

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.

April 2001

Volume 4 Issue 4



The Program Planning Committee for the April Convocation met recently at Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, the host church for the April meeting. From left are committee chair Cherie Smith, Kim Buchanan, Lanny Peters, Liz Harris-Lamkin, and Allen Mullinax. Not pictured but present were Mark Caldwell, Jeanette Holt and Beth Vann.

## Retirement coming for

## FOUNDING ALLIANCE MEMBER JOHN ROBERTS

Over a period of 40 years, founding Alliance member John Ewing Roberts has been pastor of a church with two names, two locations, and multiple congregations, a church where Annie Armstrong once belonged, and a church that has always found its ministry and mission at its doorsteps and beyond.

John will retire at the end of April as pastor of Woodbrook Baptist Church in Baltimore, where he has been pastor since 1970. But his association with the church goes back even earlier, to 1959 when he was summer assistant at Eutaw Place Baptist Church in downtown



Baltimore, then from 1960-62, as associate pastor of the same church.

In 1962, he left Eutaw Place to teach Latin at his alma mater, Wake Forest University in North Carolina. When he was called back to the same church in 1970 as pastor, it had a new name and a new location in the Baltimore suburbs. He never left again.

“It’s wonderful to have served the same church all these years,” he said. “I have officiated at weddings, seen those couples have children, be baptized, get married and have children.”

At Eutaw Place, the members were proud to be the home

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## ANNUAL CONVOCATION

### April 20-22

Oakhurst Baptist Church  
Decatur, Georgia

#### Friday, April 20

6:00 p.m.—Welcoming reception sponsored by the Baptist Studies Program, Candler School of Theology

7:15 p.m.—Opening worship.  
Covenant Speakers: Andrew Lester and Jann Aldredge-Clanton

#### Saturday, April 21

8:30 a.m.—Morning prayers  
9:00 a.m.—Stan Haste, State-of-the-Alliance address  
10:00 a.m.—Annual Meeting  
12:00 p.m.—Lunch, Oakhurst Baptist Church  
1:30 p.m.—Workshops  
3:30 p.m.—Mission Fair  
7:00 p.m.—Evening worship  
*Preacher:* Paula Clayton Dempsey

#### Sunday, April 22

8:30 a.m.—Morning prayers  
9:00 a.m.—Bible study. *Teacher:* Ofelia Miriam Ortega, president, Protestant Evangelical Seminary of Cuba.  
9:00 a.m.—Workshops  
11:00 a.m.—Closing worship/  
Communion



a still more  
excellent  
way

celebrating the call of  
Christ for men and women  
to live in equal partnership

**A**mong Alliance-affiliated congregations recently voting to withdraw from the Southern Baptist Convention are: **First Baptist Church**, Henderson, NC; **Austin Heights Baptist Church**, Nacogdoches, TX; and **Kirkwood Baptist Church**, St. Louis.

Two Alliance-affiliated congregations have called new pastors recently. **Lee Brewer**, of Allen, TX, has received the unanimous call of Bethesda (MD) First Baptist Church, effective April 1. He has been pastor of churches in Denton, Houston, Eldorado and Allen, all in Texas.

**Steve McNeely** has been called as pastor of Peakland Baptist Church, Lynchburg, VA, going there from Columbia Baptist Fellowship, Columbia, MD.

**The Council of the Virginia Chapter of the Alliance of Baptists** issued "A Call for a Moratorium on Executions in Virginia." Noting that Virginia is second only to Texas in imposing the death penalty and citing the Alliance's commitments to "side with the poor" and "pursue justice with and for those who are oppressed," the Council called on Virginia Governor James Gilmore, the chief justice of the Virginia Supreme Court, and delegates



## BTSR celebrates founding

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond President Thomas H. Graves (c) and Professor of Mission and World Christianity Isam E. Ballenger (r) speak with Alliance Executive Director Stan Hastey following a BTSR chapel service during which the role of the Alliance in the creation of BTSR was celebrated. In a sermon during the March 1 event, Hastey recalled the 1989 debate at the Alliance annual meeting in which the decision was made to create a new school of theology in Richmond. The Alliance and BTSR have entered into an agreement to endow an annual program commemorating the historical connections between the two.

and senators to Virginia's General Assembly "to enact and implement an immediate moratorium on executions."

Veteran Baptist communicator **Wesley M. (Pat) Pattillo** has been elected as Associate General Secretary for Communications of the National Council of Churches, beginning April 16. Pattillo moves to New York from Birmingham, AL, where he has been a member of the Alliance-affiliated Baptist Church of the Covenant. Alliance board member **David Waugh**, pastor of Metro Baptist Church in

New York City, represented the Alliance at the February meeting of the NCC's executive board in New York.

Alliance member **Robert Tiller** has been named director of government relations at Bread for the World, the Washington-based Christian anti-hunger organization. Tiller, a veteran Washington activist, most recently held a similar position with Physicians for Social Responsibility. Before that, he was for 14 years chief of the Washington office of the American Baptist Churches in the USA.



### The Alliance of Baptists

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## WELCOME TO THREE NEW AFFILIATED CONGREGATIONS

A warm Alliance welcome to these newly-affiliated congregations:

- Calvary Baptist Church, Roanoke, VA (Donna Hopkins-Britt, pastor; Drew Purcell, associate pastor)
- Shell Ridge Community Church, Walnut Creek, CA (Greg Ledbetter, pastor)
- Briggs Memorial Baptist Church, Bethesda, MD (Bob Maddox, pastor; Tim Tutt, associate pastor)

John Roberts has been a part of the Alliance from its beginnings, he said, because he wanted to be a part of a “more positive group.” “As the Southern Baptist Convention became controlled by fundamentalists, some moderates who took the lead in the political process kept trying to tell us what to do to regain control, and that to me made us sound more like the fundamentalists. I was attracted to working with people of like faith to achieve positive goals instead of merely opposing people who were different.”

“The Alliance has remained the most vibrant part of Baptist life,” he said. “If you go to an Alliance meeting you know you will be stimulated and stretched. When you go to most Baptist meetings, it is an exercise in patience and endurance. The Alliance is always a challenge. It requires that you be alert and ready.”

John was president of the Alliance from 1995-97. During

## “The Alliance is always a challenge”

—PAST PRESIDENT JOHN ROBERTS



John earned a bachelor of divinity degree from Yale Divinity School, and studied classical languages at Princeton on a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship. He was ordained in 1959 by Highland Baptist Church in Louisville, KY. He and his wife Marylynn, married in 1961, have known each other since junior high school in Louisville. They are parents of one son, Chris, 31, who lives in London with his wife Hannah.

his tenure, he was the primary force behind the Alliance’s adoption of its statement on Jewish-Christian relations. “We were the first group with any evangelical background to adopt such a statement,” he said. The Alliance’s position was cited in a recent book by Jewish scholars trying to respond to Christian statements, such as Bailey Smith’s famous line, “God doesn’t hear the prayers of Jews.”

“As a result of the Alliance’s statement,” John said, “I have been invited to speak to many Jewish groups, and I get the opportunity to talk about the New Testament and Christian beliefs from the Baptist perspective before Jewish groups who would never invite a Bailey Smith type of Baptist.”

For years, John has been a part of the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies in Baltimore. “I’ve always been interested in what was

going on in New Testament times,” he said. “It was a time when Judaism was redefining itself. To understand what was going on then helps us to understand what is happening now.”

In retirement, John will be working one day a week as a consultant for the Institute. A major part of his work will be reviewing the lectionary to see if there is any material included that could be considered anti-Judaic.

John will also begin serving on the board of the Maryland Bible Society. And, he wants to combine his interest in classical studies and first century biblical studies to write a guide for the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. “The museum has some wonderful works but doesn’t necessarily pay attention to the biblical aspects of the art they have,” he said.

The Roberts plan to remain members of Woodbrook.

## Woodbrook Baptist Church

(continued from page 1)

church of WMU’s first executive, Annie Armstrong, and the two executives who followed her. “It was an old historic church with a strong heritage,” John said. Woodbrook still has on display a desk that belonged to Armstrong.

Even though the congregation opted to leave the inner city, it did not want to leave its missions heritage, John said. “It has been interesting to see some of church’s continuous ministries evolve,” he said. For example, the church has had a Cantonese-speaking Chinese ministry since the 1880s. Baltimore’s Chinatown was not far from the downtown location and a Chinese Sunday School was taught every Sunday afternoon. “When we relocated, the Chinese ministry continued but declined somewhat,” John said. “Now, in recent years, we’ve seen a real resurgence in that ministry in a slightly different form. The Chinese have spread out from downtown, and now we have a Cantonese worship service on

Sunday mornings at the same time as our service. On Mondays, we have 30-40 who come for lunch and Bible study, and on Fridays we offer language classes.” Out of those language classes have evolved three Sunday morning Sunday School classes taught in English but designed for Asians, primarily but not exclusively, Chinese.

“While I have been pastor of one church, it has actually been four or five churches,” John said. “We’ve had changes in membership and circumstances. When I came, the congregation was comprised largely of older people who were weary from having hung on and done inner-city ministry in the old location, and then weary from the move. After a while, we had a nice balance of all ages, and now we have a strong nucleus of young adults so their ministry needs are different from the senior congregation that I inherited.”

Woodbrook has about 300 members.



Edgar Palacios (c) is flanked by fellow Salvadorans Rolando A. Rivas (l) and José Manuel Trejo (r) outside The Potter's House in Washington following a recent luncheon with Alliance Executive Director Stan Hastey. Rivas and Trejo briefed the Alliance leader on conditions in El Salvador following two devastating earthquakes this year and on the efforts of Baptist Association of El Salvador to address the Central American country's material and spiritual needs. Palacios is pastor of a new Latino congregation in the nation's capital that is one of 24 recipients of this year's Alliance Mission Offering.

## POSITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Covenant Church, Houston,** which describes itself as "an ecumenical liberal Baptist congregation," seeks "an articulate woman or man who will deliver thought-provoking sermons and minister to a diverse group of individuals." For more information, visit the church's Web site at [www.covenanthouston.org](http://www.covenanthouston.org).

**Broadneck Baptist Church, Annapolis, MD,** seeks a part-time or bi-vocational pastor "who enjoys being with people, shepherding, assisting in visiting and creatively reaching out with compassion.... He or she will be a fellow traveler and seeker, challenging and enabling us to build and strengthen our relationships with Christ and others." Please send résumés to Margie Kelbel, Broadneck Baptist Church, 1257 Hilltop Drive, Annapolis MD 21401.

**Myers Park Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC,** is seeking a youth minister to work on a pastoral team that includes a senior minister who "provides positive but not intrusive leadership" and a minister of music with "a lot of enthusiasm for working with kids in youth choir," among others. The church seeks an experienced leader with a strong sense of vocation to specialized youth ministry. Please send résumés to P.O. Box 6006, Charlotte NC 28207-0001, or by e-mail to [phice@mpbconline.org](mailto:phice@mpbconline.org).

**Park Road Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC,** seeks as associate pastor for youth and children who is "a warm, engaging caregiver ... able to work intergenerationally to meet needs of the entire family unit ... able to direct lay leadership ... a team player who can roll us his/her sleeves ... a dependable, energetic self-starter...." Please contact Kay M. Thornburg, 9601 Mitchell Glen Drive, Charlotte NC 28277. E-mail: [Peacemaker\\_I@msn.com](mailto:Peacemaker_I@msn.com).

## CONGREGATIONS SURVIVE ANOTHER OUSTER VOTE

Two Alliance-affiliated churches in the Atlanta area – including the host of this month's Convocation – have survived a second attempt at ouster by the local Baptist association.

Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, along with Virginia-Highland in downtown Atlanta, have come under attack for their welcoming and affirming stance toward homosexuals. On March 12, messengers to the Atlanta Baptist Association voted 254-188 to sever ties with the two churches but this vote fell short of the two-thirds majority needed.

The messengers did approve by the required two-thirds majority a new bylaw excluding any church "which knowingly takes, or has taken, any action to affirm,

approve or endorse homosexual behavior."

Both churches admit gays and lesbians as members and include them in leadership positions. That is contrary to stated positions of both Georgia Baptists and the Southern Baptist Convention that homosexual behavior is sinful. Georgia Baptists voted to revoke membership status from the two churches in 1999. Both churches have ceased affiliation with the SBC, which in 1992 changed its constitution to ban churches that sanction homosexuality.

Tim Shirley is pastor of Virginia-Highland and Lanny Peters is pastor of Oakhurst, where the Convocation will be held April 20-22.



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.

## What's in a Name?

In the case of the Alliance of Baptists, the short answer to Shakespeare's perpetually important question in *Romeo and Juliet* is, "Everything." Because we take our name seriously, we are taking a new look at it during this year's annual meeting on April 21.

When the founders of the Alliance pondered in 1986 what to call the new movement/organization, they settled on "Southern Baptist Alliance," a name consistent with the original Constitution's commitment "to the continuance of our ministry and mission within the Southern Baptist Convention." That language reflected the simple fact that the battle for control of the SBC had yet to be abandoned.

Five years later, meeting at Providence Baptist Church in Charlotte, the membership changed the name to its present form and dropped the constitutional reference to the SBC. By then defeat in convention warfare had been conceded. Alliance people were eager to make a new beginning. That year's convocation theme, "Building Bridges, Singing Songs," made the point.

Still nine years after that watershed change of name, we gather at Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, GA, to consider a second change in our name, this one considerably more modest yet nonetheless indicative of our ever-evolving self-awareness. What will we accomplish by changing our official designation from "The Alliance of Baptists, Inc.," to "The Alliance of Baptists in the U.S.A.?"

As the one who made the suggestion to change our name, let me tell you what I told the board of directors last September when they approved the proposal and sent it on to the membership. First, this

change in our name will state unequivocally that we are a national, not a regional, organization. More and more every day, the Alliance is being considered as an option by churches other than those that once affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. The simple fact is that over the past couple of years, we have received more new churches affiliated with the American Baptist Churches than congregations once affiliated with the SBC.

Among those on our board who have advocated a more

deliberate outreach to American Baptist congregations is Martha Barr of St. Davids, PA, a theologian who at one time was the ecumenical officer of the American Baptist Churches in the USA. Martha, we have been listening to you and to other American Baptists make your case.

Second, this change will signal to the Baptist World Alliance that we are sensitive to its long-stated objection to the use of the word "Alliance" in our name. We have no illusion that to specify we are the "Alliance of Baptists in the U.S.A." will remove all the confusion. But we hope our friends at BWA will

receive it as an olive branch, at the very least as an indication that we understand their objection. After all, we may some day want to join BWA.

During the annual meeting at Oakhurst, you will have the chance to say what you think about this proposal and all other actions taken by the board of directors during the year since we last gathered. Please consider this my personal invitation to be there, not only at the annual business meeting, but for the worship, learning and companionship that always characterize our gatherings. With Paul the apostle, I thank God every time I think of you....



### perspectives



By Stan Haste  
Executive Director



Beth Vann is serving as local arrangements chairperson for the April Convocation at Oakhurst Baptist Church. Beth is executive director of The Foundation for Medically Fragile Children in Atlanta.

## CONVOCATION WORKSHOPS:

These two workshops have been added to the Convocation schedule. Others were included in the March issue of *connections*.

**Faith and Ecology.** Herman Greene, chairperson, Alliance Work Group on Ecology, and lay leader, Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, NC.

**A Most Excellent Adventure: Christian Education in the Church.** Ken Meyers, associate pastor, Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL, and president, Christian Educators Network; Frank Granger, minister of education, First Baptist Church, Athens, GA, and president-elect, CEN.

## CONVOCATION RESOLUTIONS/STATEMENTS

The Alliance Board of Directors respectfully requests that any member bringing a resolution or statement for consideration during the Annual Meeting notify President Paula Clayton Dempsey, Secretary David Gooch, Executive Director Stan Haste or Associate Director Jeanette Holt of such intention so that it may be announced during the opening session of the Convocation Friday evening, April 20. Please submit your resolution or statement in writing to Gooch.

**2001 Operating Budget**

Through March 15

Needs: \$58,320

Receipts: \$62,148

**2001 Mission Offering:**

Goal: \$92,000

Receipts: \$21,331

April 2001

Seeing a need and finding a way to meet it was the impetus behind a new ministry that Max Hill, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jonesville, NC, has begun.

Called Volunteer International Partnership Missions (VIP Missions), the organization's original purpose was to provide missions education and involvement opportunities. "My plan is to educate people to Christian missions by leading them on mission tours and trips," Max said. "I am beginning now to develop the materials for weekend seminars. My hope is to teach and preach volunteer missions. Obviously, this will be based on my experience as a missions volunteer in Cuba and other places. While Cuba will be the focal point of most of my missions activities, I will certainly not be limited to one field or area of the world."

The ministry has already expanded beyond Max's original vision. During his most recent trip to Cuba in January, Max learned that home missionaries, called misioneros, were being sent out by El Jordán Baptist Church in Havana to develop

**MINISTRY EXPANDED  
EVEN BEFORE IT BEGAN**  
teaching and doing missions is idea behind max hill's new organization

new preaching points. They were being sent, but receiving no pay or even living allowance.

"The financial need was apparent. After some discussion about the plans for these missions and those who work in them, VIP Missions took on limited sponsorship of three part-time and two full-time misioneros. This is a most exciting development. It was, for me at least, the best outcome of the trip."

The Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba has developed much of its work through local churches starting churches around them. "The more support we can provide for Cuban missionaries to assist these churches in their development, the more opportunity there will be for the Fraternity to develop its work," Max said. "I see this as a cost-effective and partnership-oriented way to help. I hope that we will be able to expand our assistance to misioneros in churches throughout the Fraternity."

VIP Missions is providing enough to help with transportation and food costs. For part-time misioneros, the stipend is \$5-\$10 a month. For full-time, \$20-\$25. "One of beauties of the Cuban partnership is that limited resources can go a long way," Max said.

**'The more support we can provide for Cuban missionaries to assist these churches in their development, the more opportunity there will be for the Fraternity to develop its work. I see this as a cost-effective and partnership-oriented way to help.'**—Max Hill

One of the misioneros being funded through VIP Missions is a 20-year-old whom Max has watched grow up in El Jordán. "He is now a responsible leader in the church who goes out to one of the missions and helps them do their work on Sunday." Max expects someday soon this man will enter seminary. "So I see that we are not developing a church but a future pastor," he said.

VIP Missions will continue to develop and take on mission opportunities. "We will continue to develop the ministry step by step, looking for the funding to make more involvement possible," he said. "My ultimate goal is teach missions and to introduce people to missions. I want to do volunteer international partnership missions on the theory that not everybody is called to be a career missionary. Partnership is the key. We go to learn from as well as to assist and aid. I want to teach that mode and method of doing missions."

VIP Missions is being funded with contributions. For information, contact Max at 106 Cherry Street, Jonesville, NC 28642. Mdmhill@yadtel.net.