Their Own Words*.

As a child of the South, her musical tastes were forged in the smoky fires of soul, R&B, Southern rock, country, and folk music.

As the daughter of a Baptist preacher from Sledge, MS, Kate's formative years were spent in the civil rights movement of the 1960's, and the

experiences of those years have shaped her heart, character and convictions ever since. She has performed at the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and the Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery, AL.

Twang On A Wire features Campbell singing with Kevin Gordon (*Mississippi Woman, Louisiana Man*), Will Kimbrough (*Boulder To Birmingham*), and Jeff Finlin (*Would You Lay With Me In A Field Of Stone*). With the exception of the closing title track, Campbell set aside her own songwriting to salute a dozen singles culled from the years 1968 – 1975 by women country singers including songs written by Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris, and Tammy Wynette.

Twang On A Wire enhanced CD includes an exclusive movie about the making and recording of the album. It contains interviews with Kate and live studio performance footage.

Kate Campbell's music continues to inspire a growing audience. Ballet Memphis featured songs from each of Campbell's six CDs as well as a live performance by Kate and band at a ballet entitled *South Of Everywhere*.

