

# connections

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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.

## UCC wants to keep talking

Two-year dialogue with the Alliance approved by Synod



Alliance Executive Director Stan Hastey was greeted with a standing ovation following his remarks to the General Synod of the United of Church Christ.

“They’re ... they’re ecumenists!”

Yes, well, that came as a surprise to some of the participants at the United Church of Christ’s 22nd biennial General Synod whose culture had taught them to think of Baptists as Southern, religious right fundamentalists who kept to themselves.

But convinced the Alliance of Baptists was not comprised of that kind of Baptist, the Synod enthusiastically approved a two-year dialogue between the two bodies.

The immediate goal of the dialogue, approved by the Alliance membership at the March Annual Meeting, is to produce a report to the next General Synod and to the Alliance’s annual meeting in 2001 that will suggest areas of collaboration between the two bodies.

Executive Director Stan Hastey, addressing the full Synod following its endorsement of the dialogue, said “the Spirit is ever moving the whole church of Jesus Christ. God is uniting people.” The Synod rose to applaud.

Within 10 years, Hastey hopes the two communions will have found ways for local churches and the larger bodies to cooperate in mission and to mutually support one another.

“The dialogue with the UCC gives us in the Alliance a chance to live up to our commitment to ecumenism,” Hastey said. “One of the great gifts we have been offered during our first dozen years is the gift of pastoral concern on the part of many other Christians. None of these has been more graciously offered than by the UCC.”

“Together with our pending application for membership in the National Council of the Churches of Christ this dialogue with the UCC represents our ongoing commitment to find our little niche in the larger church,” he said.

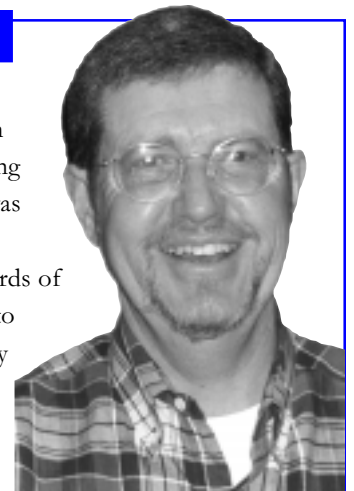
Initial informal discussions between the national bodies began in 1997.

Meeting in Providence, RI, over the Fourth of July holidays, the UCC General Synod 22 recognized its relationship with a number of ecumenical groups including a new formal partnership with the Congregational Christian Church in American Samoa.

To learn more about the UCC, visit its website at [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org).

### JIM STRICKLAND RESIGNS AT CARTERSVILLE

Jim Strickland, a driving force in the organization of the Alliance, has resigned as pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Cartersville, GA, and hopes to establish a house of respite for ministers and others in need of a quiet place of renewal. He resigned in April after 12 years at the church where he was founding pastor, and after 37 years in the ministry. Jim has served two terms as an Alliance board member, and was chair of the 1994 Convocation committee. He has traveled three times to Cuba, where Heritage has a partnership with Mount of Olives Baptist Church in the city of Holguín. He has also served on the boards of Friends of New Churches and Morningstar Baptist Treatment Services, Inc., a Georgia-based ministry to families and children in crisis. Jim is a native of Floral, AL, earned the M. Div. from Southern Seminary and the D. Min. in pastoral care and counseling from Columbia Seminary. He and his wife Clarissa have one daughter, Courtney, of Seattle, WA. He will organize a board of advisors to help him give direction to his plans for a ministerial retreat.



**T**wo Alliance members have been added to the faculty at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond for the 1999-2000 school year. Named assistant professor of church music was **Deborah Loftis Schoenfeld** of Birmingham, AL. She becomes the first faculty member elected to teach church music at the eight-year-old seminary. Most recently she has been associate minister of music at Riverchase Baptist Church in Birmingham. **Israel Galindo**, pastoral associate for Christian education at Vienna Baptist

Church, Vienna, VA, was elected professor of Christian education. He will work with other faculty members to develop a new master of divinity in Christian education degree. BTSR now has a full-time faculty of 15. During the 1998-1999 school year, it enrolled 285 students.

Alliance member **Max Lyall**, a long-time professor of church music at Golden Gate Theological Seminary, has been called as minister of music at Woodbrook Baptist Church, Baltimore, where former Alliance President John Ewing Roberts is pastor. Lyall is to begin his new ministry in October.

Alliance member **Raye Nell Dyer** has been elected president of Baptist Women in Ministry. As such she will become a non-voting member of the Alliance board of directors. Raye Nell serves as night chaplain at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, TN. She is a member of

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**A**s the Alliance took another step in its relationship with the United Church of Christ, it continues to seek membership in the National Council of the Churches of Christ. Executive Director Stan Hastey is to participate in further discussions at the NCC's Executive Board meeting in November where he is to meet with the committee considering the application. He has also been invited to participate at that same meeting in a forum focusing on the NCC objective of expanding its membership to new church bodies. The Alliance applied for membership in the NCC last year.

The Executive Board meeting will be held Nov. 9-12 in Cleveland, where the NCC was organized 50 years ago. It now includes 35 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican church bodies that work together on a wide range of activities that further Christian unity. Some 52 million U.S. Christians belong to churches that hold Council membership.

To learn more about the National Council, visit its website at [www.nccusa.org](http://www.nccusa.org).

**NCC APPLICATION**

Glendale Baptist Church, an Alliance-affiliated congregation whose pastor, Mark Caldwell, is also an Alliance board member.

**Peter Yuichi Clark**, a member of the Alliance and of Oakhurst Baptist Church in Atlanta, is one of 10 recipients of the Louisville Institute's 1999-2000 Dissertation Fellowship Awards. The awards support candidates for the Ph.D. or Th.D. in the final year of dissertation writing for students engaged in research projects on American religion. A graphic artist, Peter has designed logos for Alliance convocations.

Oakhurst Baptist Church in Atlanta has called **Christopher T. Copeland** as associate pastor. A graduate of Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Chris's areas of responsibility will include Christian education, mission activities, and ministries to children and youth. Oakhurst ordained Chris to the ministry two years ago.

Haworth Press has recently released a book, *Caring for People from Birth to Death*, edited by Alliance member **James E. Hightower Jr.**



**CBF:** The Alliance booth at the General Assembly in Birmingham was in a high-traffic area of the convention hall, giving Stan Hastey and Jeanette Holt an opportunity to talk with many of those attending, including Don Flowers, pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Charleston, SC.

**T**hese are tough days for the working poor in our country. Even as Wall Street's bull market rushes ahead into previously unthinkable territory, low income workers wait for Congress to act on the modest proposal to increase the minimum wage from its current \$5.15 an hour to \$6.15.

In a particularly cruel twist, some congressional leaders are insisting on striking a "balance" by conditioning consideration of the minimum wage legislation on tax cuts for corporations. In the words of Amy Isaacs of the Campaign for Employee Rights, "The working poor are falling further and further behind." What these leaders propose, she declares, should provoke "moral outrage." Our partners in the gospel at the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America never tire of reminding the Baptist world — including those of us who like to be known as progressives or even liberals — that the absence of justice translates into the absence of peace. Elsewhere on this page you can read of some worship resource materials recently offered by BPFNA. Among these is a piece titled, "Good News for Workers." Written by BPFNA and Alliance member Chris Sanders of Louisville, KY, this brief document outlines some of what the Bible has to say about issues relating to labor. With Labor Day looming just ahead, I thought you might find Chris's review helpful. Here's his outline, texts included:

1. The Bible tells us of God's special concern for poor and working people (Lk. 6:20; Mt. 25:34-36; Lk. 4:18-19).

2. The Bible condemns greed, the abuse of power, and the love of money (Mt. 6:24; Phil. 3:18-19; Jas. 5:1, 4).

3. The Bible tells owners to treat workers fairly and with respect (1 Cor. 9:4, 10; 1 Tim. 6:18-19).

4. The Bible tells workers to be faithful and hardworking (Eph. 4:28; Col. 3:23).

5. The Bible tells Christians to follow Jesus and live out their convictions, though it may bring conflict and even danger (Mt. 10:38-39; Mk. 13:9-11).

6. Christian owners and workers may be tempted to economic or physical violence, but oppression and violent response to

oppression are always wrong. Followers of Jesus are peaceful and peacemakers (Mt. 5:9, 38-39, 44; Lk. 22:47-51; Rom 12:21).

7. The Bible does not describe a detailed plan for owners and workers. What we know about equality and harmony in the workplace we learn from Bible teachings on unity, oneness, and the common good (Lk. 10:27; 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 26; Phil 2:4; Gal. 3:28).

Chris Sanders, who splits his time between a law firm in Louisville and pro bono work as a labor

organizer, has done more than provide preachers with an outline for a Labor Day weekend sermon. In the best of the prophetic vocation, he has reminded us that the gospel's message of abundant life extends to all workers — and especially to those on the bottom rungs of the economic ladder.

**perspectives**



*By Stan Hasteley  
Executive Director*

**A L L I A N C E   C H A P L A I N  
E N D O R S E M E N T S**

The following people have been endorsed as chaplains by the Alliance since the board of directors approved an endorsing process last September.

Rebecca Albritton	American Assoc. of Pastoral Counselors	Fellow
Bonita Barnes	Assoc. of Professional Chaplains	Board Certified Chaplain
Joy S. Berger	Assoc. of Professional Chaplains	Board Certified Chaplain
Crystal Champion	Spartanburg Regional Medical Center	Staff Chaplain
Melanie Childers	Assoc. of Professional Chaplains	Board Certified Chaplain
John D. Foster	Wake Forest Univ. Bapt Med. Center	Supervisor, ACPE
	Assoc. for Clinical Pastoral Education	Supervisor, ACPE
James E. Hightower, Jr.	Assoc. of Professional Chaplains	Board Certified Chaplain
	American Assoc. of Pastoral Counselors	Diplomate
Deborah Lynn Isley	Mission St. Joseph's Hospital	Staff Chaplain
	Assoc. of Professional Chaplains	Board Certified Chaplain
Mark Jensen	American Assoc. of Pastoral Counselors	Fellow
	Assoc. for Clinical Pastoral Education	Supervisor
	North Carolina Baptist Hospital	Chaplain Supervisor
Robert A. Kidd	Assoc. of Professional Chaplains	Board Certified Chaplain
Ann Thomason Madden	American Assoc. of Pastoral Counselors	Fellow
Terry Thomas Primer	Assoc. of Professional Chaplains	Board Certified Chaplain
Paul Warren	Assoc. of Professional Chaplains	Board Certified Chaplain

**P E A C E  
J U S T I C E**

Our friends at the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America have produced some excellent worship bulletin inserts that address issues of peace and justice. Some are written to coincide with seasons or specific days of the church year, such as Pentecost or Advent, while others are designed for use on such occasions as Mother's Day or Earth Day. Still others are undated.

A clean white copy of each insert, suitable for copying, is available from the BPFNA office for \$5. Churches without equipment to make multiple copies may pay 10 cents for each additional copy.

Please direct inquiries to BPFNA Managing Director LeDayne McLeese Polaski by phone (704/521-6051); e-mail (bpfna@bpfna.org); or USPS mail (4800 Wedgewood Dr., Charlotte NC 28210).

**Operating Budget YTD:**

Needs: \$137,438  
Receipts: \$142,724

**Mission Offering YTD:**

Goal: \$80,000  
Receipts: \$28,366

**Cuba Grant:**

Challenge: \$23,700  
Receipts: \$19,012

**San Leandro Community Church ousted by American Baptist Churches**

It's a story we've heard before, coming this time from an Alliance congregation in San Francisco, CA, San Leandro Community Church, which in June was thrown out of the American Baptist Churches USA.

San Leandro was one of four churches removed from the fellowship of its ABC region four years ago when they joined the Fellowship of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists. The churches appealed and until the most recent biennial convention, all four had expected to remain a part of ABC/USA through affiliation with another region.

But San Leandro and the other churches were booted from the ABC because of their "welcoming and affirming" stance toward homosexuals.

"The convention's decision to remove us completely has a very strong emotional and political impact," said pastor Kay Wellington. "Many of our current members have given thousands of dollars through the years to start new churches by some of the same people who have headed the campaign to kick us out."

The church retains its affiliation with the United Church of Christ, which last year recognized Kay's ordination to ministry. "But I was ordained by American Baptist Churches and I feel a deep, deep grief that we are no longer an ABC church."

Despite its problems with its former denomination, San Leandro continues its ministry. Amidst the conflict, ironically, the church is beginning sponsorship of a new nonprofit organization called Ubuntu, an African word that means recognizing the best in every person. Ubuntu will address violence in society as it relates to youth. The organization will offer services that will teach children to handle anger and resolve conflict.

The church uses its Alliance funding for pastoral support.



**Bill Hendricks will retire at end of month from Brite Divinity School**

Bill Hendricks will retire on Aug 30 as the director of the Baptist Studies program and lecturer in theology at Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, a job he's held since the program was started in 1995. He formerly taught at Southern, Southwestern and Golden Gate seminaries and has been a professor for 43 years. He will remain in Fort Worth and serve as a consultant to the Baptist Studies program for at least another year.

Jeff Pool has been named interim director.

Brite students and faculty are now gearing up to host a meeting of the deans, directors, and administrators of the Baptist Consortium of Theological Education, a group of seminaries providing theological education for moderate Baptists. This meeting, co-hosted by Baylor's Truett and Hardin-Simmons' Logsdon seminaries, will be held Sept. 12-14 in Irving, TX.

The Baptist Studies program at Brite, a part of Texas Christian University, has 36 students enrolled. One of those students, Terri Morgan, has recently been employed by the Christian Life Commission of Texas. Recent graduate Jeni Cook has been hired as the chief chaplain of the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Washington, DC. Another graduate, Tony Morgan, has been

hired as a consultant and student worker by Metropolitan Baptist Church in New York City where Alliance board member David Waugh is pastor.

Brite uses its funding from the Alliance to publish and distribute the quarterly *Brite Baptist Bulletin*.



**San Leandro Community Church \$2,000**  
**Brite Divinity School \$2,000**