

Connections

March 2003

Volume 6 Issue 3

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.

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all of his glory was not clothed like one of these." (Matthew 6:28)

April 24-26 at Vienna Baptist Church in the DC area Convocation focuses on ecology

During our annual Alliance Convocation this spring, we will be *considering* not only the lilies of the field, but the earth's field itself. Its glory we will celebrate; its cries for healing we will heed.

Most of us, along with our churches, have historically focused on human-divine relations and human-human relations. Of late, we are being increasingly challenged to



By **MAHAN SILER**
Chair, Convocation
Task Group

extend our theology to include human-earth relations. We are remembering that upon all creation, not humans alone, God declared it "very good."

Paul in Romans re-

minded us that the whole of creation, not human life alone, groans and awaits redemption. This year the Alliance Convocation will assist us in thinking, feeling and acting upon the mandate of embodying God's love for all that lives.

During these past 16 years, we have expected the Alliance to stretch us toward more faithful expressions of justice-love.

We have felt the summons of God toward gender equity, racial reconciliation,

church-state separation, interfaith relationships, Baptist connections within and beyond our national borders and the welcome of all regardless of sexual orientation.

The ecological consequences of our stewardship have been a secondary theme. In this year's convocation, we are bringing this dimension of the gospel forward to center stage. Once again our Alliance network will provide the context for another challenge, in this instance, the well-being (shalom) of life on the earth, both human and non-human.

You can count on the Alliance Convocation to offer the gifts we have come to expect: inspiring worship; informative workshops; reviewing our mission; provocative messages — all interlaced with the wisdom, laughter and insights from being together with like-minded and spirited Baptists. New this year will be the perspectives of theologians Jay McDaniel and Elizabeth Barnes, a Convocation choir, the youth meeting in a retreat setting, and the *Wisdom of Old Turtle*, a musical with choir and orchestra.

I hope you will join us as we work out some of the implications of being members of the body of Christ . . . members of the Alliance of Baptists . . . and members of the earth community.



Chaplains Beth Jackson-Jordan and Bob Kidd.

Alliance-endorsed chaplains rise to the top of their endorsing agency

The Alliance of Baptists is fairly new at the job of endorsing chaplains but already two of our members have held important positions in the Association of Professional Chaplains, the primary professional organization for chaplains.

Alliance member Bob Kidd, senior staff chaplain at The Methodist Hospital in Houston, TX, is the president-elect of the organization.

Beth Jackson-Jordan, chair of our Endorsing Committee, has just completed a four-year term on the board of directors of the same group. Last fall, Beth became coordinator of pastoral care and education in the long-term care division of Carolinas Health Care in Charlotte. She had previously served at St. Joseph of the Pines, a long-term-care facility in Southern Pines, NC. Beth is now a member of Providence Baptist Church in Charlotte.

A list of recently endorsed Alliance chaplains is on page 2.

Where is the Alliance going? Work group wants to map out a plan

The eight-person Strategic Planning Work Group appointed by president Craig Henry to develop a strategic plan to guide the Alliance over the next few years had its first meeting Feb. 14-16 in Atlanta.

Guiding the strategic planning process is Daniel Pryfogle of Signal Hill, a consulting firm based in Raleigh, NC. Pryfogle is an American Baptist who recently moved east from Oakland, CA, where he was a lay leader in Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church.

Members are Willard Bass of Winston-Salem, NC; Jerene Broadway, Asheville NC; Chris Copeland, Decatur, GA; Welton Gaddy, Washington, DC and Monroe, LA; Ann Quattlebaum, Greenville, SC; Paula Dempsey, Mars Hill, NC; Cherie Smith, Baltimore; and Henry.

The work group wants to hear from all Alliance members. The group will hold workshops at the Convocation in Vienna to give members an opportunity to provide input. You may also visit the discussion forum on the Alliance website to offer suggestions. www.allianceofbaptists.org.



Alliance board member Willard Bass of Winston-Salem, NC., left, and planning process leader Daniel Pryfogle.

Convocation Housing:

Courtyard by Marriott at Tysons Corner, 1960-A Chain Bridge Road, McLean, VA. 703/790-0207. Group Name: Alliance of Baptists. \$119 single/double. Deadline is **April 2**.

Books by Jay B. McDaniel:

With Roots and Wings: Christianity in an age of ecology and dialogue
Living from the Center: Spirituality in an age of consumerism

alliance finances

Through January 31

2003 Operating Budget

Needs: \$ 25,013
Receipts: \$ 21,797

2003 Mission Offering

Goal: \$ 111,000
Receipts: \$ 22,299

Alliance continues to endorse chaplains

Since May 2002 the AOB has endorsed 16 chaplains and pastoral counselors for a total of 82 endorsees. They include:

Brian Stowers, Hospital Chaplaincy, WakeMed, Raleigh, NC

Charlotte Fletcher, Hospital Chaplaincy, Wallingford, PA

Carol Mitchell, Active Duty Military Chaplain, US Army

Robert Redfearn, Healthcare Chaplain, Dorothea Dix Hospital, Knightdale, NC

Jo Smith Holloman, Chaplaincy, Stewpot Community Services, Jackson, MS

Dick Lewallen, Institutional Chaplaincy, John Knox Village, Pompano Beach, FL

Gary Bennett, Hospital Chaplaincy, Centera Baptist Hospital, Lexington, KY

Elizabeth Kammerdiener, Hospital Chaplaincy, Memorial Health Care System, Chattanooga, TN

David Carnish, Chaplain/CPE Supervisor-in-Training, Palmetto Health Alliance, Columbia, SC

Diane Cox, Hospital Chaplaincy, Western WakeMed, Cary, NC

Raye Nell Dyer, Hospital Chaplaincy, Vanderbilt Hospital, Nashville, TN

Jennifer Hornbuckle, Hospital Chaplaincy, Haven House Hospice, Atlanta, GA

Elizabeth Jackson-Jordan, Chaplaincy/CPE Supervisor, Carolinas Healthcare System, Charlotte, NC

Brent Adams, Mental Health Chaplain, Medical Pavilion, Concord, CA

John Hunt, Healthcare Chaplain, Providence Hospice of Seattle, WA

Angie Flack, CPE Supervisor-in-Training, University of Virginia Department of Chaplaincy Services

Our Alliance Endorsing Committee is comprised of volunteers who read applications, conduct interviews and vote on all applicants. Karen Moore of Charlotte, NC; Jay Foster of Winston-Salem, NC; Jim Coffman of Nashville, TN; Donna Poynor of Gainesville, FL; and Beth Jackson-Jordan of Huntersville, NC, make up the endorsing committee for the AOB. Jackson-Jordan is chair of the committee and can be reached at Beth.Jackson-Jordan@carolinashealthcare.org.

National arrogance has brought us to the edge of the precipice

During one of the presidential debates three years ago, George W. Bush made the case that in the exercise of international policy the United States needed a good dose of humility. Now is the time for President Bush to take the medicine he prescribed then.

Much of the rest of the world seems to understand that by going to war in Iraq, the United States would be making a mistake of potentially catastrophic proportions. These lines are written a day after millions of people around the world marched in protest of the long-threatened and possibly imminent U.S.-led war against Iraq. On the same day, hundreds of thousands of our own citizens did the same in cities across the nation.

Public opinion polls taken in mid-February show conclusively that these demonstrators speak for large majorities in many nations. A slimmer majority of our own citizens opposes the removal of Saddam Hussein by force. Clearly the time has come for the politicians to get into line behind the people.

For the past half century, U.S. international policy has been guided by the morally bankrupt notion that we make decisions about the rest of world based on our own national interests. Perhaps its most forceful advocate was Henry Kissinger, the Nixon administration secretary of state who may be the most overrated diplomat of the last century – or longer. Who other than he has been so consistently wrong on so many key issues for so long?

Such a view, that the United States of America has the right to deal with the peoples of the world as though our own interests are of such overarching importance that we can do pretty much as we please, has been a colossal failure.

In Iraq itself, we have inflicted unimaginable horrors on a

people undeniably oppressed by a brutal dictator whose megalomania seemingly has no limits. We have fought one war there already in which thousands of innocents were killed while Saddam was left unscathed. Then we imposed, with United Nations support, draconian economic sanctions that have killed unnumbered others and left a once-thriving economy in utter ruins. And we've done it all under the bloody banners of freedom and peace.

We are only beginning to pay the price for such mind-bending arrogance. As unthinkable as it may seem, September 11, 2001, could turn out to be a mere down payment on the exorbitant cost yet to be exacted. What supreme irony. If our nation goes to war in Iraq, we will be extending an open-ended invitation for a plague of violence of unprecedented proportions to be visited upon us. We very well may usher in a season of violence in the Middle East like none other before it. And in the bitter process, we will end up obliterating the very national interests upon which the entire house of cards has been so precariously built.

There is yet time, of course, to avoid all this. Why not allow ourselves to imagine what would happen in the whole region should we rededicate into humanitarian assistance a mere fraction of the resources already destined to a presumed war? Into an investment of real freedom and lasting peace in the Middle East built on the strong foundation of meaningful concessions by Israelis and Palestinians alike?

Such things are possible, yes. But they will come to pass only with a forthright renunciation of the national arrogance that has brought us to the edge of the precipice.

perspectives



By Stan Hastej
Executive Director

REGISTRATION FOR 17TH ANNUAL CONVOCATION

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime phone _____

Child care needs (ages/times): _____

\$65 – Individual • \$35 – Student • Youth Convocation — \$40

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Mail Registration to: Alliance of Baptists, 1328 16th Street NW, Washington DC 20036

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Youth Convocation offers time to reflect through nature study on the Potomac

As older Alliance members meet for the annual convocation April 24-26 in Vienna, VA, Alliance youth will have a time for their own celebration and worship.

Alliance board member Tim Dean, Minister of Youth at Myers Park Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC, is heading up the Youth Convocation.

“This event is for mature middle school and high school students who demonstrate leadership in their churches,” Tim said. “We are looking for youth who want to take some time away to reflect on their lives with God through nature study, selected readings, and group discussion. We’re looking for participants with positive attitudes, emotional and spiritual maturity, and self-discipline.”

The youth will

participate in the Thursday and Friday night worship services, the Saturday morning workshops and the closing worship at Vienna Baptist Church. The rest of their time will be spent at a nearby retreat center owned by Calvary Baptist Church, an Alliance affiliated congregation in Washington, DC.

“The center is located on a 300-acre piece of land with nearly a half-mile frontage on the Potomac River. Weather permitting, we will be sleeping on bunks inside screened cabins,” Tim said. “Most of our programming and group meeting time will take place outdoors. We will balance our time between spiritual exercises, Bible study, group play, a few hours of free time, and meals.”

In order to safeguard equity and a positive group dynamic, no church may

bring more than five youth.

The registration cost is \$40 per person, and will cover lodging, meals, and any materials or activities to be provided. Transportation will be the responsibility of each group, and will include travel to and from Vienna Baptist Church, approximately a 30-minute drive.

Individual youth are welcome to attend, but special arrangements must be made in advance to ensure that enough adult leaders and transportation are available to accommodate them.

To register, or if you have any questions, please call Tim Dean at 704/334-7232 ext. 23. You may also call Jeanette Holt at the Alliance of Baptists offices in Washington, DC. The deadline for registration and payment is April 1.



The need to reflect on ecology

“Because those of us in the church-house have so many immediate appeals that demand a response, we may not feel the excitement nor the urgency from listening to the cries of joy and pain from the earth. The Convocation is not designed to burden us with still more to do and more guilt to feel. Rather, it will offer the reconnections that give us vitality as we lift up our sails to the breezes of God’s spirit . . . to feel our communion with each other, including friends from Cuba, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe . . . **and** to catch the life-giving winds from our natural environment that both renew and challenge.” — Mahan Siler