

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.

At 2004 Annual Meeting Cuba statement adopted; Smith elected president

The Alliance of Baptists, at its Annual Meeting April 17, renewed its call for the elimination of the travel ban between the United States and Cuba and elected Cherie Smith of Baltimore as its new president.

The statement on U.S.-Cuba relations is the latest in a series of statements adopted by the Alliance calling for normalization of relations between the two countries. In addition to speaking to the travel ban, the statement voiced objection to the Treasury Department's decision in the fall of 2003 to cease granting licenses to educational institutions for people-to-people travel to Cuba.

The statement was adopted without objection. It can be read in full at www.allianceofbaptists.org.

Smith, director of pastoral care at a Baltimore hospital and a former member of the board, was elected president. She most recently served on the Alliance's Strategic Planning Committee. Chris Copeland, associate pastor at Oakhurst Baptist Church in Atlanta, was elected vice president. Mary Sue Brookshire, a chaplain

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2004
Convocation

INTERFAITH AND ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

Representatives of Dayton's interfaith community participated in Saturday night worship at the Alliance Convocation, held April 16-18 at First Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio. Alliance member and Middle East expert Charles Kimball, left, professor of religion at Wake Forest University, brought the Covenant Address.



Karen Thomas Smith, a former Alliance board member and now a chaplain in Morocco, led a breakout session at the Convocation on multicultural ministry. She was also the preacher for Sunday morning worship, and presented a Moroccan communion set to the Alliance. The only funds she gets for her work among Muslims and Christians is the \$1,000 that comes through the Alliance Mission Offering.

2003 mission gifts fall short Board uses operating funds to make up deficit

The 2003 Alliance of Baptists Mission Offering totaled only \$84,611, significantly short of the \$104,000 that had been allocated to 26 recipients. The board of directors voted to make up the \$16,889 shortfall because it felt a change in policy attributed to the lower giving total last year.

Previously, contributions received in January of the year following the offering emphasis were allocated to the previous year. A policy was adopted last year that required the books be closed on the Bridges of Hope Offering for 2003 on Dec. 31, 2003. The board felt it appropriate to make up the shortfall from the operating budget for 2003 but also asked the Finance Committee to develop policy regarding such transfers in the future.

Offering receipts for 2004 are off to a good start and 25 percent of the allocations for the year has already been sent to recipients.

Compere presented Neil award; Dekar publishes new book

In March, 2004, Baptist Women in Ministry of North Carolina presented its Anne Thomas Neil Award to Alliance member **Anne Compere**, a member of Knollwood Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, for her lifetime of ministry and service. Compere was a pioneer in marriage enrichment ministry, crisis intervention and counseling, and ministries for women in transition.

happenings

Alliance member **Paul Dekar**, professor of Evangelism and Missions at Memphis Theological Seminary, has a new book titled *Holy Boldness: Practices of an Evangelistic Lifestyle*, published by Smyth & Helwys. Dekar is a peacemaker and social activist as well as a professor. According to the book jacket, "This book will help to transform personal devotion into public witness that cares for the poor, liberates the oppressed, and challenges the powers as it celebrates the good news of Jesus Christ."

St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans has called **Barbara Meigs** as Minister to Children and Families and for Outreach. Barbara comes from a background in public school teaching and administration.

Alliance member **Deborah Carlton Loftis** has established The John F & Jessica P. Loftis Memorial Bereavement Fund at Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center in Richmond, VA, in memory of her husband, John, and daughter, Jessica. The fund provides assistance with burial and funeral expenses for bereaved families; grief and bereavement materials for families and hospital staff; and educational programming for families, staff, students and the community in the areas of death and dying, grief and bereavement.

Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, KY, needs a pastor. Details on at www.crescenthillbaptistchurch.org



Craig Henry, a lawyer from Monroe, LA, completed two years as president following this year's Convocation. He is shown here with his predecessor, Paula Clayton Dempsey of Mars Hill, NC. Craig will remain on the board for the next two years.

Task group wants input on planning future convocations

The Board of Directors appointed a Task Group on Future Convocations that is to look at timing and locations of future meetings. Chris Copeland of Atlanta is chair. Other members are Willard Bass, Mary Sue Brookshire, Joann Davis and Bill Sapp.

The task force would like input from as many as possible on issues related to scheduling convocations.

Which days are best? What time of the year is best? (The week after Easter, the same weekend every year, alternating/rotating schedule, the summer?)

What cities would you recommend for future convocations? What themes would you recommend? Send any responses/suggestions to Chris Copeland, chris@oakhurstbaptist.org



Kingsley Perera from the Baptist Union of Sri Lanka, participated in a lunch session on international partners.

Annual Meeting (continued from page 1)

at San Diego State University in California, was elected to a second term as secretary.



Cherie Smith

A statement of concern on same sex marriages was presented from the floor by Donna Mote of McDonough, GA. The statement, adopted without objection, opposed making a political issue of same sex marriages. It can be read in full on the Alliance's website.

Elected to the board of directors with terms ending in 2008 were: Brian Ammons, Raleigh, NC; Susan Ballenger, Baltimore, MD; Jean Robinson-Casey, College Park, MD; Ann Charles-Craft, Richmond, VA; Joann Davis, Severna Park, MD; Velma McGee Ferrell, Chapel Hill, NC; and Carl Gregg, Monroe, LA.

Donna Poyner of Gainesville, FL, was chair of the Nominating Committee. Other members were Willard Bass, NC; Brian Dixon, CA; Ginny Brown Daniel, TX; and Kristy Pullen, PA.

The next Convocation will be held April 1-3 at First Baptist Church in Greenville, SC.

A typical American boy

In the 1960's Phil Ochs sang "I'm just a typical American boy from a typical American town..." He could have been writing about me. My story is not as compelling as that of Ron Kovic and "Born on the Fourth of July," but my experience as a conscientious objector may be of interest to my contemporaries who lived the same dilemma. It also may be helpful to young men today who must register for a future draft, but who have pondered how to reconcile military service with the command to love one's enemies.

Born in Alabama in 1946, I came of age steeped in southern and Southern Baptist culture. I obeyed the scout law. I was president of my Sunday School class and National Honor Society chapter. The American Legion of Huntsville chose me for its annual award at high school graduation. Three years later I would be in an Army jail for refusing to serve in Vietnam.

Conscientious Objector (CO) status wasn't well known in Alabama. I learned about it only because Georgia Tech was a land grant college. In 1964 land grant colleges required two years of ROTC. ROTC was required to tell all students about CO status—what it is and how to apply. CO status seemed natural for a Quaker, but I was a Southern Baptist. I couldn't recall any sermons about a problem with military service. I didn't think I was a CO.

Of course, I remember being taught about turning the other cheek and my duty to love and pray for those who persecute me. I knew that Jesus ordered Peter to put away his sword. It was difficult to imagine the Jesus of the crucifixion wearing a uniform and carrying a rifle.

SBC foreign missions also influenced me. My church expected evangelism of everyone, and elevated missionaries to Baptist sainthood. This led me to the following quandary. What should I do if I faced an armed enemy in battle? If we were both Christians, we surely had better means of resolving our conflict. Otherwise there were two stark possibilities. If he killed me, I was assured of going to heaven. If I killed him, he would be condemned to hell. Wasn't

my highest obligation to tell him the Good News of salvation in Christ?

The clerk at my draft board was horrified at my request for a CO application. Tearfully she asked me, "What if *everyone* felt the way you do?" I suspect her answer to the question was that America would be overrun by godless Communists, as the "domino theory" predicted. I thought to myself, "There would be no wars."


I filled out the form and waited to be called before the draft board. Instead, a card with status 1A-O arrived in the mail. That meant I could be drafted into the Army and trained as a medic. My notice arrived early in 1967. I made an effort to fit in with Army life but I came to realize I was an essential element in the war machine. I was the universal soldier who perpetuates it. Several months into Medic training I asked to be released as a 1-O type objector and allowed to complete my obligation performing alternative service.

This was 1968 and the Army said, "No!"

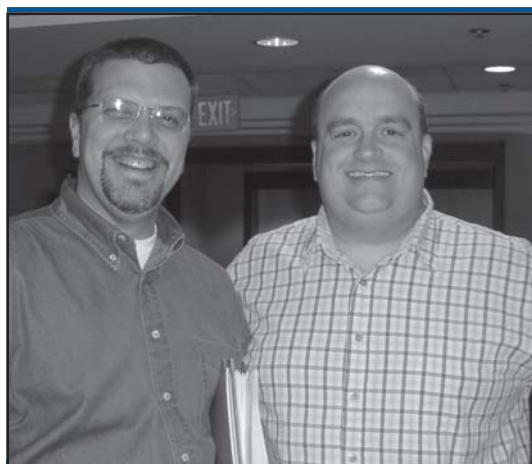
As a moral choice and a practical matter, it wasn't easy refusing to ship to Vietnam. The chronicle involves hearing a Baptist chaplain ask three times, "Where did you get these ideas?" It includes a general court-martial and a sometimes violent incarceration. The full story requires more space than this newsletter allows. Suffice it to say that the testing strengthened my faith and trust in Jesus and the validity of his non-violent, compassionate ways. I learned, too, that pacifists cannot be passive. We must "seek peace and pursue it" to prevent evil from becoming so powerful that we are forced to chose the lesser evil and forgo the greater good. I still believe in the noble American ideals our country contradicts as well as upholds. I'm patriotic, but I guess I'm an "atypical" American boy.

Alan Hoskins is beginning his second year of a four-year term as a member of the Alliance of Baptists Board of Directions. He is an IT consultant and computer programmer specializing in database applications. He is also a chaplain.

perspectives



By Alan Hoskins
AOB Board Member
Bardstown, KY



Convocation leaders

Steve Lucas, right, pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church in Austin, TX, was chair of this year's Convocation Task Group that planned the worship and breakout sessions. Mike Castle, pastor of Cross Creek Community Church in Dayton, OH, was chair of the local arrangements committee and organized all of the volunteers who made the Convocation run smoothly.

alliance **f**inances

Through March 31

2004 Operating Budget

Needs: \$84,960
Receipts: \$62,316

2004 Mission Offering

Goal: \$113,000
Receipts: \$38,249

May 2004

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Heifner hired as part-time development director

Todd Heifner has been hired as the Alliance's part-time development director, effective May 1. Todd is a member of Baptist Church of the Covenant in Birmingham, AL. With 11 years experience in fund development, Todd previously worked with Samford University, Passport and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. He holds a masters degree in fundraising management/institutional advancement from Vanderbilt and a master's degree in business administration from Samford. Todd previously had worked as a

corporate contributions officer with BellSouth Corporation and launched into fulltime consulting in December.

"I know the Alliance and I know that the work you do is done with great integrity and a driving purpose," Heifner said. "My desire is to help you raise money for the annual operating expenses of the Alliance, to increase giving to the annual Mission Offering, and to build an endowment fund that will secure your financial base and ensure the important work of the Alliance continues for years to come."



**Todd Heifner
of Birmingham**

First time attendee

Adams wishes denominational lines would go away

Betty Adams, a licensed lay minister at First United Christian Church, a Disciples of Christ Church in Xenia, OH, was one of the first-time attendees to an Alliance Convocation. "I like to see Christians get together and talk about one God, one baptism," she said, "because God loves all people."

She is glad that the Alliance, the Disciples, and the United Church of Christ have entered into a close working relationship. "I wish denominational lines would go away," she said. "The more we work together under the banner of Jesus Christ, the more we will show people that maybe there is something to us Christians."

Betty is a retired procurement specialist for the federal government.

Board adjusts budget, restructures itself

The Board of Directors, meeting prior to the Convocation, approved a revised 2004 budget of \$339,847 that is \$9,000 less than originally adopted last September. The reduction came because \$30,000 had been budgeted for a new development director to be hired as of Jan. 1. But the position was not filled until May 1 resulting in a budget reduction of \$10,000. The board approved a new line item in the budget of \$1,000 to go to the National Council of Churches' Interfaith Relations programs, headed by past vice president Shanta Premawardhana.

The board also restructured its committees. It amended the Bylaws to eliminate the Budget and Development Committee and add three new standing committees: Communications and Development, Finance, and Personnel.

The board also agreed to participate in a one-day anti-racism training session prior to its spring 2004 meeting.

