

connections

May 1999

Volume 2 Issue 5

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.

The board also:

▶ Set the weekend following Easter as the stated date for future Alliance Convocations and voted to continue the practice of rotating the schedule between Friday-Saturday-Sunday and Thursday-Friday-Saturday.

▶ Set themes for the next three Convocations: Church-state relations, 2000; Gender equity, 2001; and Church leadership, 2002.

▶ Accepted a recommendation of the Theological Education Committee that the Alliance assist Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond in finding internships for students who are Alliance members in churches affiliated with the Alliance.

▶ Accepted a recommendation from the Executive Committee to work with BTSR in establishing a fund to support a Founders Day program to focus attention on the Alliance's role in the school's founding.

▶ Approved a Missions Committee initiative to seek out churches, individuals and other groups to enter into partnerships with six home mission areas in Zimbabwe.

▶ Endorsed Jubilee 2000, an effort to forgive Third World debt, and encouraged distribution of information on this effort provided by Bread for the World.

Major actions by the Alliance Board of Directors prior to the recent Richmond Convocation, subsequently approved by the membership in Annual Meeting, included creation of a Committee on Ordination and endorsement of military chaplains.

Upon recommendation of its Executive Committee, the board adopted the following statement on ordination: "Consistent with the historic role of associations in our Baptist heritage, the Alliance of Baptists will offer its services to congregations upon request in their processes of ordaining Alliance members to the

board and annual meeting actions committee on ordination



Members of the Alliance board are divided among nine committees. Wanda Burton-Crutchfield, left, was chair of the Women in the Church Committee during 1998-99, on which Bill Sapp, Pat Fulbright, and Bill Butler were members.

alliance members quoted on *perils of pauline*

Two Alliance members were quoted in the April 5 issue of *U. S. News and World Report* in an article titled "The perils of Pauline exegesis." Immediate past president Nancy Hastings Sehested of Clyde, NC, and Larry Bethune, pastor of University Baptist Church in Austin, TX, presented the progressive point of view in the interpretation of Paul's "submit graciously" and "men with men working that which is unseemly" passages. "In the Epistles, people tend to pick and choose on the basis of their own personal prejudices," said Larry, whose church welcomes the full participation of women, homosexuals, and minorities. Nancy was held up as an example of one "who was thrown out of her local Southern Baptist Association for the transgression of serving as pastor." Her quote: "I've been beat up by St. Paul for the past 20 years." This sidebar accompanied a longer article about St. Paul.

ministry." The action further authorized President C. Welton Gaddy to appoint a Committee on Ordination to implement the statement.

Board action followed interviews with several Baptist historians, all of whom pointed to the early example of the Philadelphia Baptist Association — the first Baptist association in the United States — which took it upon itself to offer a similar service to its congregations. Those churches came from five different states, making the Philadelphia association a non-geographic body.

Also, as reported last month, the board and membership approved Alliance endorsement of military chaplains, "with the understanding we will engage in an ongoing study of its church-state and peace and justice implications." Endorsement of pastoral counselors and chaplains in other institutional settings was approved last year.

happenings



Alliance member Ted Ellett was awarded the honorary doctor of humanities degree April 16 at Furman University in Greenville, SC. Stan Hastey, on the Furman campus to discuss possible Cuba projects, was present for the ceremony. Ted is a member of First Baptist Church in Greenville.

Mark A. Stauffer will begin work June 1 as pastor of Luther Rice Memorial Baptist Church in Silver Spring, MD. He previously was pastor of First Baptist Church, Norristown, PA.

First Baptist Church in Silver Spring, MD, will celebrate its 75th anniversary in June. The highlight of the celebration will be a banquet on June 12, featuring keynote speaker Tony Campolo.



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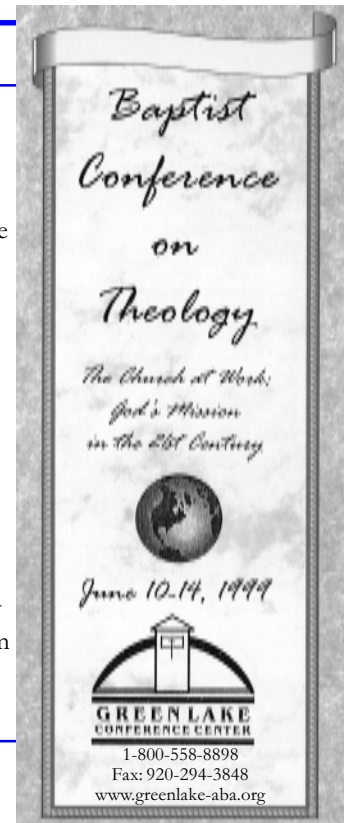
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The third in a series of four major theological conferences to be held at Green Lake Conference Center, the Baptist Conference on Theology is designed for church members and pastors who are looking toward preparing their churches for the new millennium. The conference, June 10-14, will focus on the churches' response to mission in its local, national and global dimensions.

Jointly sponsored by the Alliance of Baptists, American Baptist National Ministries, American Baptist Women in Ministry, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and American Baptist Assembly, this series of theological conferences at Baptists' premiere conference center models the wave of the future in intra-Baptist collaboration. Alliance representatives on this year's planning team were former President Richard Groves and Associate Director Jeanette Holt.



Steve Matthews and Tilden Bridges, members of Northminster Church in Richmond, helped with local arrangements for the Convocation. Northminster and Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, hosted this year's Convocation.



new BTSR scholarship fund established by FBC Greenville

Through an anonymous gift of more than \$100,000 from one of its members, First Baptist Church in Greenville, SC, has set up a scholarship fund to help South Carolina students attend Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. The gift was made in honor of the church and in recognition of the role it had in the seminary's beginning. The church was the site of the March 1989 meeting of the Alliance of Baptists when we voted to begin a new seminary.

statement on U.S.-Cuba relations

This statement on Cuba was adopted by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Since 1961 the United States has isolated Cuba diplomatically and economically. For the first three decades of official hostilities between our two governments, a superpower Cold War between the old Soviet Union and the United States seemed to dictate Cuba's treatment at the hands of both.

For the past decade, however, there has been no Cold War. Despite the absence of previously cited strategic reasons for doing so, the United States continues to isolate Cuba diplomatically and maintain a comprehensive economic boycott against one of our closest neighbors.

Along with many other religious bodies in our country, the Alliance of Baptists again lifts its voice in protest of these policies. Our rich and rewarding relationship with our partner group, the Fraternidad de Iglesias Bautistas de Cuba, continually provides us

Three new publications conceived and produced by Alliance members illustrate the remarkable way we continue to make a difference far beyond what might be expected of a relatively small group with limited financial resources. Also remarkable is the fact that the authors of all three have been or are members of the same Alliance congregation – Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, NC. These Alliance members saw needs and translated them into products we are now able to offer other members and affiliated churches.

Board member and Wesley Theological Seminary student Cathy Tamsberg devoted a substantial portion of last summer to writing and publishing *Pursuing Justice: A Social Justice Curriculum for Churches*. Published as a joint effort by the Alliance and the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, this 10-lesson unit of study provides biblical interpretation, spiritual exercises and bibliographical suggestions on U.S. poverty; workers' rights; classism and consumerism; criminal justice; racism; sexism; heterosexism and homophobia; peace; global poverty; and the environment.

Alliance founder and first executive director Alan Neely has written *A New Call to Mission: Help for Perplexed Churches*, in which the approaches to mission of the Alliance, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and International Mission Board, SBC, are examined

perspectives



By Stan Hasteley
Executive Director

and analyzed. Yet this much-needed work offers more than a case-study approach to three very different ways of fulfilling the larger mission of Baptist congregations. It also provides a platform for one of the Christian world's foremost missiologists to assess the need for change in approaching mission in today's world.

Attesting to the value of these recent works is the fact that Smyth & Helwys Publishing is talking with Alan and Cathy about producing a second edition of each within the next few months.

In addition, Alliance member Herman Greene, along with other members of the Work Group on Ecology he chairs, has produced *Care for the Earth: An Invitation to Reflection and Action*. In its pages, Alliance people are invited to give wing to the commitment we made as part of our 1997 Mission statement — to care for the created order. Herman, now a member of Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill, NC, worked three years to develop this concise and well-written report.

All three of these newly published resources may be ordered from the Alliance office. Single copies of *Care for the Earth* are free. *A New Call to Mission* and *Pursuing Justice* are available at \$20 each, including handling and postage.



Besides these newer resources from the Alliance, the *Report of the Task Force on Human Sexuality: A Document for Dialogue and Study* has been reprinted in a new format and is now available. The only change in content in the new edition is a preface explaining how the report came to be. Single copies may be ordered free of charge from the Alliance office. Larger quantities are available for the cost of postage.

future convocation dates and sites:

- April 27-29, 2000: University Baptist Church, Austin, TX
- April 20-22, 2001: Oakhurst Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA
- April 4-6, 2002: Wake Forest Baptist Church and Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC

with the much-needed perspective of observing the suffering of the people of Cuba. We ache for and with them and long for the normalization of diplomatic and economic relations between our governments so that the people of the United States may begin to make amends to the people of Cuba.

As one small step in that direction, the Congress of the United States is to consider again this year a partial lifting of economic sanctions against Cuba so as to enable the government of Cuba to purchase foods and medicines in international markets without the imposition of penalties by the United States. We encourage the Congress to approve companion measures on this matter soon to be introduced in the Senate and House of Representatives and urge President Clinton to sign such legislation at the earliest possible moment.



Joann Davis of Severna Park, MD, was chair of this year's Nominating Committee. Other members were Martha Barr, PA; Kyle Childress, TX; Pat Fulbright, NC; and Lee Gallman, GA.

alliance board

The following people were elected as officers and directors of the Alliance at the Annual Meeting.

President: Welton Gaddy, Monroe, LA

Vice President: Genie Dyer, Waco, TX

Secretary: David Gooch, Nashville, TN

Board of Directors, term expiring 2001:

Tim Dean (student member), Fort Worth, TX

Board of Directors, for second three-year terms, expiring 2002:

Jerene Broadway, San Francisco, CA
Richard Cook, Hunt Valley, MD
Ruth Cuéllar, Lawrenceville, GA
Ed Galbreath, Stockbridge, GA

Board of Directors, for three-year terms, expiring 2002:

Audrey Clifton, Kansas City, KS
Richard Groves, Winston-Salem, NC
Kenneth Williams, Rochester, NY

Budget Gifts YTD:

Operating Income: \$87,298
Budget Needs: \$78,544

Bridges of Hope YTD:

Goal: \$80,000
Receipts: \$17,254

Cuba Grant:

Challenge: \$23,700
Receipts: \$18,808

New to the list of mission offering recipients this year is Baptists and Others Interested in Spirituality, a group that has met each of the past five summers at Mars Hill College in North Carolina.

The \$3,000 from the Alliance will provide scholarships for 10 seminary students to attend the 1999 Gathering.

The Gathering is open to anyone who wants to meet with others in the spirit of friendship to pray, share stories about their spiritual journeys, and learn from one another about the contemplative life.

The idea for the Gathering grew out of a conversation in 1994 between E. Glenn Hinson, Professor of Church History, Spirituality, and Worship at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, and Thomas B. Turner, Minister of Spiritual Direction at Pilgrims Rest Retreat Center in Greenville, SC.

They discussed the need for Baptists involved in ecumenical and Catholic programs of spiritual formation to meet one another and talk about their rich experiences with the contemporary spirituality movement.

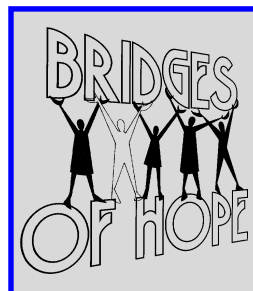
The 1994 Gathering featured a lecture by Hinson about spirituality and how Baptists relate to it. In 1995 the focus was on the freedom of Baptist spirituality: freedom for faith, freedom for the Word, freedom for prayer, freedom for missions and freedom for community.

In 1996 participants explored the

common ground of spirituality and the arts. The 1997 Gathering invited participants to tell stories about their adventures in search of authentic spiritual life in four areas: welcoming the mystic, developing a contemplative life, exploring new forms of community, and nurturing the prophet.

In celebration of the fifth anniversary, the format for 1998 was expanded from a three-day retreat to include several options over the course of a week — a conference, a meeting for spiritual directors and other guides, and an experiential prayer retreat.

In 1999, the Advent Center (the emerging spirituality center at Mars Hill) will assume responsibility for the Gathering, July 25-31. The theme for the week will be “Patterns of the Sacred.” Under the sub-theme of “Patterns for Living,” the conference will address the significance of the Rule of St. Benedict for modern spiritual life, and eight Baptists who are oblates in Catholic contemplative communities or members of Catholic Third Orders will talk about their experiences of living by a “rule of life.”



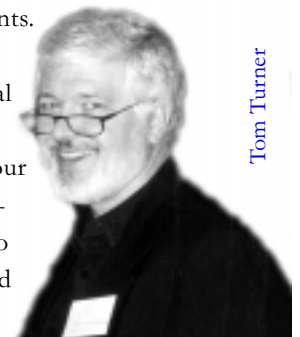
**Baptists and
Others Interested
in Spirituality:
\$3,000**

Once again, there will be a meeting for spiritual directors and other guides that will address the topic of “Patterns for Guiding.” The retreat, “Patterns for Praying,” will offer guidance in four approaches to prayer: centering prayer, praying the Psalms, prayer and art, and praying with nature.

“The Gathering is an opportunity for seminary students to experience the integration of spiritual formation and theological education, meet Baptists who are now working in the area of spirituality, form friendships that will enrich their ministries for many years to come, find affirmation for their own sense of calling to ministry in the emerging field of spiritual formation and spiritual direction in local churches, and receive encouragement to make their own spiritual formation a priority as they continue their theological education and enter ministry,” Turner said.

There was very little student participation the first three years, but it has increased the last two years. Last year seven students attended. The goal for 1999 is 20 students.

The plan for reaching this goal is to invite students from four of the new theological schools to lead morning and evening prayers.



Tom Turner