BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE
ANNUAL GATHERING

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GIFTS FROM GLOBAL BAPTISTS: STORIES ENGAGING CHURCHES IN CONVERSATION

A podcast from the Division on Mission, Evangelism and Justice (MEJ) of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) hosted by MEJ Coordinator Trisha Miller Manarin

This monthly podcast focuses on the work and ministry of member bodies and churches in the BWA. The our goal is to share stories from our Baptist brothers and sisters around the world, encouraging our churches to consider and explore new ministry possibilities.
RECLAIMING BAPTIST INTERDEPENDENCY

Many people believe Baptists are a fiercely independent people—not only as individuals, but also as congregations. One reason for this opinion is the impact of American Baptist theologian and former BWA President E. Y. Mullins who, in his 1908 *Axioms of Religion: A New Interpretation of the Baptist Faith*, controversially identified “soul competency” as “a distinctive contribution [by Baptists] to the world’s [religious] thought.” Another is the vaunted claim, signaled clearly in 1611, when the congregation led by Thomas Helwys issued *A Declaration of Faith of the English People Remaining at Amsterdam in Holland*. The Declaration asserted that Baptist congregations are autonomous entities. As Article 12 of the Declaration puts it, “no church ought to challenge anie prerogative over anie other.”

From the beginning, Baptists have claimed that each individual needs to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in the process of conversion. Baptists have also believed that each local church—that is, each gathered group of believers covenanted together with God and with each other as a community of faith—is competent, under the lordship of Christ and in dependence on the Holy Spirit, to discern the will of God for its ministry as a local church. It is also empowered to invite into its ministerial leadership those whom the Lord chooses for this purpose.

Each local church fellowship is an expression of the body of Christ and, as Paul implies in 1 Corinthians 1:13, the body of Christ cannot be divided. For this reason, each local church shares an integral bond with other local churches and together they are the body of Christ. In other words, there is a sense in which, by participating in the one reality—they enjoy an existence in Christ—each local church bears witness to the one body of Christ, which is the church. As the Bible makes clear, “We were baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body” (1 Corinthians 12:13). And it is this one body that is called “the church of God” (Galatians 1:13). In order to give expression to the one church of Jesus Christ, each church needs other churches.

Baptists are indebted to the American theologian Dale Moody for helping us understand that to claim that the local church is completely autonomous is to fail to do justice to the full New Testament teaching concerning the church.

Baptists have long emphasized their mutual relationships and interdependence. As the British historian W. T. Whitley said in 1932:

> From the beginning Baptists were not “Independent”; they always sought for fellowship between the different churches, and they were very successful in arranging for permanent organization. [A]s soon as the slackening of persecution permitted not only freedom of action but also the keeping of records, the churches grouped themselves and arranged for regular meetings. This has always been a Baptist characteristic.

Long before Jean Jacques von Almen said, in 1970, that “The local church is wholly church, but it is not the whole church,” Baptists were applying the logic of this claim to individual congregations.

From as early as 1644, seven Particular Baptist congregations in England stated in the celebrated Article 47 of what has come to be called the First London Confession of Faith that:

> Although the particular Congregations be distinct and severall Bodies, everyone as a compact and knit Citie in it selfe; yet are they to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all meanes convenient to have the counsell and help one of another in all needful affaires; of the Church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their only head.

Eight years later, the Abingdon Association in England affirmed the urgent need of Baptist churches “to hold firm communion with each other.”

Over the years, churches existing in close geographical proximity have affirmed their inter-relationship and have developed patterns of cooperation deriving from their fellowship. This has happened translocally in regions and nations and, with the passage of time, internationally, both at the continental and the worldwide levels. More reflection needs to be given to the precise nature and meaning, not simply the purpose, of Baptists associating at the global level.

Baptist interdependency is capable of bearing the burden of the associational obligation that celebrated Baptist historian William Brackney had in mind when, writing about associations, he emphasized the need for Baptists “to learn again how to wrestle in love with difficult issues and to celebrate one another’s successes and bear one another’s burdens.” It is unclear whether the Baptist World Alliance mission statement balances the obligation of life together with common service to the world to the glory of God.

> “Networking the Baptist family to impact the world for Christ” is how the BWA Mission Statement reads. I am not convinced that the verb “networking” captures and conveys the breadth and depth of interdependency that is one critically important dimension of Baptist life. The verb focuses on a functional objective, which can easily be reduced to collaboration born out of self-interest or the awareness of the resources that are accessible through contact with others. Any group of people can network with each other. The word “networking” does not seem to be capable of bearing the theological weight of Baptists’ existence in Christ and the obligations, not simply the voluntary actions, which flow from this.

If only texts such as Romans 15:26-27 and Galatians 6:2 would feature more prominently when Baptists discuss the relationship that exists among their churches. Hardly can one identify a greater need of Baptists today than to rediscover Baptist interdependency—an interdependency that rejects cultural imperialism, paternalism and neo-colonialism—a true interdependency that is untainted by notions of empire.
BAPTISTS DIFFER. THAT IS A LONG, HISTORICAL FACT. Even at the earliest beginnings of the Baptist movement, Baptists in the United Kingdom were either Particular Baptists, those who hold to a Reformed or Calvinist tradition; or Arminian Baptists, those who rejected the Calvinist doctrine of predestination.

Since then, divisions have occurred at different levels and for various reasons. The diversity among groups springs from differences in geographical locations, historical origins, missional outreach and social and moral emphases, as well as theological divergences and administrative, property and personal disputes.

Despite the fractures and breaks, the longing for Baptist cooperation and unity has never been lost. It is this impulse that led to the formation of the Baptist World Alliance in 1905, and what has spurred Baptist cooperation at national and local levels. Associationalism, the conviction that Baptists do best when we enter into fraternal relationship and share fellowship with each other, never died.

The BWA comprises 235 member organizations in 121 countries and territories. Several countries have multiple Baptist groups that are distinct and different. The three most notable countries are India, which has 22 BWA member organizations; the United States with 19; and the Democratic Republic of the Congo with 12.

BWA AS CATALYST
There have been instances when the BWA was the catalyst that brought Baptist groups in a particular nation together, some becoming aware of each other or having any kind of direct contact with each other for the first time. In May 2006, the BWA, in its human rights visit to Vietnam, with support from Vietnamese Baptist leaders in the United States and in Vietnam, inspired five organized Baptist groups, most of which were totally ignorant of or, at best, strangers to each other, to participate in a special meeting. That led directly to one of the groups, the Baptist Churches in Vietnam, gaining BWA membership.

The Jesus Christ, Living Water program from 2005–2010 and the Bread of Life initiative from 2010–2015 were especially helpful in forging Baptist cooperation and
unity. During these programs, 24 intensive training conferences in evangelism and discipleship were conducted in 19 countries.

At the Living Water event in Bangladesh in November 2008, it was the first that the Bangladesh Baptist Church Fellowship (BBCF), the Bangladesh Baptist Church Sangha and the Garo Baptist Convention of Bangladesh had any direct, formal contact. “This Living Water conference has the potential to be the most important event Bangladesh Baptists have ever conducted, especially as it has brought the people of the three Baptist groups together to concentrate on sharing faith in Christ and on the importance of servant leadership,” said BBCF General Secretary Leor Sarkar.

The Bread of Life event in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in July 2012, was the first initiative ever, as far as could be determined, to bring Baptists of different traditions together in that city and country. It helped pave the way for one of these groups, the Convention of Independent Baptist Churches, which did not have BWA membership at the time, to become part of the BWA. Three groups in the South American country are now part of the BWA.

A Bread of Life Mission and Evangelism Training Conference at the North Haiti Christian University in Haut Limbé, Haiti, in early 2013, resulted in a declaration proposing the formation of an Alliance of Baptists in Haiti to unite all Haitian Baptists in their common efforts to witness and be a Baptist in early 2013, resulted in a declaration that the BWA, the Euro-Asian Federation comprises 12 Baptist conventions and unions, including its two largest Baptist unions, Russia and Ukraine. “Formed in 1993, [it] serves only as a consultative and coordinating body” (Hans Hillerbrand). The federation hosts an annual conference that allows feedback, consultations and updates on Baptist work in the various countries.

A similar movement occurred in Northeast India. Assam was one of eight major provinces in India during and after British colonial rule but, in the 1970s, was broken up into several Indian states, including the state that still retains the name of the province. Baptists in this sub region continued their relationship through the Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India (CBCNEI) and are engaged in extensive cooperation. CBCNEI gained BWA associate membership in 2011. CBCNEI’s ministries include six hospitals and a theological school, along with seven other affiliated seminaries, three students’ hostels, a Christian Literature Center and a conference center.

The Indonesian Baptist Alliance, or the Fellowship of Baptists of Indonesia (PBI), came into being in March 1981, “to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, as contained in the Bible,” and to bring about closer unity among Baptists in the majority-Muslim country. It includes seven groups, three of which are member organizations of the BWA. “We Baptists in Indonesia, namely the people of the Lord Jesus Christ, incorporated in various Baptist Church organizations, are fully aware of … our role as a messenger of the Lord Jesus in doing His work in this world and in Indonesia in particular,” PBI announced in a statement. PBI brings the groups together in annual conferences and other meetings to celebrate their oneness and togetherness as Baptists.

In 2006, the Cameroon Baptist Convention, the native Baptist Church and the Union of Baptist Churches of Cameroon founded the Cameroon Baptist Alliance. “We came to an agreement that as Baptists, we must have one body to evangelize Cameroon [and] bring forth educational and medical healing to our people,” declared Charles Tangwa at the launch. Tangwa was elected general secretary for the new entity. The constitution declared the alliance’s objective to “build an organization of Baptist churches and provide a space for sharing in witness and ministry.” The four BWA member organizations in Cuba have held joint programs and events aimed at advancing evangelism and enhancing fellowship. In May and June of 1999, Baptists held 16 major events in plazas and stadiums. Thousands of Christians were mobilized. Government authorities attended the meetings. That particular series of events and subsequent evangelistic outreach activities and programs contributed to spectacular numerical growth among Baptists on the Caribbean island over the past two decades. The four Baptist groups realized “that working separately will not win the country,” said Elmer Lavastida, a pastor in eastern Cuba.

In February 2008, the four groups, the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba, the Baptist Convention of Eastern Cuba, the Free Will Baptist Convention of Cuba and the Fraternity of Baptist Churches in Cuba, held a joint dramatic presentation titled, “We are one.” Held on BWA Sunday, it reenacted the coming of the first Baptists to the island. A 50-day emphasis on prayer and evangelism from Easter Day, March 23, to Pentecost Sunday, May 11, followed.

In Brazil, Baptists, along with other Christian traditions, engaged in mission outreach to the city of Rio de Janeiro and to its visitors during the 2016 Summer Olympics and Paralympics. The National Baptist Convention (NBC) utilizes a program called Igreja Multiplicadora (Multiplication or Multiplying Church), a program to plant new churches and development of existing churches. Developed by the Brazilian Baptist Convention (BBC), NBC is sending its leaders to BBC training conferences.

The examples cited above and the articles that follow on the United States, Trinidad and Tobago and Rwanda, demonstrate that the impulse among Baptists to co-exist and be together is strong. Such bond comes not just out of necessity, but recognition that Baptists share a common DNA not easy to ignore.
BAPTISTS UNITE FOR GREATER SERVICE
BY ANSLEM WARRICK

The Gospel Baptist Association of Trinidad and Tobago (GBATT) is now the umbrella body representing six Baptist groups with 100 churches and a united membership of approximately 10,000 baptized believers. GBATT’s mission is “to celebrate our Baptist heritage and to reveal our legacy.” Its theme is “United for Greater Service.”

GBATT, not to be confused with Spiritual or Shouter Baptists, trace their history back to 1816 with the arrival of former slaves and former marines and soldiers who fought on the side of the British in the American War of 1812–1814.

Given parcels of land in British colonies as their reward, they came in the very companies in which they had fought. They took their faith with them and set up small churches in each company village. Many villages still carry the company name today, such as 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Company villages.

Sometime later, the Baptist Missionary Society of London came to the island and assisted the small Baptist witness by planting several churches. That group became known as the “London Baptists.”

Sharp disagreements arose over worship styles, governance, education and training. This led to a split and the departing group was first called “Disobedient Baptists” but later referred to themselves as “Independent Baptists.” This group later split into different groups of Independent Baptists.

Missionaries from the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States, came to the island in the mid 1960s. They, too, set up churches and formed a separate group called the Trinidad and Tobago Baptist Association.

Attempts at unity began in the 1970s as leaders of the different groups saw the need to cooperate for greater effectiveness and a stronger Christian witness on the island. It was clear, however, that any attempt at unity had to be done bearing in mind the Baptist doctrine of the autonomy of the local church, and so cooperation was strictly on a voluntary basis.

Eventually in the year 1984, an umbrella body called the Trinidad and Tobago Baptist Fellowship (TTBF) was formed, consisting of the following associations and unions: the Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago (BUTT); the Independent Baptist Mission Churches of T&T, Inc. (IBMC); the Trinidad and Tobago Baptist Association (TTBA); the International Independent Baptist Churches (IIBC); the Independent Baptist Missionary Union (IBMU); and Mt. Beulah Evangelical Baptist Church (MBEBC).

Having agreed on a statement of faith, the TTBF established pillars upon which they worked out their unity and cooperation, including the successful implementation of several programs and ministries. These include a half hour radio program titled “The Ray of Hope,” which dealt with social and moral issues from a biblical perspective. Church services and programs were also aired featuring the different preachers from the various associations; a pastors, deacons and wives end of year dinner, which encouraged fellowship and camaraderie amongst the pastors and leaders of the different groups; and a Cooperative Credit Union, which was incorporated by law to encourage members to save and to assist churches and members with their building programs.

An important initiative was a united training program called the United Baptist Training Institute that equips leaders and pastors for ministry. The Nelton Richardson Bible Institute for the training of full time pastors and evangelists is 90 percent complete and will soon be taking in its first students. Other programs such as youth rallies and leadership seminars are done jointly.

Over the years, the effectiveness and vibrancy of the association has waned and some programs were discontinued. The departure of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention from the Caribbean meant that some programs had to be cut and others scaled back. However, cooperation continues in training, radio ministry and fellowship.

Our stated goals were firstly to celebrate God’s faithfulness in sending our foreparents of the faith to Trinidad and in keeping us for so long a time. Secondly, to rebrand and differentiate ourselves from the ubiquitous Spiritual and Shouter Baptist groups with which we are sometimes confused. Finally, we aimed to document our history as Baptists in Trinidad and Tobago.
The year 2016 brought with it a fresh opportunity to ride a new wave of renewal and cooperation which we pray will see Baptist unity grow stronger and deeper.

This year marked the 200th anniversary of Baptist presence in the twin island republic. From very early we began planning to use this once in a lifetime opportunity to revitalize, rebrand and restore the work of the Lord among Baptists in Trinidad and Tobago.

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We started our preparations in 2014 because we knew it would require getting all six groups to agree, to invest and to participate—a tough task for Baptists. After numerous meetings, consensus was reached and a Heritage Committee consisting of representatives from all six associations was constituted.

To achieve our stated goals, we planned three major events. First, a Grand Thanksgiving Service on March 13, 2016. This was attended by more than 750 persons, the full capacity of the venue. Special greetings were received from the Baptist World Alliance through General Secretary Neville Callam, the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship through its Zonal Moderators Bernadette Richards-Duncan and Brenda Harewood, and BMS World Mission of London. This was followed by a Gala Dinner on Saturday, June 18, 2016. At this event the best of Baptist talent was showcased.

Our final event was a National Church Growth Conference and Book Launch held on September 17, 2016. In my opinion, this was the most important event, attended by 198 delegates including pastors, evangelists, Sunday School teachers, deacons and youth leaders.

This event equipped our members with the strategies, skills and knowledge of “making disciples who make disciples” using a Biglife group plan. We aim to see our membership involved in a church growth movement that would multiply our membership to 20,000 by 2018.

We also launched a book written by Trinidadian-born Baptist pastor and historian, Victor “Ken” Cadette, entitled, Slaves, Soldiers and Saints, documenting the history of Baptists in Trinidad from 1816-2016. Numerous copies were sold and plans are being made to ensure the book becomes part of the curriculum in our nation’s schools and tertiary institutions.

2017 is shaping up to be a good year for Baptists as our young people prepare to host the Caribbean Baptist Youth Festival in Trinidad in July. All the groups under GBATT are involved in the planning.

Our fellowship and unity have indeed been enriched and revitalized through these events and we are looking forward to the future with hope for a deeper and more lasting unity among Baptists in Trinidad and Tobago.

Anslem Warrick is general secretary of the Baptist Union of Trinidad and Tobago, director of the Gospel Baptists Association of Trinidad and Tobago and a vice president of the Baptist World Alliance.
BAPTISTS JOIN HANDS IN RWANDA

Since the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda, the four Baptist World Alliance member organizations in the country, along with two other Baptist denominational groups, have engaged in extensive cooperation with each other.

The Rwandan Genocide was a mass slaughter of Tutsi and moderate Hutu by members of the Hutu majority. During the approximate 100-day period from April 7 to mid-July 1994, an estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 Rwandans were killed, constituting as much as 70 percent of the Tutsi and 20 percent of Rwanda’s total population.

Founded in 1991, the Evangelical Alliance of Rwanda (EAR), which comprises 47 church groups, was the initiative of four of the six organized Baptist groups in the Central African country. The EAR was instrumental in helping to open the door to churches in the mostly Roman Catholic country. Before the genocide, evangelical Christianity was largely discouraged but the formation of new groups exploded after the government removed restrictions. The alliance engages in church empowerment, community enrichment, microfinance and training.

Leadership within the six Baptist groups set the example of cooperation by meeting regularly, sharing testimony and praying with and for each other. Starting about five years ago, some 50 or so Baptist leaders—presidents, general secretaries and executive members—gather at a different location on the last Thursday of each month.

SEMINARY

Among the earliest initiatives was the founding of a single degree granting institution to train pastors and others for the Christian ministry. Formed in 2004, the Rwanda Institute of Evangelical Theology (RIET) offers accredited Bachelor of Theology degrees and, since 2014, a Master’s program. With a current enrollment of more than 170 students, it graduated its third class in July 2016.

Courses of study are offered in collaboration with the Nairobi Evangelical School of Theology in Kenya and two schools in Uganda, the Kampala Evangelical School of Theology and Ndejje University.

In tandem with plans to make English more widely spoken in Rwanda, the seminary offers diploma courses in English. Class instructions are given in French, the official language, and English.

Classes are currently being held in facilities owned by one of the six groups, the Association of Baptist Churches in Rwanda, but there are plans to build its own campus on two acres of land in the capital, Kigali, which was gifted to the Baptists by the government.

According to Dusingizimana, one’s lineage is determined by one’s father. Though his mother was Tutsi, he was regarded as Hutu because of his father. In the scenario where tribes were pushed by politicians to be hostile to each other, the pernicious situation occurred where stepchildren attacked and killed each other, uncles and nephews attacked each other, and so forth.

RECONCILIATION

An important component of Baptist cooperation is reconciliation. “The church makes a big impact on Rwanda to bring people together,” said Enoch Dusingizimana, bishop and president of the Community of Christian Churches in Africa.

Dusingizimana told the BWA that for hundreds of years the three main groups in Rwanda, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, lived peacefully together. All three groups speak the same language. Intermarriage was common. For instance, Dusingizimana’s father was Hutu while his mother was Tutsi.

He blames politicians for sowing divisions among the various tribes. “Politicians pushed it,” he asserted, going into villages and towns and telling the various ethnic groups that they should have nothing to do with the other, even with family members.

“Reconciliation happens at various levels. Joint worship services are held in Rwanda’s largest prison where imprisoned persons can enroll in training courses. By 2016, 14 prisoners completed four years of Bible school. After their training, “some who finish their sentence go out and preach the Gospel,” Dusingizimana said.

The churches institute income generating projects for the families of those in prison and those who lost loved ones in the genocide, mainly through farming and sewing. “Say your husband is in prison because he killed mine,” Dusingizimana explained. “We bring them together into this training program so they are united.”
OF ALL THE COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE, the United States (US) has the largest number of Baptist Christians, estimated at 40 percent of the global total. It also has one of the largest numbers of Baptist denominational groups. The Baptist World Alliance, the international umbrella organization for Baptists, has 19 member organizations in the US.

Baptists in the US often speak in separate, distinct voices, covering virtually every spectrum in the Christian Protestant tradition. But Baptist denominational groups, institutions and organizations have grasped opportunities to engage each other. Much of this engagement revolves around disaster response and justice issues.

The North American Baptist Fellowship (NABF), officially formed in 1964, grew out of the Joint Baptist Jubilee Advance Committee, which was formed by seven groups in December 1955 as part of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Baptist work “on a national scale” in North America.

Specifically, the NABF was “to conserve the gains and values which have resulted from the Baptist Jubilee Advance and to increase opportunities for fellowship and for sharing mutual concerns.” Most groups in NABF, which is one of six regional fellowships of the BWA, are based in the United States. The rest are in Canada or span both countries. It is the principal means through which fellowship and cooperation occur among Baptists on the continent.

One of the more recent areas of cooperation is the Disaster Response Network, a tool used by the NABF to avoid duplication and to better coordinate disaster response to floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires.

Baptist Joint Committee (BJC), founded in 1936, is supported by 15 Baptist bodies in the US, most of which are BWA member organizations. In the 1940s, both the BWA and BJC shared a physical home in Washington, DC. BJC’s mission “is to defend and extend God-given religious liberty for all, furthering the Baptist heritage that champions the principle that religion must be freely exercised, neither advanced nor inhibited by government.”

BJC opened the Center for Religious Liberty in October 2012. “The Center increased our work capacity as we continue to advocate for religious liberty, filing briefs in the US Supreme Court and working with Congress and the White House.” In addition, the center “hosts frequent groups of partners, students, church members and clergy … providing visitors meaningful exposure to the work of the organization and our Baptist heritage.”

The New Baptist Covenant (NBC) was founded to encourage Baptists in the US to reconcile differences, to engage in partnership and to help transform communities. A vision of former US President Jimmy Carter, a prominent Baptist layman, NBC draws historically Black Baptist groups such as the Progressive National Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention of America to work with other large groups such as American Baptist Churches USA and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Through Covenants of Action, NBC brings “together Baptist churches from different racial and ethnic backgrounds to build relationships with each other and work together to create positive change in the community beyond their churches.” Churches “from the same city or region … engage in serious and hard conversations about what it means to form a covenant with each other.”

NBC’s Justice Equality Initiative addresses shortcomings within the American criminal justice system. “Impoverished people and racial minorities do not receive equal protection under the law, Jim Crow is resurrected and God’s beloved children are oppressed,” NBC declares. It provides a Healing Communities Toolkit for congregations, which includes training workshops where five or more churches partner with each other to address justice inequality.

African American Baptist Mission Collaboration (AABMC) coordinates initiatives among the historically Black Baptist denominational and mission organizations in the US. AABMC was formed in February 2010 to coordinate disaster relief response to the earthquake that devastated the Caribbean nation of Haiti the previous month, in January.

AABMC’s aims were “to create synergies by collaborating with financial support and technical assistance in responses of relief and recovery; advocate for just and humane policies toward Haiti, in the United States, and the international community; and to engage in ongoing programs of service delivery and sustainable development.”

Its specific targets were for “five health care clinics to provide restorative health services and wellness, 50 schools with enhanced learning environments, 500 reconstructed churches to serve as center points for community empowerment [and] 5,000 homes to house victims left homeless following the earthquake.”

AABMC reported that “approximately 8,428 people benefited from the $1 million donation to HFH (Habitat for Humanity) and 700 jobs were created” in Haiti.
CALLAM GIVES NOTICE OF RETIREMENT FROM BWA

As per policy, the general secretary, the chief executive of the international umbrella organization for Baptists, should give a minimum notice of 12 months.

Callam, a Jamaican, made history when he was elected to the position in July 2007 during the BWA Annual Gathering in Accra, Ghana, as the first Black person to hold the position. Since its founding in 1905, all previous general secretaries were American or European.

He took over the BWA just when the Great Recession occurred. Working with the Budget and Finance Committee, Callam shepherded the body through the financial crisis and global economic meltdown, with minimal dislocations and impact on the operations of the BWA and its staff.

In addition, after the Implementation Task Force completed its work in 2008, there were major constitutional and operational changes within the BWA, many with potentially disruptive implications on the future of the organization that Callam had to navigate.

Under Callam’s leadership, much work was done to streamline the administration of the BWA office, giving clarity to the alignment of purpose, function and operational modalities. He worked with staff to employ relevant technology to improve BWA functions while minimizing cost, and put in place a conference management system to secure greater economic sustainability.

The divisions on Evangelism and Education and Study and Research were merged into the newly formed Division on Mission, Evangelism and Theological Reflection (METR).

The Division on Freedom and Justice (F&J) was established in 2008 after years of discussion of the need for such a unit in the BWA. One consequence of the Great Recession was the 2016 merger of both METR and F&J into the Division on Mission, Evangelism and Justice when pledged donor funds failed to materialize to support a separate F&J Division.

BWA membership has grown since Callam came into office, moving from 214 to 235 member organizations in 122 countries and territories such as Vietnam, Grenada, and the Turks and Caicos Islands, into the BWA fold. Some new groups from East and Central Africa found their beginnings in refugee camps in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan.

Bread of Life, an evangelism training initiative, a successor to the Jesus Christ, Living Water program, played a significant role in forging Baptist cooperation among various Baptist groups in countries, including Brazil and Haiti. Callam worked tirelessly to help settle disputes among Baptists and bring about reconciliation in places such as Kenya and Liberia.

A Covenant on Intra-Baptist Relations was adopted to provide a framework for BWA response to the diversity of language, culture, opinions and perspectives in meetings and in the various operations of the international body. The document considers the great diversity that exists among Baptists, particularly within the BWA. It assists member organizations to understand that all equally belong in, and are needed by, the BWA, and provides a framework for respectful trans-cultural relationships.

In his retirement notice letter, Callam said his commitment in serving the BWA was to “draw attention to the church’s mission as the mission of God,” locating the ministries of relief and development, the defense of freedom and justice and a commitment to the unity of the church within that vision. He ceaselessly insisted “on the theological foundation for these values.”

“You are one of those gifts from God for the church,” BWA President Paul Msiza said in response to Callam’s announcement. “I have been touched and encouraged by your deep faith and commitment to God and to the mission of the church. Your hard work and sacrificial service describe your deep commitment and love for the BWA.”

“My first response was one of sadness. It felt I was losing something very significant and precious,” declared John Upton, former president and current chair of the Human Resources Committee, upon learning of Callam’s plans to retire from the organization. “I have been deeply grateful for the opportunity to work alongside Neville, not only while serving as president of the BWA, but in every other capacity. His deep commitment to the BWA and his tireless service to it will long be appreciated.”

Noting his scholarship and commitment to theological rigor and integrity, Upton said Callam “modeled unsurpassed excellence of service” and that “his leadership has challenged the BWA to become increasingly an authentic global Baptist community.”

Callam acknowledged God’s guiding presence and the support of his wife, Dulcie. “Serving in this position, God has never failed me and, through all the opportunities and challenges, I have benefited from the unwavering faithfulness of my wife who has helped me selflessly.”

“Serving in this position, God has never failed me and, through all the opportunities and challenges, I have benefited from the unwavering faithfulness of my wife who has helped me selflessly.”

— Neville Callam
CALLAM APPOINTS MEETING PLANNING MANAGER

CAROLINA MANGIERI, a Baptist World Alliance member of staff since 2004, assumed the full position of Meeting Planning Manager beginning October 1.

The appointment was made by BWA General Secretary Neville Callam following a decision of the Executive Committee in Vancouver, Canada, in July, that “the General Secretary will make interim staffing arrangements to continue the work of the BWA while the Executive Task Group does its work.”

The task group is to take a comprehensive look at BWA staffing and submit its recommendations not later than 2018. The general secretary can fill vacancies that arise on an interim basis.

Mangieri, in addition to the Meeting Planning portfolio, assumes staff leadership for selected aspects of the work of the BWA Youth Department while the task group fulfills its mandate.

The combination of responsibilities for the Youth Department and the Conference portfolio follow the work of the BWA 21st Century Committee and the Implementation Task Force from several years ago. This caused Mangieri’s role in the Conference Office to include service to the BWA Youth Department.

Mangieri served two years as administrative assistant in the Division on Promotion and Development and in a similar role in the BWA Conference Office over the last 10 years.

“In the position she occupied in the Youth Department/Conference Office, Carolina has been steady and reliable and has contributed significantly to the success of BWA’s congresses, Annual Gatherings, youth conferences and executive committee meetings,” Callam said.

Mangieri’s Meeting Planning portfolio will include logistical responsibility for BWA events, including the Baptist International Conference on Theological Education (BICTE) and BWA-sponsored training events and receptions.

“Carolina has drawn on her training in public relations and hotel management at the Universidad Argentina John F. Kennedy and the Instituto Superior en Turismo Perito Moreno, respectively,” Callam stated. “Over the years, BWA has made good use of her multi-lingual skills that were honed starting in her native Argentina.”

BAPTISTS TO OBSERVE BWA DAY

Baptist churches and institutions are encouraged to observe Baptist World Alliance Day on February 4 or 5, 2017, depending on whether they worship on Saturday or Sunday.

The observance is aimed at affirming Baptist identity within the worldwide Christian family. Baptists are encouraged to pray for each other and to renew their commitment to cooperate with Baptists globally through the BWA.

The 2017 BWA Day worship materials have been prepared by Karen Gwynn Massey, associate dean for Masters Degree Programs and associate professor of Christian Education and Faith Development at the McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, in the United States. She is the holder of the Watkins Christian Foundation Chair at that institution.

Worship resources are available online on the BWA website at www.bwanet.org. Various language translations will be added in due course.

Congregations and institutions are encouraged to share stories of their observance and worship experience by emailing PandD@bwanet.org.
BWA LAUNCHES PODCAST

THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE LAUNCHED ITS FIRST PODCAST.

Titled, “Gifts from Global Baptists: Stories Engaging Churches in Conversation,” the podcast, a creation coming from the new Division on Mission, Evangelism and Justice (MEJ), focuses on the work and ministry of member bodies and churches in the BWA.

MEJ combines former divisions on Mission, Evangelism and Theological Reflection and Freedom and Justice.

Trisha Miller Manarin, new MEJ coordinator, said “our goal is to share stories from our Baptist brothers and sisters around the world, encouraging our churches to consider and explore new ministry possibilities.”

The podcast is available on the BWA website at www.bwanet.org.

BWA PARTICIPATES IN GLOBAL GATHERING ON PEACE AND JUSTICE IN ITALY

DIMITRINA OPRENOVA OF BULGARIA, a vice president of the Baptist World Alliance, was among a global gathering of 450 religious leaders of various Christian and faith traditions at the “THIRST FOR PEACE: Religions and Cultures in dialogue” in Assisi, Italy, from September 18–20.

Hosted by Pope Francis I, the event explored justice and peace issues such as economic inequality, poverty, war, terrorism, the integration of migrants and Christian-Muslim relationships.

Specific concerns, including conflicts and wars in Iraq, the horrors in Aleppo, Syria, the aftermath of the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, and the refugee challenges facing Europe, were also explored.

Oprenova, who was appointed by BWA General Secretary Neville Callam to represent him at the event, reported that “the spirit… was one of respect and value for all present.”

She said that among those invited to share in the event was “a group of refugees from countries that are experiencing tragedies of war.”

Pope Francis I hosted prayers attended by Christian leaders and representatives, including Oprenova; Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I; Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury; Ignatius Aphrem II, Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and all the East; and Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

“All main Orthodox, Protestant [and] Evangelical representatives sat at the very center of the podium from where the service was held, including the Baptist representative,” Oprenova confirmed.

“An Appeal for Peace was issued, read and then signed by the representatives,” Oprenova declared. “Small scrolls of the appeal were symbolically passed from the spiritual to the political leaders with the help of children. Young children were invited to come to the podium where the faith representatives gave the scroll appeals to the children who in return delivered it to the politicians and representatives sitting in the front rows.”

The 2016 gathering in Assisi was the 30th anniversary of the Day of Prayer for Peace promoted by Pope John Paul II in October 1986, where representatives of various religious traditions and cultures met for three days of dialogue and prayer.

The BWA attended prior meetings to follow the tradition of the 1986 gathering. In October 2011, General Secretary Callam and former President John Upton were among approximately 300 religious leaders who gathered in Assisi to participate in the “Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World.”
THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE welcomed an eight-member team from the Commission for Government Support for Faith Communities in Sweden (SST) to its international offices on October 7.

SST is a government agency that provides support for faith communities, enabling congregations to work actively with long-term focus on worship, education and spiritual and pastoral care.

The team visited the United States on a fact finding tour and visited the US Department of State. They sought, among other things, to determine how faith communities interact with other parts of civil society, the expectations that society and the state have of faith communities and the work done by faith communities to combat anti-Semitism, islamophobia and xenophobia.

SST was particularly interested in BWA’s involvement in justice issues. BWA staff, led by General Secretary Neville Callam, offered a summary of the BWA’s work through its seven freedom and justice commissions as well as its involvement in the United Nations, human rights visits, representations and advocacy and recognition through its human rights awards.

The work SST does is particularly crucial at this time as Sweden has taken in the second highest number of Syrian and other refugees among countries in Europe. Christian churches, including the Uniting Church in Sweden, which includes Baptists, are playing a critical role in the care and settlement of these refugees.

As recently as September, the government of Sweden allocated the rough equivalent of some US$4 million “to civil society and religious communities to strengthen their activities that focus on asylum seekers, and for the introduction of new arrivals.”
HAITI NEEDS URGENT HELP

Everton Jackson, Baptist World Alliance regional secretary for the Caribbean, indicated that Haiti needs urgent help after it was slammed by Hurricane Matthew in early October, a category 4 storm that hit the nation with wind speed of 145 miles, or more than 230 kilometers, per hour.

Much of the damage occurred in Southwestern Haiti.

Jackson, who visited Haiti from October 7–10 at the request of BWA General Secretary Neville Callam, said “among the immediate needs are food, water, mattresses, clothes and building material.”

He told the BWA that “tents are needed to provide temporary accommodation for persons living in shelters, particularly those occupying schools and other public facilities.”

In addition, “medication and medical interventions are needed to monitor the health risks being posed in the aftermath of the hurricane, given Haiti’s vulnerability to cholera and other associated diseases.”

There is urgent need for clean water. Jackson, who is the executive secretary/treasurer for the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, noted that the absence of clean water is a matter of emergency. He sees the need for the construction of new wells.

A major concern is the number of schools affected. Churches in Haiti, including Baptists, are the backbone of the educational system. “Approximately 150 of these schools were damaged during the passage of the hurricane,” Jackson told the BWA. “A number of these schools will be out of commission for a while because of the extensive nature of the damage.” Church leaders are anxious to find alternative venues for classes.

“It was a heartrending experience to have gone to Haiti and witness the extent of the devastation occasioned by Hurricane Matthew,” Jackson observed. “Evidently, the country has not fully recovered from the earthquake that ravaged it some years ago in January 2010, nor the cholera outbreak and other intervening traumatic experiences of a catastrophic nature.”

The BWA is appealing to its global constituency to respond with urgency to the need.

Donations may be made online at www.bwanet.org/give or sent to:

Baptist World Aid

c/o Baptist World Alliance

405 North Washington Street

Falls Church, VA 22046 USA

Hurricane Matthew in Cuba

By Elmer Lavastida

Even though Santiago de Cuba was in the early forecasts for Hurricane Matthew, we were spared this time.

But the terrible storm moved toward the east and hit the very tip of the island, a less developed area. The majority of homes and public buildings are made of wood, which is abundant in that zone, and the 220 kilometers per hour winds and 10 meter high waves devastated the area.

It is also a territory with many Baptist churches. Baracoa was the first city founded by the conquistadors in 1512 and was a pioneer territory of Baptist evangelization. It is a mountainous region rich in coffee, cocoa, fruits and vegetables, so all that harvest has been lost.

A group from the Christian Center for Training and Service, which I also serve, went to assess the damage and prepared a relief project.

Donations may be made online at www.bwanet.org/give or sent to:

Baptist World Aid

c/o Baptist World Alliance

405 North Washington Street

Falls Church, VA 22046 USA

Elmer Lavastida is pastor of Second Baptist Church in Santiago de Cuba.
LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH GATHER IN MEXICO

BAPTIST YOUTH FROM ACROSS LATIN AMERICA attended the Latino American Baptist Youth Conference in Cancun, Mexico, from July 25–28.

Approximately 700 participants from 11 countries attended the event, planned by the American Baptist Youth (JUBLA) and hosted by the National Baptist Youth Union and the National Baptist Convention of Mexico.

Conducted under the theme, “Transforms,” the conference included worship, musical presentations and plenary speakers who addressed topics having to do with transformation in and through worship and relationships, transformation of communities and responsibility to the wider world.

Fourteen workshops focused on various aspects of the Christian life and youth leadership.

Conducted under the theme, “Transforms,” the conference included worship, musical presentations and plenary speakers who addressed topics having to do with transformation in and through worship and relationships, transformation of communities and responsibility to the wider world.

Speakers and presenters included Félix Ramírez, Ezequiel Fuentes and Luis Gabriel César Isunza from México; David Mangieri from Argentina and the United States; José Luis Cinalli of Argentina; David Silva from Venezuela; and Rafael Canadá of the United States.

An important feature was the level of fellowship, interaction and networking that the conference afforded, with youth meeting others from other national and cultural backgrounds.

Carolina Mangieri, from the Baptist World Alliance Youth Department, and Parrish Jacome, BWA regional secretary for Latin America and executive director of the Union of Baptists in Latin America, attended the event.

Countries represented were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela, USA, and México.

Various “family group” meetings were held during the youth conference in Cancun.
CROATIAN BAPTIST WORK AMONG REFUGEES

While a part of Europe was already facing the wave of migrants from the east, Croatia first came into contact with the wave in the middle of September 2015. The efforts in solving the situation resulted in growing tensions with neighboring countries—the blocking of border traffic with Serbia and the raising of a barbed wire fence on the borders by Slovenia and Hungary.

More than half a million migrants have passed through Croatia, with more than 6,500 arriving each day. Most came from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries.

The first set of refugees came to Croatia after the Serbian government rerouted the refugee wave toward Croatia after the closure of the Hungarian-Serbian border. The rerouting of the refugees to neighboring countries from then on depended on Austria’s willingness to let people in, and Germany’s policy toward the migrants and refugees.

Croatian Baptist Aid (CBA) has been active through its volunteers and the first aid provided by local churches since the first influx of the refugees to Croatia, in the municipality of Tovarnik, on the Croatian-Serbian border. As the number of the refugees grew each day, so did the needs grow as well. The government of the Republic of Croatia organized a crisis center and held a meeting with all active humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations Refugee Agency, the Red Cross, Croatian Baptist Aid, Samaritan’s Purse, Caritas and Jesuit Refugee Service, with the goal of constructing the first refugee camp in Opatovac, Croatia.

Croatian Baptist Aid had a twofold role in the camp: daily distribution of food to refugees, and in planning and preparing the conditions for constructing the new winter camp for the upcoming winter season. With the help of 173 volunteers from 22 different countries, through which CBA helped in this refugee crisis, and with selfless efforts of its leadership, CBA helped refugees daily in basic ways such as providing food and clothes; and spiritually, by sharing the Gospel.

After the camp was moved to Slavonski Brod, a town in Croatia on the Croatian-Bosnian border, CBA initiated the setup of a special place for prayer in the camp, where volunteers and refugees could pray together.

Religious leaders from.bgav.org help to construct a special place for prayer in the camp, where volunteers and refugees could pray together.

Refugees in Croatia reflect and study (Photos courtesy of CBA)

It is our wish, but also our Christian obligation, to proclaim the Gospel in every place in order to bring hope in the midst of hopelessness and suffering and to open doors for the realization that Christ is the Savior.

Even though most refugees came from a Muslim context, the proclamation of Christ, and the display of Christian love through the activities of the CBA, resulted in refugees coming to Christ.

As the winter drew closer, CBA, in cooperation with the Croatian government, worked with others on setting up sanitation infrastructure in the new refugee camp in Slavonski Brod. In addition to the Baptist World Alliance, CBA worked with the European Baptist Federation, The Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) and Samaritan’s Purse.

The capacity of the camp was 10,000 people, divided into six sectors. Each sector got its own toilets and showers.

After the opening of the camp in Slavonski Brod, the old camp in Opatovac was closed. Since then all refugees from Sid, Serbia, were transported by train directly to the camp in Slavonski Brod where they were greeted by the smiling faces of our volunteers.

Not wanting to neglect the context of suffering and pain of these refugees and by practicing the great compassion from Matthew’s gospel in chapter 25, we decided to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and provide for the refugees, because that is part of our mission and calling.

Driven by that mission, CBA, in cooperation with BGAV, daily distributed underwear to the refugees. That proved to be of crucial importance for the health of each individual and for the health and cleanliness of the whole camp.

Due to parliamentary elections and the change in the Croatian government, there were changes in the camp. The new government continued the cooperation with organizations working in the camp but it also significantly diminished communication about the happenings pertaining to the refugee crisis. They also stopped supplying meals for the volunteers doing the night shifts.

Submitted by Croatian Baptist Aid.
UKRAINE BAPTISTS PARTNER TO OPEN FAMILY-TYPE HOME FOR ORPHANS
BY PAVEL UNGURYAN

On Sunday, September 11, our team participated in the festive opening of the family type orphan home in the South of Odessa region, Ukraine, in a town on the Black Sea coast called Belgorod-Dnestrovskyi.

The orphanage was sponsored by the German foundation, Bridge to Life. This is the 22nd home they have built in Ukraine and the scope of their ministry is growing significantly. The foundation aims to bring orphans out of the orphanages into family-run homes that would operate under the umbrella of the local churches and thus raise the children in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

The majority of the Ukrainian population was already living in bitter poverty before the outbreak of the current armed conflict. The war in eastern Ukraine has worsened the circumstances of the population and made many people homeless. There are hardly any medical facilities in eastern Ukraine, and in some places there is even no water supply. Power cuts are also a frequent occurrence.

The deterioration of living conditions in Ukraine has had a particularly serious effect on the lives of children, especially orphans and street children. According to unofficial statistics, ten thousand children live on the streets of Ukraine in stations, cellars or sewer shafts. They are unprotected from hunger, cold, violence and diseases such as HIV.

They manage to keep their heads above water through begging, drug dealing and prostitution. Many children and young people anaesthetize themselves against mental and physical suffering by sniffing glue—a cheap, readily available but highly toxic drug that causes lasting physical and mental damage.

The foundation wants to get children off the streets, offer them new homes and integrate them into caring families to provide a sustainable path toward a secure, self-determined future.

The church needs to respond to this situation and take this unreached generation upon itself.

Pavel Unguryan is deputy minister of Environment in Ukraine and a member of the BWA General Council.

We are blessed that two such homes have been built in my home state of Odessa and that this is just the beginning. To help protect and further disciple orphans we passed a law that enables Christians to be registered as counselors with one or several orphans, visit them, teach them the Bible, supply their needs and prepare them for adult life.

Participants at the opening of the home for orphans in Odessa, Ukraine

A home for orphans in Odessa, Ukraine
ISRAELI SEMINARY HOLDS SECOND GRADUATION
BY BADER MANSOUR

WE ARE THRILLED TO CELEBRATE the second graduation of our seminary this week (first week of September). Having a seminary in Nazareth to serve all Evangelical churches in Israel is a dream come true since, for many years, ministers who studied in other seminaries gained a wealth of knowledge of Scripture but not enough information about the context.

Our context is unique as we are a three-fold minority: We are Arabs in Israel, Christians among Arabs and Evangelicals among Christians. We are also located in the land where The Word became flesh, God made God's dwelling among us and we were shown God's glory.

Nazareth Evangelical College (NEC) was established in 2014 as a joint venture between the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel and Bethlehem Bible College. NEC seeks to “train leaders, both men and women, to follow Christ faithfully and to be equipped and qualified for serving the church in the Holy Land, enabling it to have a powerful influence on society according to God’s purposes.”

NEC’s Master’s program in Ministry and Christian Leadership was designed with the future Christian leader in mind. Each student chooses a research topic from within the context of where we live.

Bader Mansour is development officer for the Association of Baptist Churches in Israel and a member of the BWA General Council.

ISRAELI BAPTISTS SPONSOR SINGLE MOTHER CONFERENCE
BY BADER MANSOUR

A SPECIAL CONFERENCE WAS HELD BY THE ASSOCIATION OF BAPTIST CHURCHES IN ISRAEL (ABC) centering on single mothers and their children. These families were given a rare opportunity to focus on communicating and learning about themselves in a loving and caring Christian atmosphere.

Twelve mothers and 17 children, both boys and girls between seven and 20 years old, attended the two-day conference at the Nes Ammim Retreat Center in Galilee.

It is not very common in our society for single parent families to have a safe zone to share their own stories, pains, joys and challenges. However, during the conference this group worshiped together, played, laughed, learned and shared their lives together.

The conference, sponsored by the ABC and the Bible Society, included various sessions dealing with emotions and handling the troubles of life while trusting the Lord. There was also a lot of time for musical activities, games and loads of laughter.

The ABC family ministry is led by Sister Daad Odeh and aims to empower and encourage Christian mothers and wives to grow in their leadership and communication skills. This ministry offers many different churches a course of practical, faith-based training sessions for women in parenting and marriage. Every year, more than 100 mothers attend these training programs in a local church.

Parents and their children at the single mothers conference by Baptists in Israel (Photo courtesy of ABC)

A lecture at Nazareth Evangelical College presented by Rabbi Or Zohar (Photo courtesy of ABC)
**THE GOSPEL IN EGYPT**

**BY DANIEL TRUSIEWICZ**

**INDIGENOUS MISSION WORKERS IN EGYPT** work sacrificially, usually among the poorest and illiterate. Their mission is to share the message of the Gospel and do social outreach ministry, which brings bright rays of light into a dark reality.

Egypt is a multiethnic and socially diverse population of nearly 80 million people. About 90 percent of Egyptians are Muslim and 10 percent are Christian, mainly Coptic and Orthodox. Evangelical believers are the “minority of the minority” in Egypt. They comprise only about 10 percent of Christians.

The beginning of the Baptist movement in Egypt is usually associated with Saddik Gerges. He was the first Egyptian Baptist to study theology in the United States and returned home in the early 1930s to start Baptist ministry in his homeland. Through his efforts, several indigenous churches were planted.

The Baptist Convention in Egypt is now led by Mounir Malaty from Cairo. The convention comprises 19 local churches and other church plants. The convention is seeking opportunities to plant new congregations and send both full time individual church planters and teams for the two-handed mission, with the message of the gospel in one hand and social outreach in the other.

The European Baptist Federation has given support to several indigenous mission workers in Egypt. One such worker, Youssef, reported:

> In early 2015 our goal was to serve 100 families by the end of the year. Now I’m glad to say that we passed this number. … We have seen how studying the Word of God influenced the lives of those who participated. … Our goal now is that by the end of 2016 we will have ministered to 200 families. … We also run a learning center for orphans and children whose parents can’t afford other schooling. There are 70 children and seven teachers.

Nabil, another indigenous missionary, said:

> I call our congregation “a mobile church,” as meetings are organized in different homes. The recipients of our ministry are farmers and it is impossible to gather them together for one regular meeting because of the long distances and the differences in the working times. … I visit them on a regular basis according to their social and spiritual needs. Personal visits in homes are helpful in building relationships with them. The number of those we serve is increasing. They live under very tough conditions so we need to give a lot of our effort and time to care for them. Ten people have lately accepted the Lord and professed Jesus as their Savior and we are following them up.

**Daniel Trusiewicz** is mission coordinator for the European Baptist Federation.

“I call our congregation “a mobile church,” as meetings are organized in different homes. The recipients of our ministry are farmers and it is impossible to gather them together for one regular meeting because of the long distances and the differences in the working times.” – NABIL, INDIGENOUS MISSIONARY
NEPAL BAPTISTS SET MEDIUM RANGE GOALS

NEPAL BAPTIST CHURCH COUNCIL (NBCC), established in April 1992, an umbrella organization of Baptist churches in Nepal, is working on five goals and objectives for the upcoming five years. The first goal is to mobilize local churches to establish new congregations.

This will be accomplished primarily through pre-feasibility surveys for church planting, a church planting and discipleship training program, the sending of missionaries, spiritual and mission conferences and seminars, scholarships to train ministers and by ordaining additional pastors and ministers. There will be emphasis on evangelistic activities, increasing the number of baptisms and advocating for improved religious freedom in Nepal.

The second goal is to develop capable Christian leaders for mission in all areas of society by building degree granting academic training centers, offering scholarships, organizing capacity development training and developing support for church administration and management.

A third goal is to place humanitarian and social work as a part of integral mission through community development and social service programs such as cooperatives, infrastructure building, agriculture, animal husbandry, health education, etc. There will be income generation projects for church and community, engagement in climate action training and projects, conflict management support and disaster and humanitarian assistance.

A focus on organizational development is the fourth goal. NBBC will develop new policy documents, update its organizational structures and management systems, acquire lands to build churches, a college and new offices for the NBBC and procure new vehicles and other relevant assets.

NBBC intends to widen and deepen its partnerships in order to attain these goals, ensuring that local churches and NBBC departments cooperate with each other and network with national and international partners.

For 2016 and 2017, plans are to ordain a total of 37 persons; prepare and send four missionaries; plant 69 churches; conduct 32 spiritual and mission conferences, seminars and capacity development training sessions; as well as conduct three religious freedom campaigns.

It is hoped that a drinking water project will benefit 3,500 people, community health and sanitation training will reach 12,500 persons and income generating training will positively affect 3,800 individuals.
UNREST IN CONGO
BY MIKE MUSAFIRI BUGENI

THE EASTERN PART OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONG (DRC) is unstable and lacks security. The population is suffering from killings orchestrated by unidentified persons.

The term of President Joseph Kabila is at its end. Political opposition parties suspect that the government would like to boycott the DRC’s constitution and continue to govern the country.

President Kabila convened a dialogue that would bring together political stakeholders, civil society and the Diaspora, but the opposition parties withdrew from this dialogue and organized a peaceful march to show their discontent.

Political opposition parties were allowed to demonstrate peacefully in the city of Goma, and submitted a memorandum of their demands. According to local authorities, there was civil unrest and looting. Police officers dispersed the crowd using teargas. This act intensified the anger of demonstrators who threw stones at the police. The situation has led to the loss of human lives and damage to property.

Demonstrators threw stones at one of our Baptist schools in order to force pupils to return home. They broke the windowpanes and one pupil was injured in the head. The injured pupil was treated at our clinic and released. We thank God that nobody died.

It will be difficult to explain exactly what is happening at Kinshasa (the capital city of the DRC), because it is far from our city of Goma. But according to information, the demonstrations of September 19 caused deaths and property damage. According to some sources, more than 17 people died and some were seriously injured.

Mike Musafiri Bugeni is director of Development and Aid for the Community of Baptist Churches of Eastern Congo.
BOOK NOTES


Addresses how the church and Christians should or should not engage with alternative spirituality practices in an objective, popular and practical way. Foreword by the well-known Scottish Baptist theologian, John Drane.

MEMORIAM


In addition to being BWA vice president, Premawardhana was a former member of the General Council, the Executive Committee, the Officers Search Committee, the Congress Committee and the Christian Education Workgroup.

She held an especially honored place among women in the Sri Lanka Baptist Union, whom she led as president for three years, the Asian Baptist Women’s Union for whom she was vice president from 1993–1998 and president from 1998-2004 and the BWA Women’s Department, where she was a vice president between 1998 and 2004.

She was credited with initiating the Asian Baptist Young Women’s Leadership Conference and was editor of *Asian Echoes* from 1993–1998.

A former Buddhist, Premawardhana was influenced by her Christian stepmother and the two Christian missionary schools she attended. The aspiring schoolteacher made the step of faith upon the declaration of her Christian fiancé, Felix, whom she met while at the state teachers’ college of education, that his faith in Christ was paramount and that he had doubts about marrying a Buddhist.

“The Baptist World Alliance is saddened at the passing of our former vice president, Indranie Ellawala Premawardhana,” said BWA General Secretary Neville Callam. “We laud the kindness, grace and commitment that our sister displayed in her life, ministry and witness in the name of our Lord and on the behalf of the church. We are assured that she has found rest and peace and the legacy she left behind will be long remembered and honored.”

Funeral service was at Cinnamon Gardens Baptist Church on November 6 and burial at the General Cemetery, Kanatte, in Colombo.

She was predeceased by her husband, Felix, in 2006. She leaves son, Kuvera; and daughter, Kuveni.

**JOHN WILKES**, former director of Communications for the Baptist World Alliance, died on October 2 in Fredericksburg, Virginia, in the United States (US). He was 83 years old.

Wilkes served as BWA Communications director from 1986–1988. Prior to that, he worked with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and as a pastor of churches in the states of Tennessee, Mississippi, and Missouri, in the US.

Wilkes worked with SBC’s Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) as Vacation Bible School and youth camp specialist and as a Foreign Mission Board (International Mission Board) missionary, pastoring churches in France and Germany.

After being director of News and Information for the European Baptist Federation, based in Switzerland, he left that position to become BWA communications director.

Wilkes earned degrees and diplomas from Cameron University in Oklahoma, the University of Oklahoma, Midwestern University in Arizona and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas, all in the US; and the Institute of Touraine in France.

A memorial service was held at Fredericksburg Baptist Church in Virginia, on October 18.

He is survived by wife, Jo-Anne; son, John; and daughter, Katia.
ANDREW MACRAE, a former general secretary and superintendent of the Baptist Union of Scotland (BUS) and principal of Acadia Divinity College in Canada, died on October 30 in Kentville, Canada. He was 83 years old.

Multitalented and multifaceted, MacRae, in addition to being a congregational pastor and leader of the BUS, which he led for 14 years from 1966–1980, was a broadcaster and religious advisor, first to BBC Scotland and then for 12 years on Scottish Television. From 1973–80 he was chair of the Committee on Mission, Development and Unity of the Scottish Churches Council.

A past president of the European Baptist Federation, MacRae left Scotland for Canada in 1980, where he accepted an invitation to establish the first chair of Evangelism and Mission in Canada at Acadia Divinity College. He became principal of the college and dean of theology for Acadia University from 1985 until his retirement in 1998.

After retiring, he was professor emeritus of Evangelism and Mission at Acadia; directed the Doctor of Ministry program at the school, which he introduced in the 1980s; and pastored Grace Chapel in Halifax, Nova Scotia, from 1999–2003.

Serving the Baptist World Alliance in various capacities, he was a member of the General Council and the Executive Committee from the 1970s into the 1990s, played a pivotal role in the process to create the Division on Evangelism and Education and was a member of its Coordinating Committee.

MacRae became co-chair of the BWA National Evangelism Workgroup and was a member of the Theological Assistance Workgroup, the Division on Study and Research Executive Committee and the Commission on Baptist Doctrine and Interchurch Cooperation.

The former street evangelist in Edinburgh, Scotland, earned degrees from the University of Edinburgh, the Baptist Theological College of Scotland and St. Andrews University. He received honorary doctoral degrees from Campbellsville University in Kentucky in the United States, and from Acadia.

Funeral service was held November 7 at the Wolfville Baptist Church in Nova Scotia.

He is survived by Jean, his wife of 59 years; son, Findlay; and daughter, Fiona.

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CIRCULATION STATEMENT
Statement required by the act of August 12, 1970, section 3685, Title 39, United States Code, showing ownership, management and circulation of BAPTIST WORLD. Published four times per year at 405 N. Washington Street, Falls Church, Fairfax County, Virginia 22046; the Publisher is Baptist World Alliance; the Editor is Eron Henry. There are no bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities. Baptist World Alliance is a nonprofit organization located at the above address. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months.

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<td>PERCENTAGE PAID AND/OR REQUESTED CIRCULATION</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

ERON HENRY, EDITOR
O
n December 12, 2015, I attended a special graduation ceremony in a township called Eersterus in Pretoria, South Africa. This was not an ordinary graduation. It was a graduation of our brothers and sisters who went through a rehabilitation phase to overcome their addiction to substance abuse.

This is a ministry of Teen Challenge South Africa based in Cape Town. This ministry is in partnership with Enon Baptist Tabernacle in Philadelphia, in the United States, under Alyn Waller and the Lott Carey Baptist Mission Convention. The leaders of this ministry in South Africa are Jacobus and Erica Nomdoe from Cape Town, one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

Cape Town has one of the wonders of the world, Table Mountain, lying just next to Cape Point where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Indian Ocean. Not far from the shores of Cape Town lies Robben Island, a place that bears a terrible history about oppression and human cruelty toward fellow humans. This is where Nelson Mandela and many other South African leaders were incarcerated for resisting oppression and racism.

In this beautiful city of Cape Town there is a sad story about the plague that continues to destroy the lives of young men and women in the townships. Drug trafficking, gangsterism and human trafficking are plagues that destroy many lives in this beautiful place. Jacobus and Erica Nomdoe heard the call from the Lord Jesus to start a ministry that focuses on rescuing young men and women who have become victims of these challenges. By taking this call it meant putting their lives at risk, confronting those who are peddling drugs, the leaders of the gangs and the kingpins of human trafficking. This ministry started when the Nomdoes rescued several girls who were victims of human trafficking. The ministry has since grown and spread to Port Elizabeth and Pretoria.

The mission of the ministry is described in these profound words as printed in one of their flyers: “Teen Challenge is a Christ-Centred, 12 Months residential program that offers hope, help and healing for people trapped in gangs, drugs, prostitution and human trafficking.” What I saw and experienced on that day of graduation was a DOOR OF HOPE. I saw Christ being the DOOR OF HOPE to the young men and women whose lives were trapped behind the high walls of addiction to substance abuse. These wonderful people of God found themselves in a situation where their lives are controlled by those who make a living by selling drugs using young women as sex slaves.

It is a known fact that most people who find themselves in this situation are pushed out of their families and society. They become like the man of Gerasenes who was possessed by a legion of demons. As narrated in Mark 5, he lived in the tombs and in the mountains. Christ visited his village and his life was transformed. The man found Jesus Christ, the DOOR OF HOPE, and his life was brought back to normal.

Teen Challenge seeks to bring Christ, the DOOR OF HOPE, to men and women trapped and imprisoned by drugs, gangsterism and human trafficking. On November 26, 2016, other young men and women graduated. These men and women will be encouraged to walk through that DOOR OF HOPE. Christ said in Revelation 3:8, “I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.” This is the grace that the Lord gives to all of us to find that DOOR OF HOPE and to walk through.

During the ceremony one or two graduates are given the opportunity to share their testimony. In their testimony there is joy and thanksgiving to God because they have found hope. There is joy of victory and freedom because they have gone for months without taking drugs or getting involved in gang activities. They also share their fear of facing the world outside the rehabilitation center. This is not a negative fear of giving up, but rather a fear that is calling for help. These men and women fear facing the world alone and are calling on their families and friends to support them. Above all, they are putting their trust in Christ. They are looking for that assurance to know that there is an open DOOR OF HOPE for them.

This is the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ, the DOOR OF HOPE. We celebrate the ministry of Teen Challenge South Africa and other similar ministries that work tirelessly to present the Gospel in word and deed so that men and women will come to know Jesus Christ, the DOOR OF HOPE.

I praise God to know that this door stands open for all of us. Oftentimes we find ourselves locked down by things in this world that seek to deny us the freedom and the joy in Christ. I praise God because each time we walk through this DOOR OF HOPE, we discover our joy and we are able to live in peace and harmony as God’s children.

Behold and open the DOOR OF HOPE.

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— PAUL MSIZA
2017 CALENDAR DATES

JANUARY
1 New Years Day
6 Epiphany
18–19 EBF Youth and Children’s Committee Meeting
Vienna, Austria
19 APBAID Committee Meetings
Yogyakarta, Indonesia
20–22 APBF Executive Committee Meetings
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

FEBRUARY
1–8 BWA/World Methodist Council
International Theological Dialogue
Kingston, Jamaica
2 Africa Day of Prayer
Africa
4–5 BWA Day

MARCH
1 Ash Wednesday
6–8 BWA Executive Committee Meetings
Falls Church, VA USA
21–25 Youth and Children’s Workers and Mission Conference
Vienna, Austria
22–25 EBF Youth and Children’s Conference
Vienna, Austria

APRIL
9 Palm Sunday
13 Maundy Thursday
14 Good Friday
16 Easter Sunday
20–22 APBF Worship Conference for North East India and Nepal
Dimapur, Nagaland, India
20–23 APBF Youth Worship Conference
North East India
22 Men’s World Day of Prayer
27–30 EBF Executive
Norway

MAY
25 Ascension of Jesus

JUNE
4 Pentecost
11 Baptist Youth World Day of Prayer
25 CBF Sunday

JULY
2–7 BWA Annual Gathering (Executive Committee and General Council)
Bangkok, Thailand
19–23 CBF Youth Festival
San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago

AUGUST
2–6 AABYF Continental Leadership Conference
Iowo State, Nigeria
20–24 Baptist Women’s Union of Africa
Continental Conference
Kabwe, Zambia

SEPTEMBER
19 EBF Executive
Yerevan, Armenia
19–20 EBF Youth and Children’s Committee Meeting
Yerevan, Armenia
20–23 EBF Council
Yerevan, Armenia
25–29 9th APBF Congress
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

OCTOBER
1–31 BWAid Hunger Month
19–22 North American Baptist Women’s Union Assembly
Ontario, Canada
25–28 CBF Mid-Term Assembly
Nassau, Bahamas

NOVEMBER
1–30 CBF Stewardship Month
6 Women’s World Day of Prayer
28 Giving Tuesday

DECEMBER
3 Advent Begins
10 Human Rights Day
24 Christmas Eve
25 Christmas Day
31 New Year’s Eve
CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

This annual celebration is aimed at affirming Baptist identity within the worldwide Christian family. Baptists are encouraged to pray for each other and to renew their commitment to cooperate with Baptists globally through the BWA.