

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.

## Board wants to take a new look at Alliance's vision

Believing the Alliance may need to refocus its vision, the board of directors, meeting in Oakland, CA, Jan. 10-11, named a task group to recommend a process by which we can begin looking anew at our role with local churches and with other progressive Baptist and ecumenical bodies.

Cherie Smith from Kirkwood Baptist Church in St. Louis will chair the task group that includes Relma Hargus, the board's secretary from Baton Rouge, LA, Cathy Tamsberg from Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, NC; and past president C. Welton Gaddy of Washington, DC.

The group's charge is to bring to the board at its April meeting a strategy for revisioning, not an actual revisioning plan.

Comments by Gaddy sparked the conversation about the Alliance's future. "We are at a point where the challenges we face strongly suggest an organizational reassessment," he said. "The niche that we filled 15 years ago is now much larger and has much more potential for ministry than we are equipped for."

Much of the board discussion centered on how the Alliance can best utilize its limited financial and personnel resources to meet the growing demands and needs of progressive Baptist congregations, and related ecumenical bodies.

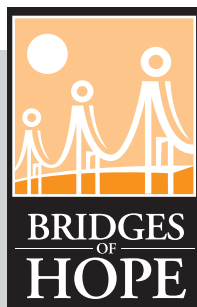


Alliance board members Bill Butler of Baltimore and Martha Barr of St. Davids, PA.

Also at the Oakland meeting, the Alliance board approved a 2002 operating budget of just under \$290,000 and a Mission Offering goal of \$95,000 to be distributed among 24 organizations.

The board also heard a report from one of its members, Donna Poynor of Gainesville, FL, that 53 chaplains have been endorsed by the Alliance since it was granted endorsing status in 1999. Poynor is a member of the Endorsing Committee.

The Nominating Committee, which will bring recommendations to the annual meeting in April for new board members, will be chaired by Millard Eiland of Houston. Serving with him will be Brooks Wicker of Raleigh, Kathy Berry of Richmond, Cherie Smith of St. Louis, and Marylynn Roberts of Baltimore.



### 2002 Bridges of Hope Mission Offering: \$95,000

The Alliance of Baptists annual Mission Offering is not large — \$95,000 in 2002 — but to many of the 24 recipients this year it will provide a vital portion of their operating income. Inserted in this issue you will find a brochure describing those organizations which have applied for funding, and been approved by the missions committee and board of directors. In each case, the organization's values are consistent with those of the Alliance Covenant and Mission Statement. Funds will be accepted for the 2002 offering through December 31.

**J**eremy Rutledge has been called as the new pastor of the Alliance-affiliated Covenant Church, Houston. In notifying the Alliance office of his election, church member Pamela Taylor described the new leader as one deeply committed to the Alliance and the Baptist Peace Fellowship and called him “a rising star in his gifts of writing and proclamation.” Rutledge, a graduate of Baptist

**happenings**

Theological Seminary at Richmond, has been working as a chaplain in Houston, and was already a Covenant member.

A warm welcome to the Alliance’s most recently affiliated congregation, **The Community Church of the Midlands, Columbia, SC**, whose pastor is John C. Whatley III.

**Jeff B. Pool** has been named director of Brite Divinity School’s Baptist House of Studies, Fort Worth, TX. An Alliance member, Pool is also professor of theology and special assistant to the president at Brite, a school affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Through our Mission Offering, the Alliance supports the Baptist House.

Longtime Alliance member **Lynn Rhoades** has resigned as associate pastor of Wake Forest Baptist Church, Winston-



**Rudolph Challenge for Cuba:** The Moore Class at Ravensworth Baptist Church in Annadale, VA, wanted to raise money for a good cause as well as have a good time at its Christmas party. So class members enlisted the aid of six Alliance members who donned Rudolph gear for 30 minutes in return for a contribution to the Virginia chapter’s 2001-02 mission project. The challenge raised \$500 for the Women’s Studies Program of the Lay Theological Institute in Havana. Rudolph’s helpers were, from left, Jerry Turner, Mallary Binns, Alliance board member Sylvia Campbell, Finney Williams and Stan Hastey. Also participating but not pictured was Phyllis Turner. Binns died on Jan. 17 of lung cancer.

Salem, NC, to pursue several new ministries. These include *Word & World: A People’s School*, which Rhoades describes as “an ecumenical and inclusive” movement that draws inspiration from Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Confessing Church in Germany, the U.S. civil rights movement, “womenchurch” experiments in Christian

feminism and the base communities movement animated by liberation theology. Rhoades will direct development and fundraising activities for *Word & World* and give oversight to regional gatherings already scheduled for Greensboro, NC, Philadelphia, Tucson, AZ, and Seattle. She will work from her home in Winston-Salem.



**The Alliance of Baptists**

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**POSITION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Dolores Street Baptist Church, San Francisco,** seeks “a gifted and exceptional pastor.” Long known for its progressive stance in a variety of causes, Dolores Street belongs to the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, a caucus within the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. that affirms and welcomes gay and lesbian Christians. It is also affiliated with the Alliance. The congregation invites interested candidates to learn more about it by visiting [www@baptistchurchsf.org](http://www@baptistchurchsf.org).

**College Park Baptist Church, Greensboro, NC,** seeks an associate minister for youth and education. While the congregation expects its associate minister to spend at least half-time in ministry to some 40 young people and their families, he or she has occasional duties of

preaching, celebrating communion and baptizing, and regular responsibilities in worship leadership, pastoral care, administration and teaching. The successful candidate “will be one who is called to minister to youth and who has a passionate enthusiasm for this age group” (Grades 6-12). The church’s most recent associate minister, Dorisanne Cooper, recently was called as pastor of Lake Shore Baptist Church, Waco, TX. For more information, visit [www.collegeparkchurch.com](http://www.collegeparkchurch.com).

**Menokin Baptist Church, Warsaw, VA,** seeks a new pastor to succeed former Alliance board member Wanda Burton-Crutchfield. Warsaw is located in Virginia’s scenic Northern Neck region. For more information, write or call Leanna C. Yeatman, 23665 Kings Highway, Warsaw VA 22572 (804/493-8839).

# Religious freedom at risk in Supreme Court

Freedom is both strong and fragile. That is true of all freedoms, including the three affirmed in the Alliance Covenant — freedom of the individual conscience in matters of faith, freedom of the congregation to determine its own sense of ministry and mission, and freedom of religion in the social sphere. These three (Walter B. Shurden adds Bible freedom) mark the principal contributions Baptists have made to church and society. They are no small contributions.

Of the nation's founders in the late 18th century, none helped secure religious freedom in the political realm as did Thomas Jefferson of Virginia. At his request, what he described as his life's principal achievements were listed on his tombstone at Monticello: Author of the Declaration of Independence; Founder of the University of Virginia; (and) Author of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. The last of these rang the death knell of the church-state unions in the original colonies, Anglican and Congregationalist. And it set the stage for the epic debate among the nation's founders that in the end yielded the carefully balanced clauses that form the cornerstone of the First Amendment to the Constitution: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Exactly 200 years ago and one year into his presidency, Jefferson penned a carefully written letter to the Danbury (CT) Baptist Association, in which he declared: "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church & State...."

Jefferson's letter actually was a reply to one sent him by the Danbury association objecting to a 1784 Connecticut law known as the "Toleration Act" which exempted members of dissenting faiths from the payment of taxes to the Congregationalist churches — but only on condition they pleaded their case before a local magistrate and offered proof they belonged to a dissenting sect. Though hardly among the most oppressive of the colonial church-

state unions, Connecticut's requirements were nonetheless noxious to our freedom-loving ancestors.

Written in January 1802, Jefferson's reply has been denigrated by some as nothing more than a courtesy note to supporters. Yet comprehensive research conducted by the nation's foremost church-state scholar of the 20th century, the venerable Leo Pfeffer, demonstrated conclusively that the president sent his response to the Danbury Baptists only after extensive consultation with his attorney general, Levi Lincoln, and intended it as a major public policy pronouncement. In the early years of the nation's history, even private letters to individuals were often the vehicle for such announcements.

For the past two decades or longer, Jefferson's views on the proper relationship between church and state have been dissected by advocates and opponents of church-state separation alike. Among the latter has been none other than the chief justice of the United States, William H. Rehnquist, most notably in a 1985 case from Alabama (*Wallace v. Jaffree*) in which he dismissed Jefferson's "wall of separation," calling it "useless as a guide to judging" and advocating that it be "frankly and explicitly abandoned."

Thankfully, Chief Justice Rehnquist's anti-separationist views have remained in the minority on the court he presides over. Two of his younger colleagues, however, have views even more radical than his own — Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. Should the chief and two other associates believed to be considering retirement during the current administration in fact leave the bench, President Bush would have the chance to nominate their successors. Many court observers are all but convinced that will happen over the next three years.

Should the incumbent president have the opportunity to nominate three or more new justices, look for him to seek to elevate judges whose views of church-state separation are like those of Rehnquist, Scalia and Thomas. Then look for a fierce debate in the U.S. Senate, which must confirm Supreme Court nominees. Given the high stakes, this will be a battle worth engaging, and one in which true Baptists will surely be in the vanguard. How can we do less, so recently reminded of the courage of our Connecticut ancestors two centuries ago and that of the third president of the United States?

perspectives



By Stan Hasteley  
Executive Director

**April 5-7:  
Convocation  
Winston-Salem**

The convocation will be held at Wake Forest Baptist Church and on the campus of Wake Forest University. It begins with an opening reception at 6 p.m. on Friday and concludes at noon on Sunday. The theme is "Servant Leadership" and the topic will be addressed in a variety of ways in workshops and worship. Visit the Alliance website, [allianceofbaptists.org](http://allianceofbaptists.org), for detailed information.

**2001 Operating Budget  
Final Report Jan. - Dec. 2001**

Budget: \$286,935  
Receipts: \$256,588

**2001 Mission Offering  
Through Jan. 18**

Goal: \$92,000  
Receipts: \$87,239

February 2002



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**GETTING TO KNOW YOU: ALLIANCE CO-SPONSORS PACIFIC COAST EVENT**

Meeting at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church in Oakland on Jan. 12, the Alliance of Baptists and the Pacific Coast Baptist Association of the American Baptist Churches in the USA got together to worship and fellowship. The theme for the meeting was **KEEPING FAITH: BEING BAPTIST IN A CHANGING WORLD**, chosen to reflect recent events that have impacted our world.

1. Panelists and workshop leaders, from left, were Jane Medema, John Ewing Roberts, C. Welton Gaddy, Daniel Buford and Donald Ng.

2. Getting to know one another was a major reason for the Oakland meeting. Here, Alliance member David Gooch of Nashville, TN, talks with Ray Jennings and Phyllis Deer.

3. Alliance board member Jerene Broadway of San Francisco was co-chair of the meeting.

4. Past Alliance president Nancy Hastings Schested of Charlotte, NC, was one of two preachers at the event.

5. President Paula Clayton Dempsey of Mars Hill, NC, visits with one of the participants.

6. Associate Director Jeanette Holt introduced the Alliance Mission Offering.

7. Jane Medema of San Francisco, center, led a workshop on conflict resolution. She had participants, including Alliance secretary Relma Hargus, right, stand in various places around the room and defend their position.

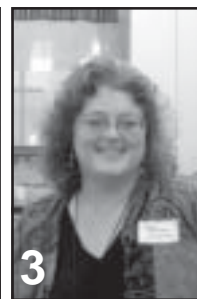
8. Host pastor Jim Hopkins of Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church with Alliance board member Richard Groves of Winston-Salem, NC, in front of the church.



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