

connections

December 2001

Volume 4 Issue 12

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.



As the year-end approaches, please consider making your gift to the Alliance of Baptists Bridges of Hope Mission Offering. Twenty organizations are depending on our support. Through the middle of November, we were still about \$36,000 short of the \$92,000 goal.

KEEPING FAITH: BEING BAPTIST IN A CHANGING WORLD

It has a new theme and different workshops but the goal is the same: to bring the Alliance of Baptists to the West Coast.

The Fall mini-convocation in Oakland was postponed because of disruptions in air travel caused by the Sept. 11 attacks. It has been rescheduled for Saturday, January 12 from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church in Oakland, California.

The theme, Keeping Faith: BEING BAPTIST IN A CHANGING WORLD, taken from II Cor. 4:8-10, has been changed to reflect more

adequately recent events that have impacted our world.

A town meeting has been added to the program to give participants an opportunity to discuss current events. The meeting will focus on the questions of "How is the world different today?" and "How do we live in it as people of faith?"

The registration fee is \$25 (\$15 for students), and includes lunch. Childcare will be available. Contact the Alliance office to register.

The Alliance's Board of Directors will meet prior to the mini-convocation in Oakland on Jan. 10-11

workshops:

Walking in the Fire: Conflict Transformation One-to-One and Around the World — Jane Medema

Differences Between Christians, Jews and Muslims - Irreconcilable? A Blessing, A Curse, or Both? — John Ewing Roberts, C. Welton Gaddy, Ramonia Lee

Holding Ourselves Accountable for Diversity: a Biblical Perspective — Donald Ng

Faith and Creativity — Daniel Buford

town meeting:

How is the world different today? How do we live in it as people of faith? A forum for discussion. Moderator: Esther Hargis

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body."

II Cor. 4:8-10

featuring:

Nancy Hastings Sehested, Past Alliance president, Baptist preacher & state prison chaplain from Charlotte, North Carolina

Michael-Ray Mathews, pastor of Grace Baptist Church, San Jose, CA

Robert Stapp, singer, musician, former minister of music at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, Oakland, CA

hotel

Executive Inn
1755 Embarcadero
Oakland CA 94606
510.536.6633 or
800.346.6331

As for group # 146H
Rate \$95 per night + tax,
single or double

Deadline for guaranteed rate:

December 19

Lloyd H. Neil, 84, husband of Anne Thomas Neil, died November 8 at Raleigh Community Hospital. He was born in Tennessee and grew up in South Carolina, the son of a Southern Baptist minister. Lloyd earned a Master of Divinity degree in 1952 from Southern Seminary. The same year, Anne and he were commissioned as missionaries by the Foreign Mission Board and they spent their professional lives in West Africa. Since 1981 Lloyd and Anne have lived in Wake Forest.

happenings

In addition to Anne, Lloyd is survived by his daughter, Rebecca Albritton and her husband, Bob, and their children, Neil and Anne; his second daughter, Elaine Neil Orr and her husband, Andy, and their son, Joel, all of Raleigh; a sister, Evelyn Thomas and brother, John Neil, both of South Carolina. Memorial contributions may be made to the Sacred Walk Garden Fund, c/o Millbrook Baptist Church, 1519 E. Millbrook Rd., Raleigh, NC 27609.

Howard Roberts has been called as pastor of Glenview Community Church (affiliated with the United Church of Christ) in Glenview, IL, a suburb of Chicago. Howard is a former vice president of the Alliance of Baptists and has served churches in Georgia, Maryland, Alabama and Virginia.

Alliance board member **José Oliveras** of Puerto Rico has a new baby girl, Carola Oliveras Rodríguez, born on Sept. 6. She was in the neonatal intensive care unit for seven days, but José reports that she is “now perfectly fine.”

Susan Miller assumed duties as Executive Director of Baptist Women in Ministry (BWIM) on Nov. 5. Miller is the first to hold this new post for the 18-year-old organization. She is a graduate of Southwest Baptist University and Midwestern Seminary, where she was a finalist for the preaching award in 1994. She has served on the staff of Wornall Road Baptist Church in Kansas City, MO, and has also edited “The Weaver’s Cloth,” a worship resource.



Midiam Lobaina of Havana, Cuba, is flanked by outgoing Virginia Alliance President Sylvia Campbell of Alexandria and incoming President Link Elmore of Richmond. Lobaina was this year’s speaker at the annual dinner meeting of the Virginia Alliance, held Nov. 7 at Lake Ridge Baptist Church in Woodbridge, VA. Midiam currently serves as recording secretary of the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba and is a vice president of the Lay Theological Institute in Havana, an ecumenical ministry in which Fraternity people are active.

BWIM president Karen Massey says of Susan, “She is well-acquainted with BWIM, and shares our vision to be a catalyst in Baptist life, drawing together women and men in partnership with God, to illuminate, advocate and nurture the gifts and graces of women.”

Susan is married and has a four-year-old daughter. BWIM is headquartered on the campus of Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, KS.



The Alliance of Baptists

1328 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036

Executive Director: Stan Hasty
Associate Director: Jeanette Holt
(202) 745-7609
Fax: (202) 745-0023
AllianceofBaptists@cs.com
www.AllianceofBaptists.org

Newsletter Editor:

Sue Harper Poss
P.O. Box 25461
Greenville, SC 29616
(864) 848-3346
Fax: (864) 848-5258
SuePoss@compuserve.com

National Council of Churches General Assembly in Oakland

Broadway: Encouragement and perspective profound

Alliance board members **Jerene Broadway** of San Francisco and **David Waugh** of New York City represented the Alliance at the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches Nov. 13-15 in Oakland, CA.

Delegates from the NCC’s 36 Protestant and Orthodox member communions, in a three-page statement, lamented the suffering, death and grief unleashed upon the United States on Sept. 11 and ex-

pressed a longing for peace with justice. The Assembly encouraged its member congregations “to undertake open dialogue on questions of peace and justice seeking to build stronger multi-faith communities of tolerance and mutual understanding, and to renew our commitment of the churches in the ministry of peace with justice.”

A delegation from the World Council of Churches brought “Words of Comfort and

Prayers for Healing” in response to the recent terrorist activities in the USA. “I was moved by the words of support and solidarity offered to us by this delegation, whose members were from Pakistan, Lebanon, Palestine, South Africa, Indonesia, Russia, and France,” Jerene said. “As you can imagine, many of them live with terrorism and violence on a daily basis. I found their encouragement and perspective to be profound.”

Now comes the hard part

With the Taliban routed by U.S. bombing and the surprising strength of the Northern Alliance, Afghanistan may have a new lease on life. A desperately poor people plagued by years of war with the former Soviet Union, political instability in the face of the Soviet withdrawal, and most recently the reign of terror inflicted by the Taliban, many Afghans suddenly have new hope. Yet their chances for a better life hinge on the role the U.S. plays from now on. Like it or not, that is our burden.

And yes, that burden includes the provision of massive humanitarian assistance on a scale not unlike that of our military intervention. With winter looming large and hundreds of thousands of displaced Afghans facing starvation, a humanitarian disaster is inevitable unless the U.S. and our allies move swiftly. As Jim Wallis of the Sojourners community noted recently in a splendid op-ed piece in the *Washington Post*, we have a golden opportunity to show the beleaguered people of Afghanistan and of the entire region that we can feed them as well as bomb them.

To provide assistance on the level required, however, will depend in part on the Bush administration's ability to get beyond the internecine battle being fought between the Department of Defense and the Department of State. One of the worst-kept secrets in Washington these days is the unseemly behind-the-scenes conflict between Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell. It is clear Rumsfeld won the early debate over waging war swiftly and decisively. Now President Bush would do well to deploy Powell and his considerable gifts in

diplomacy to wage peace just as swiftly and decisively.

That is the only way to begin winning the hearts and minds not only of Afghans but of countless others in the Muslim world. President Bush's sincerity in insisting the war is against terrorists and not Muslims — and I believe he is sincere in this — now will be put to an even harder test than that of deploying massive military power. Our diplomatic and humanitarian deployment will have to be even more massive.

If we live up to our highest ideals in the months and years just ahead, we can do our part in the rebuilding of Central Asia and the Middle East, much as our parents' and grandparents' generation helped rebuild Germany and Japan in the aftermath of World War II. To do so will require fundamental changes in our policies toward Afghanistan, to be sure, but also toward

Iraq and the Palestinians. These are daunting challenges.

Yet history always has its ironies. President Bush, who campaigned against what he too easily dismissed as "nation-building," now finds himself inextricably engaged in it. Pray he does well at it. For if he does, we might witness a victory for peace every bit as decisive as that so recently won on the field of battle.

As we approach Advent this year, please remember to give generously to the Alliance's Bridges of Hope Mission Offering. We need a big December to meet our modest goal of \$92,000. Our partners in mission are hoping with us that we'll do so. From each of them and your Board of Directors, a hearty "Thank You!"

perspectives



By Stan Haste
Executive Director

Fraternity meeting postponed as storm hits Cuba

The Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba has announced that its annual assembly has been rescheduled for Dec. 6-9 at the William Carey Baptist Church in Havana.

Originally set for Nov. 1-4, the gathering was postponed due to a late-season hurricane that swept across the island the same weekend. According to official reports, five persons lost their lives during the strongest hurricane to hit Cuba in a half century. Thanks to a massive civil defense effort, the death

toll was mercifully low.

Nonetheless, property damage was heavy, especially in the province and city of Matanzas, the region of the 700-mile long island that took the brunt of the storm. According to Fraternity officers Francisco Rodés, Manuel Delgado and Adalberto Cuéllar, people in cities and towns and in the countryside are rallying to one another's aid, as is customary in Cuba during times of crisis.

Alliance of Baptists representatives Sylvia Campbell of

Virginia and Max Hill of West Virginia were in Cuba just before Michelle came ashore with the intention of participating in the Fraternity assembly.

Fraternity officials insisted they leave, however, on Saturday, Nov. 3, the day before the full force of the storm hit the island. They were accompanied by Midiam Lobaina of Havana, a Fraternity officer who was traveling to the U.S. to speak to the Virginia Alliance Nov. 7.

2001 Operating Budget

Through November 16

Needs: \$243,829

Receipts: \$224,249

2001 Mission Offering:

Goal: \$92,000

Receipts: \$56,120

December 2001

The Alliance of Baptists
1328 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036
202.745.7609

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit 579
Greenville, SC

The horrors of an inestimable tragedy have set before us with great clarity the globalization of opposition to the core values of varied religious traditions that give substance to the positive and healing role of religion in American life.

Civility. The horrors at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon etched into our psyches the ultimate consequences of people demonizing those with whom they disagree and concluding that differences of opinion justify the eradication of enemies of truth as one group defines truth. No more can civility be seen as an innocuous value confused with good etiquette and characterized by passivity. The terrorist attack on our nation represented incivility in its extremity.

Personal Dignity and Mutual Respect. Calls for mutual respect for personal dignity should resound within every neighborhood in our nation. However, the disturbing reality that adds to the grief is literally thousands of episodes of discrimination and even violence targeting Sikhs and Muslims and people of Arabic

HORRORS THAT SET FORTH CLARITY OF OPPOSITION TO VARIOUS RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS GIVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE

A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE AT A CRITICAL MOMENT



These are excerpts from a column written by C. Welton Gaddy, Executive Director of the Interfaith Alliance and immediate past president of the Alliance of Baptists. Welton, along with past president John Ewing Roberts and board member Ramonia Lee, will lead a workshop at the West Coast event titled Differences Between Christians, Jews and Muslims - Irreconcilable? A Blessing, A Curse, or Both?

descent. Inflammatory rhetoric has inspired violence in the streets. Both our words and actions must reflect sensitivity and humility rather than rigid labeling of whole groups of people as good or evil.

Freedom and Civil Rights. Our nation will be shaped as much by the manner in which we react to the terrorists' attack as we will by the attack itself. If we allow the terrorists to cause us to try to preserve freedom by destroying freedom, we will have given the terrorists too much. Already they have destroyed our buildings and robbed us of the blessings of precious lives. We must not let them drive us away from a solid commitment to freedom!

Church-State Separation. Seldom have we seen such dramatic examples of the tragedy of an unholy union between religion and government and the extreme danger of political people manipulating religion for partisan purposes or religious people manipulating government for sectarian purposes. Sadly, we no longer have to wonder about the evil and devastation that result from a merger between religion and government. We have been blindsided by the reality of horrors fomented by people using religion to perpetrate deeds that no religion justifies. And, we know that no government ever can claim to be the embodiment of good to the extent that all outside it are evil.

Interfaith Education. Understanding born of interfaith education can serve us well as we move past this present moment. A lack of understanding has resulted in vicious attacks on freedom-loving Americans who are a part of the Muslim and Sikh

religious traditions because of an indiscriminate association of them with terrorists who misuse the vocabulary and spirituality of Islam. Our nation needs a cram course in interfaith education as it develops a long-term commitment to understanding and protecting the rich religious pluralism that characterizes our land!

I am very much aware of the intimate relationship that can exist between compassion and justice. Merciful people are the ones who ultimately position themselves against the injustices that make relief and recovery efforts necessary. A dangerous anger will have to be managed responsibly and channeled into words and actions that help not hurt us all.