Callam Appointed Trustee of Mercer University

Baptist World Alliance® General Secretary Neville Callam has been appointed as a trustee of Mercer University in the state of Georgia in the United States.

Callam joins the 45-member Board of Trustees that has responsibility for overall policymaking for the university. Mercer was founded in 1833 and is one of the largest Baptist-affiliated tertiary educational institutions in the world.

Mercer describes itself as “a faith-based institution of higher learning that seeks to achieve excellence and scholarly discipline in the fields of liberal learning and professional knowledge. The institution is guided by the historic principles of religious and intellectual freedom, while affirming religious and moral values that arise from the Judeo-Christian understanding of the world.”

The board is responsible for establishing institutional goals and for securing resources to support the university’s programs.

Cover Photo

The altar in the chapel at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic

Unless otherwise noted, photos in the issue are by BWA staff.
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From its earliest years, the church has displayed awareness of its obligation to share with each other God-given resources that are meant for the well-being of all. Not surprisingly, we have the example of the Macedonian Christians (2 Corinthians 8:1-7) and the challenge that Paul gave to the church in Colossae (Colossians 4:16).

When it comes to worship resources, and especially hymnody, globalization has contributed significantly to the church retreating from the prized tradition of freely resourcing one another. The ownership of creative projects is increasingly regarded as a means to enrich oneself. We are in danger of a culture based on buying and selling, instead of voluntary sharing, dominating our use of songs and other worship resources. Many writers, performers, publishers and others have recognized and seized the opportunity provided by the commodification of creative output that is part and parcel of the movement for the protection of intellectual property.

Some song writers engage in their craft as a means of livelihood and it would be unreasonable to expect that they should be deprived of the benefits that come from their work. Meanwhile, in some contexts, those who compose songs for use in the worship life of the church regard this primarily as an opportunity to share a gift they have received with the community of faith without any thought of material reward. Often, they refuse to have their names associated with their composition, which they regard as belonging to the communities in which they live and serve. If others desire to sing their songs, these writers are encouraged by this development. They believe that what the Holy Spirit enables them to create is thereby put to the service of God, the author of all positive human endowments. These writers estimate the value of their work in more than merely monetary terms.

It seems to me that, while it is only fair to allow the copyrighting of some worship material, based especially on the circumstances of those who create the material, churches have an obligation to lend their support to the free sharing of worship resources as a sign of their understanding of the responsible stewardship this represents. While ensuring that it does not infringe copyright rules, the church should refuse to hold up the culture of copyright enforcement as an unquestioned virtue.

The most shameful exhibition of the commodification of songs of the Christian community form monetary gain is the unfair transfer of songs from the Global South to the North. It is unfortunate that some persons go to communities where certain creative products emerge, regarded as belonging to the whole community, reduced these to written forms, secured copyright protection, and raked in monetary rewards for what are essentially stolen goods. Even the original creators of some songs must secure permission for the use of their own works in the churches where they worship.

Over the last six years, some gifted creators of worship resources such as Christopher Ellis, Nathan Nettleton, Paul Sheppy, Myra Blythe, Jennifer Davidson and Samson Ayokunle were prepared to develop and share with the entire Baptist World Alliance® family, free of charge, resources we have used in the celebration of BWA Day. What a noble example they provide!
Theology Conference Presenters Confirmed

The main presenters and speakers for the 8th Baptist International Conference on Theological Education (BICTE) have been confirmed. The event will be held in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, from June 28-30; immediately preceding the Annual Gathering that will run from July 1-6 in the north coast Caribbean resort town.

The conference will focus on “Perspectives on Pneumatology within the worldwide Baptist Family.”

Presenters include Baptist World Alliance® General Secretary Neville Callam; Deji Isaac Ayeboyn, professor of Church History and African Christianity in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan in Nigeria; and William Brackney, Millard R. Cherry Distinguished Professor of Christian Thought and Ethics, and director, Acadia Centre for Baptist and Anabaptist Studies at Acadia Divinity College in Canada.

Other presenters are Graham Hill, lecturer in Pastoral and Leadership Studies and coordinator of Postgraduate Coursework Degrees and Ministry Research Awards at Morling Baptist Theological College in Sydney, Australia; Doug Weaver, professor in the Department of Religion at Baylor University in the state of Texas in the United States; and Burchell Taylor, a BWA vice president, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in St. Andrew, Jamaica, and lecturer at the United Theological College of the West Indies.

Respondents are Otniel Bunaciu, president of the Baptist Union of Romania and dean of the Baptist Faculty of Theology, University of Bucharest; Honorina Dela Paz-Lacquian, associate dean at Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, Philippines; Ademola Ishola, former general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention who is supervisor to Master’s and PhD students at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary; and Phyllis Rodgerson-Pleasant, former seminary professor and currently a consultant and educator to local congregations and businesses.

BICTE is planned by the BWA and is traditionally held every five years. The last conference was held in Prague, Czech Republic, in 2008.

The Evolvement of Baptist Understanding of Ordination

The ordained ministry is rooted in the mission of the church as a corporate body, said Baptist World Alliance® (BWA) General Secretary Neville Callam. Ordained persons, Callam asserted, have no existence apart from their partnership with the general church membership under the lordship of Christ.

Callam made these declarations in a lecture he presented at the 38th Annual Assembly of the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) in December 2012.

The BWA leader offered an interpretation of the understanding of ordination among Baptists, from the formative years of Baptist life in the Netherlands and England until the end of the 17th century. He suggested that, since that period, Baptist understandings of ordination have continued to evolve.

He proposed that each Baptist convention and union clarify its own understanding of the meaning and purpose of ordination and to express these in their ordination rites. Callam said the contemporary situation seems to suggest the need for churches to introduce particular forms of ordained ministry to further the church’s faithfulness to God’s mission and assist those who serve the church in a ministerial capacity.

The BCSA used the opportunity of the assembly to observe its 25th anniversary as an independent Baptist organization. The BCSA was once part of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa.

In addition to delivering the lecture, Callam preached at the assembly service in which persons were ordained to the ministry. He also met with several Baptist leaders, including Paul Msiza, former BCSA general secretary, a BWA vice president and chair of the Local Arrangements Committee for the Baptist World Congress that is to be held in South Africa in 2015; and Bonang Khumalo, chair of the BWA Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Callam said “BCSA members are looking forward to welcoming the Baptist World Congress when it convenes in Durban, South Africa, in 2015.” He noted that one of the young ministers in the convention, Thembelani Jentile, will be among the main presenters at the 16th Baptist Youth World Conference in Singapore from July 17-21 this year.

Nigerian Baptists Express Gratitude for BWA Human Rights Visit

Baptists in Nigeria expressed thanks for a Baptist World Alliance® human rights visit to the country in December 2012. “Words are inadequate to express our appreciation to you all for putting your lives on the line to come to us,” said Olasupo Ayokunle, president and chief executive officer of the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC).

The visit was in response to widespread violence in the West African country allegedly carried out by Boko Haram, a jihadist group that seeks to establish Shariah law in Nigeria. The group has carried out a series of bombings and shootings against Christian churches and government facilities. Casualties have included Baptist pastors and church members.

Led by BWA director of Freedom and Justice Raimundo Barreto, the team visited churches in the cities of Kaduna, Jos and Kafanchan that were affected by the violence, offering encouragement on behalf of the worldwide Baptist family.

A letter from BWA General Secretary Neville (Continued on next page)
Callam to Goodluck Jonathan, the president of Nigeria, was presented to Ayim Pious Ayim, a senator and secretary to the president at a meeting at the offices of the president in Abuja, Nigeria’s capital. The letter, which Barreto read aloud in the meeting, commended Nigeria as an important partner nation in the international arena, particularly in its signing of important United Nations instruments that seek to advance human rights and freedom.

Callam urged the Nigerian president “to ensure the protection and security of all citizens in the areas of conflict, to intensify efforts to encourage peace and reconciliation, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of the acts of wanton violence.” The BWA leader also appealed for “increased support for peace building programs initiated by civil society organizations and religious institutions.”

Ayim thanked the BWA for the concerns it has shown for the welfare of the country and acknowledged the important work done by Nigerian Baptists. He stated that the government is taking all possible measures to tackle extremism and promote peace and development across the nation.

The BWA delegation participated in a two-day seminar on Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Coexistence at the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution of the Nigerian Government’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Abuja.

The team also visited the offices of the governors of the states of Kaduna and Plateau to urge further measures that would offer protection in the conflict zones, and to encourage continuous support of initiatives to promote reconciliation and peace.

A meeting was held with James Wuye, a Christian pastor, and Mohammed Ashafa, a Muslim imam, directors of the Interfaith Mediation Center in Kaduna, who are both internationally recognized for their interfaith peacemaking work. Ayokunle told the BWA representatives that Nigerian Baptists will follow up on the initiatives of the BWA. Talks are already underway within the NBC with hopes of exploring opportunities for dialogue and the building of greater understanding. “Nigeria badly needs this at this time,” said B. Uche Enyioha, chairman of the NBC.

In July 2012, the BWA passed a resolution calling for “a peaceful ending of all violence and abuse of human rights in Nigeria,” and encouraged “Baptist sisters and brothers to continue to seek ways to promote peace and respect for all persons in Nigeria.” The BWA appealed to the government of Nigeria at all levels to ensure safety and security for all people in the country.

Other members of the BWA delegation were Daniel Buttry of American Baptist Churches USA’s International Ministries and a member of the BWA Commission on Peace; and Rosalee Velloso Ewell, a director of the World Evangelical Alliance and a member of the BWA Commission on Baptist-Muslim Relations.

NBC has the largest Baptist membership in Africa, reporting 3.5 million members in some 10,000 churches. The Mambilla Baptist Convention has more than 26,000 members in more than 260 churches.

**Baptists in Central African Republic Request Urgent Prayer on Conflict**

Baptists in the Central African Republic (CAR) have requested urgent prayer from the worldwide Baptist family for the conflict in the country.

Singa-Gbazia Nicolas Aime Simplice, president of the Association of Baptist Churches of the Central African Republic, told the Baptist World Alliance® that “the situation of the Central African Republic is precarious. A rebel coalition has already grabbed several towns and they are at the door of the capital,” he said. “Their aim is to overthrow the president of the republic and establish Islam as rigorously as in northern Mali.”

Simplice is referring to the insurgency in Mali that began in January 2012 against the Malian government for independence and greater autonomy for northern Mali. Several Malian insurgent groups are radical Islamists.

The 2012–2013 CAR rebellion is an ongoing conflict between the government of the CAR and rebels, many of whom were previously involved in the CAR Bush War between 2004 and 2007. The rebels have captured some of the major towns in the central and eastern regions of the country. The offensive began in December when an armed group seized the towns of N’Délé, Sam Ouandja and Ouadda and later escalated.

Simplice said life became difficult for those who were displaced by the fighting in the CAR. A number of Baptist churches, he told the BWA, were badly damaged or destroyed in the conflict. Expatriates, he said, have fled the nation.

Simplice is calling on Baptists around the world to pray for peace and stability in his country.

There are four BWA member organizations in French-speaking CAR with a total of approximately 185,000 members in about 800 churches.

**Korean Baptists Visit Syrian Refugees, Send Relief Supplies**

Baptists from South Korea visited the Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan in January. The camp houses more than 76,000 Syrians who fled the unrest and subsequent civil war in their country that began in 2011.

Former Baptist World Alliance® President Billy Kim, who led the delegation of some 200 Korean Baptists to Jordan, informed the BWA that the visit to the camp occurred shortly after an unusually heavy snowfall that made living conditions even worse.
Braille New Testament Donated to Cuban Library

By Manuel Delgado

Thirty two volumes of the Braille edition of the New Testament were donated to the Municipal Library of San José de las Lajas in the newly created province of Mayabeque in Cuba.

The event was sponsored by the Council of Churches of Cuba’s Office of Pastoral Care of Persons Who are Physically or Mentally Challenged, represented by its coordinator, Noel Fernández. Also present were government officials and local pastors. A team from the Council of Churches led the donation ceremony. Blind persons and others with visual impairment present at the event expressed appreciation for having God’s Word in an accessible form.

Selections from the Gospels were read from the newly donated text. Several persons who will benefit from these scriptures in Braille shared their musical talents. Traditional Cuban songs were sung, along with music written by the performers themselves or by other brothers and sisters in the faith. For a special closing, well-known Cuban extemporaneous composer, Tomasita Quiala, expressed his faith in Jesus Christ through an original composition. This transformed the main room in the library into a space of adoration to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The donation of the New Testament in Braille in San José de las Lajas completed a cycle in which all the provincial libraries in Cuba were given their own copies.

Manuel Delgado is pastor of the Emanuel Christian Community Baptist Church in San José de las Lajas, Cuba

American Baptists Respond to School Shooting

Leaders of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) asked American Baptists and others around the United States and the world to keep the community of Newtown, Connecticut, and those touched by the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in their prayers.

Adam Lanza, 20, shot and killed 20 first grade students and six adult staff members during a mass shooting at the school on December 14, 2012. Two other persons were injured. Before driving to the school, Lanza had shot and killed his mother at their Newtown home. He took his own life during the shooting.

“May God bring comfort and healing to all of those involved in the shooting in Newtown, Connecticut. May we all keep the families and friends of those injured and killed in our prayers,” said ABCUSA General Secretary Roy Medley. “Additionally, continue to pray for teachers, administrators and all children attending the school who lived through this event, and all those affected in some way.”

Aidands Wright-Riggins III, executive director of American Baptist Home Mission Societies, said, “We are shocked and saddened by this senseless shooting and the deaths and injuries in its aftermath. Our hearts go out to the victims and their families of this horrendous act. As I bend my knees in prayer, I also steel my spine to be a more outspoken advocate for the control of guns in this country.”

The incident is the second deadliest shooting in American history after the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre where 32 people were killed and 17 wounded in two separate attacks by Seung-Hui Cho, a student at the school. The Sandy Hook shooting is the second deadliest mass murder at an American elementary school after the 1927 Bath School bombings in the state of Michigan, where 38 elementary school children and six adults were killed.
Baptists tend to use “liturgy” with reluctance, preferring other expressions such as “order of service” to describe how worship is ordered and conducted in Baptist congregations. But Nathan Nettleton of Melbourne, Australia, is unafraid to use “liturgy” to describe worship in his church.

Nettleton claims, “Every church has liturgy. Whether it is accompanied by a rock band with projection on the big screen, or words read from a prayer book and accompanied by a pipe organ, it’s still liturgical action. The words of ‘praise and worship’ songs projected on a screen are still liturgical text even though we don’t tend to think of it that way.”

Nettleton, a member of the Baptist World Alliance® Commission on Baptist Worship and Spirituality, is not quick to impose his idea or understanding of worship on others, but he is concerned about how worship is understood and conducted among Baptists. Too many Baptists, he believes, misunderstand the meaning of liturgy and are quick to reject as unacceptable those aspects of worship that are deemed to be too liturgical.

“Because we have this history back in the beginning when we were suspicious of written texts for worship – non-biblical written texts – we think of ourselves as a tradition that does not use those, even though within the first generation or so we returned to hymn singing.” He explains that “the first Baptists wouldn’t sing hymns because they recognized them as non-biblical written texts. Now we tend to only think of liturgy if it is written down and spoken. If we sing it we think of it as something different, whereas in fact it is doing the same thing.”

The rejection and the misunderstanding of a fixed liturgy by Baptists have several consequences. Among these, Nettleton asserts, is that “many of our pastors have had no formal training in the principles of worship.” He referred to 1960s Baptist liturgical scholar Steven Winwood of Britain, who stated that only a church that has a fixed written liturgical tradition can afford to neglect the teaching of liturgical principles. Nettleton elaborates by way of an illustration:

> If you think of impro-visational jazz, you want your improvisational jazz to be improvised by people who have first been trained in the principles of musicianship because they will improvise something that is worth listening to. It is a bit like that with our worship leaders. They received no training in the principles of worship but they try to do something not copied from someone else. If they don’t know what they’re doing they may produce something that is creative and original but not very helpful to anybody.

Nettleton claims that “liturgy deepens the life of faith.” The Bible holds a central place and the liturgy takes “us into the experience of the story and connects us with the traditions of the life of our faith.” For him, it is deeply ironic that those who “most loudly proclaim themselves to be Bible reading [Christians] actually read much less Bible in their worship services.” In many Baptist churches “there’s a pattern of worship that frequently has no scripture reading other than quotes in the sermon.” He recounts being in Baptist worship services “where there was no scripture reading. There were some quotes but the quotes served the sermon rather than the sermon serving the Bible reading.”

In contrast, he says, in more Christian liturgical traditions, “there is actually more Bible reading. The Bible has its place and is allowed to speak on its own terms. It is not used merely as illustration for the sermon. There’s a more intangible sense of gathering around the word of God as a people who come to the word to hear what the word is offering to us.”

One other consequence of the rejection of a fixed liturgy is the neglect of intercessory prayer. Nettleton says that even though it appears intercessory prayer is on resurgence in Australia, “there are still many places where you get the impression the congregation is not aware of the world outside of its own walls, no prayers outside of a particular sick list, or a political issue that directly affects that congregation. There is very little prayer for peace and justice and freedom and poverty in the wider world.”

Another consequence of rejecting formal liturgy is a failure to follow the Christian calendar. In this respect, the three-year lectionary plays a particularly important role. “Historically there was a time when Baptists were opposed to observing the Christian calendar and we were completely consistent on that. We didn’t celebrate Christmas or Easter either. At some point Baptists relaxed their positions on that and most of them celebrate Christmas and Easter.” But that is where the Christian calendar ends for many Baptists, Nettleton declares. These Baptists “do not celebrate the rest of the calendar and justify not celebrating the rest of the calendar because, ‘We don’t do that.’ But yes we do because Christmas and Easter are part of it.”

But, says Nettleton, “one of the things we’ve learned from any attempt to get rid of the church calendar is that as soon as we do, a new calendar will start taking shape. We will end up having one any way.” Says Nettleton,

The unfortunate thing is that we have a new calendar that is set by the commercial sector in the world rather than the Christian calendar.

(Continued on page 10)
congregation gathers to have a discussion about worship as part of their annual retreat. A well-meaning leader stands at the chalkboard and asks, “What do you like about worship at our church? What do you think needs to change?” Another congregation wants to make their worship more relevant to the lives of those present. They distribute a survey after church one morning asking questions like, “What are your favorite hymns and/or praise songs? What would you like to see more of in worship? What would you like to see less of?”

I have been present for many conversations about worship that echo exactly these preference-centered approaches. Unfortunately, these conversations rarely lead anywhere. When the conversation does create action; it often leads toward conflict and less to understanding. Worship conversations that focus solely on preference tend to keep congregants in a state of shallowness. This creates an environment in which it can be impossible to remember that worship, while deeply personal, is also profoundly communal.

In a Worship Planning & Leading course at American Baptist Seminary of the West, students work together to develop the weekly chapel services. In addition to planning upcoming services, each week in class there is a time of reflection of the previous service. To initiate this reflection time, I ask students, “At what point in worship did you experience the presence of God?” While there are always some students who are able to answer right away, many are often hard-pressed to answer the first time they are asked. They don’t remember necessarily paying attention to that in worship. Rather, they are more accustomed to paying attention to whether they are familiar with the hymn or their response to the sermon than to grasp the moment when they were aware of God’s presence among them.

By the second and third time we reflect on this question, more and more responses come. Students begin to enter worship with the intention of noticing God’s presence. In doing so, their habit of focusing on what they like or don’t like about the service begins to fade by comparison. Excited by what they are discovering for themselves, they also look forward to hearing the diversity of responses by their classmates each week. They begin to notice: “You mean that hymn I struggled to sing… that’s when you experienced God? Wow!” or they marvel, “I felt like God was overwhelmingly present when Sung-Jin prayed in Korean, even though I don’t speak Korean myself, and I don’t know exactly what he said.”

Worship conversations that focus on the presence of God in the midst of worship tend to lead us out of ourselves to the understanding that people experience God’s presence in many different ways. There is a shift from the shallow end of our discussion to find that we are swimming together in the marvelous presence of the Spirit. We become increasingly capable of learning to experience God’s presence in multiple ways. Naming God’s presence equips each person to notice God’s presence.

There are limits to this approach. There always will remain the temptation for individuals to focus on themselves. There is also the need to recognize that the conception of God is not limited to the personal perception of God’s current presence. God is with us in our worship whether or not any one person in the gathered assembly feels as though he or she has experienced the presence of God. As James McClendon wrote, “The promise is not; ‘Where two or three are gathered, you will have such and such worship experiences.’ He only promised to be at hand.” There will be moments, and for some of us, very long stretches of time, when we do not feel as though God is present in our midst. Nonetheless, God is present. God is present in the lives of the people gathered, in their broken hearts and broken bodies. He is present to those whose heels click in the air with joy, and for gasps, cries, and groans of those who grieve. This presence is there when we feel it and when we don’t.

The next time you are having a conversation with others on how to approach worship, I encourage you to begin with how to name God’s presence. Shifting from a personal to a communal perspective will take time. It will, however, deepen the worship experience. See if you begin to notice God showing up in worship much more than you had before. Seek to honor those moments in other people’s experience, even when they do not match your own. Together in worship, practice the presence of God.

Jennifer Davidson is assistant professor of worship & theology and director of chapel at American Baptist Seminary of the West in Berkeley, California, USA; chairs the Emerging Theologians Task Force for American Baptist Churches, USA; is convener of the Liturgy and Spirituality Seminar for the North American Academy of Liturgy; and is a member of the BWA Commission on Baptist Worship and Spirituality.
Some years ago I began to research the development of worship amongst Baptists, not an easy task when many worship services do not follow a transcribed liturgy and in which most prayers are not pre-composed or catalogued for future use.

This concern for a living, personal faith has remained a key aspect of Baptist evangelical identity and, in particular, the emphasis on extempore prayer a continuing expression of this heart worship.

I want to suggest two approaches to prayer that we would do well to explore more than many of us do at present.

It is important to balance our trusting inclination to bring requests to God with a readiness to seek the Giver beyond the gifts. Through this process, we can learn from other parts of the church, both catholic and evangelical and from previous generations. Worship can tend to be verbose. Yet for persons who know each other well and love one another, silence can be deep and rich.

As Baptists, we have a deep respect for scripture. We read it for information, for inspiration and for revelation. We call it “the word of God” but how often do we read it as a means of coming close to God. In recent years the ancient, Benedictine practice of lectio divina has become increasingly used across many denominations. The words literally mean “divine reading” and are often paraphrased as “spiritual reading,” but I prefer to speak of “prayerful reading.” It is the reading of scripture in order for the words of scripture to bring an individual closer to God – and to be open to God coming close to that individual. While the term can be used quite flexibly, the practice of lectio divina traditionally has four stages: reading, when the scripture is read and re-read; meditating, when the reader reflects and chews over the words, asking what their relevance might be for them; praying, when the themes that have emerged from the meditation are recast and addressed to God; and contemplation, which is beyond prayer, where the one praying simply rests in the presence of God.

This is no mere formula. There is no guarantee offering a profound spiritual experience. Like each of the spiritual disciplines, lectio divina simply prepares the one praying to be open to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we shall see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.

He continues to point out the importance of faith, hope, and love. But there will come a time when faith is no longer needed, theology will be unnecessary, for we shall see face to face. There will come a time when hope is no longer needed for the kingdom will have come and prayers of petition will be redundant. But love – always there will be love – for God is love – always love.
Some churches include in their staff of volunteers the role of ushers: persons who greet people as they come in, give them a printed bulletin and help them find a seat. Some ushers also take it upon themselves to help maintain reverence and quietness of the worship service. Restless teenagers and noisy children are among the more frequently ministered to by ushers in their silencing task. Ushers like to see everyone sitting comfortably and in quiet reverence during worship. However, they would have a difficult time trying to make God behave in worship.

In Mexico, like in many other countries, Baptist worship is known to be reverent, well organized, calm and sober. This is so because the worship service is carried out under the premise that we are in the presence of God who is attentively listening to our praise, therefore we must keep silent before the throne of glory. The thought of God listening to our praise is what makes us work hard in every part of the service. We have been taught that everything we do in worship is for God. So we practice for God to listen to our performance. We have turned the worship service into a spectacle whose special spectator is God. However, this divine “spectator” is not behaving; God is not quietly and passively listening during worship.

God is not behaving in worship, sitting quietly like the family “grandma” having a delightful visit, slowly rocking back and forth in her chair listening to her grandchildren recite heartfelt poems, sing favorite hymns and speak elegantly about ideas and doctrines. Instead, God is working actively during worship. God is moving from one place to another, poking someone’s ribs, pulling someone’s sleeves, whispering in someone’s ears, touching someone’s heart, probing someone’s will, inviting, challenging, calling, waking up moral consciences, helping people see new visions and possibilities of life in hope and joy. At the end of the worship service God must be exhausted from all the work done, knocking at the door of our hearts.

So when we “perform” in worship, either as members of the choir or as preachers, ushers or any other role, let’s keep in mind that God is constantly working and speaking to people in ways that escape us. God is not a quiet spectator of our rehearsed shows. God is not behaving the way many of us expect God to, and we rejoice in that wonderful fact!

Churches live because God is not only silently and quietly listening to what we say or sing. The life of the church depends on God’s actions of justice and salvation. When we gather for worship, we are entering into an encounter; we are being talked to, addressed and awakened by God. God’s initiatives and ideas are implanted and sown in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and if we are paying attention and devote ourselves to keeping the Word of God that comes to us in every worship service, then we’ll see how the church moves on and is alive. We’ll see how the mountains move.

Mission starts in worship as we let God “misbehave” and not remain in silent observation of our religious motions and pious gestures. Go on, God. Move among us! Talk to our hearts and give us an opportunity to respond. Your churches will move on in bold mission and witness of the life of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit for the transformation of Your beloved world. Amen.

Joel Sierra, from Mexico, pastored First Baptist Church of Managua, Nicaragua, and is a vice president of the BWA.

God is not a quiet spectator of our rehearsed shows. 

. . . let’s keep in mind that God is constantly working and speaking to people in ways that escape us.
Nigerian Baptists at WORSHIP

By S.A.K. Olaleye

Nigerian Baptists are not different from other Baptists across the globe in matters of faith and practice. One factor that marks worship among Nigerian Baptists is their doctrinal expression.

Pastors in Nigerian Baptist churches serve as worship leaders that influence the congregations’ mode of worship. Nigerian Baptist pastors are generally dynamic and charismatic in their presentations. They take sermon delivery seriously. This makes the worship atmosphere lively and inspirational.

Cultural differences influence the mode of worship from one Baptist church to the next. The emotional display and zeal that people invest in the worship experience depends on their cultural contexts. Musical instruments that are used for worship may be a reflection of the worshippers’ culture. The music, the dance steps and the mode of prayer also reflects this diversity. However, this does not affect the core values of the people’s beliefs and practices.

In the last three decades the Pentecostal movement has influenced the mode of worship of many Baptist churches in Nigeria. This is noticeable especially in music, prayers and sermon delivery. The Pentecostal mode of worship is attractive to the youth. This has led to the exodus of many of these youth from mainline churches, Baptists inclusive. Baptist churches have been responding to this challenge by adjusting their traditional modes of worship. Emotional zeal is put into singing and sermon delivery more than before in a typical Baptist church in Nigeria today. African worshippers are comparatively more emotive in worship than their European counterparts. However, Nigerian Baptists are generally more moderate in their emotional expressions than worshippers in other Christian traditions in Nigeria. Pentecostal and white garment churches in Nigeria are generally more emotional than Baptist worshippers.

Societal and life challenges are other major factors that impact the worship atmosphere among Nigerian Baptists. Poverty is a major factor in Africa, Nigeria inclusive. The attitudes of the poor in worship are quite different from those of the rich. Poor people tend to be more emotive in the way they pray than the rich are. People in rural areas tend to focus their attention more on negative forces like witchcraft, demons, cultism and the like than those in urban areas. This affects the nature of prayers and sermons that people wish to hear and to which they may respond.

Worship in Nigerian Baptist churches is evangelical in nature. The goal of soul winning is at the back of the mind of most Nigerian Baptist pastors. Whatever may be the purpose of the service, the salvation of souls is always paramount to the preacher.

Worship among Nigerian Baptists is considered an educational opportunity. The teaching and preaching of the Word of God are given prominent place and seen as the climax of the worship experience. Sharing necessary information is also seen as part of worship.

Nigerian Baptists have certain values that they cherish when they come to worship. These values may be slightly different from one congregation to the next. This is because Baptists do not follow a strict liturgical order in their worship services.

Hymn singing is a constituent part of worship in a typical Nigerian Baptist church. The Pentecostal influence has, however, affected hymn singing in Nigerian Baptist churches. This is why many churches sing songs of “praise and worship” rather than those printed in hymn books. Yet, people continue to cherish the singing of hymns as a significant part of the “faith of our fathers living still...” in many churches. There is renewed interest in more hymn singing in many churches because of an increasing number of trained music ministers who encourage the singing of hymns. Music is currently attracting more attention among Nigerian Baptists. Youth, for instance, are more interested in music and this is drawing them to go to churches of other Christian traditions. Hence, most Nigerian Baptist churches are spending more funds to improve their music ministries.

Congregational polity is reflected in Nigerian Baptists’ mode of worship. Worshippers are allowed to be involved in most of the worship event. Worship leaders try to involve all members of the congregation who respond in one form or other.

The issue of worship among Nigerian Baptists is important. This is given major attention in pastoral training and taken very seriously among churches. The worship service is the only forum where most church members are present.

S.A.K. Olaleye is director of the Youth and Students’ Ministries Department of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

African worshippers are comparatively more emotive in worship than their European counterparts. However, Nigerian Baptists are generally more moderate in their emotional expressions than worshippers in other Christian traditions in Nigeria.
The Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance® accepted the recommendation that four groups be accepted into membership of the international organization.

Three new member organizations are from the Caribbean. The Connection of Haitian Baptist Churches for Integral Mission, established in 2004 with offices in Delmas, Port-au-Prince, is an association of 15,000 members in 58 churches. The Evangelical Baptist Mission of South Haiti, founded in 1936, has 50,000 members in 488 churches with offices in Les Cayes, a town and seaport in southwestern Haiti. This brings to four the number of BWA member organizations in Haiti.

The third Caribbean group is the Turks and Caicos Islands Baptist Union. Formed 50 year ago, it is an association of 500 members in 13 churches.

The fourth organization is from Africa. Established in 1996, the Baptist Church of Congo brings to 11 the number of BWA member organizations in the vast country of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The group comprises 2,850 members in 26 churches.

There are now 227 BWA member organizations in 121 countries.

These were among a number of decisions made by the Executive Committee in meetings held at the BWA international offices near Washington, DC, in early March.

BWA Executive Committee members approved the 21st Baptist World Congress logo. The logo, designed by a South African, will be used to brand and promote the international gathering that is to be held in Durban, South Africa, from July 22-26, 2015.

Parrish Jacome was confirmed as BWA regional secretary for Latin America. Jacome, from Ecuador, was elected executive director of the Union of Baptist Churches in Latin America (UBLA) in April 2012. UBLA is one of six regional fellowships of the BWA.

It was affirmed that the official report of the second round of dialogue between the BWA and the Vatican is to be circulated among members of the BWA General Council for approval at its meeting in July in Jamaica. The dialogue took place between 2006 and 2010 and followed an earlier round of talks from 1984 to 1988.

The BWA is to act on earlier proposals to enter into dialogue with the worldwide Methodist community. The BWA is awaiting further developments for talks between itself and the Orthodox Church and international representatives of the Pentecostal movement, following earlier decisions by the Executive Committee and the General Council to do so.

Two documents were unanimously approved by the Executive Committee. Principles and Guidelines for Intra-Baptist Relationships, prepared by the Special Commission on Intra-Baptist Relations, and a second document that sought to clarify the status and relationships of regional secretaries within the BWA.

(Continued on next page)
The nomination of Glen Stassen as the 2013 recipient of the Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award was accepted by the executive. The award is to be presented during the BWA Annual Gathering in Jamaica in July.

It was announced that the 2014 Annual Gathering will be held in Izmir, Turkey. Izmir, which is biblical Smyrna, referred to in Revelation chapters two and three, is in western Turkey, usually referred to as Asia Minor in the New Testament. Close to Izmir are other biblical towns, including the ancient ruins of Ephesus.

Some 70 persons traveled from around the world to attend meetings of the BWA Executive Committee, sub-committees of the executive and advisory committees from March 3-6 at the BWA international offices in Falls Church, Virginia, a suburb of the US capital of Washington, DC.

DOCUMENT APPROVED to Guide BWA Relationships

The Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance® approved the document to be presented at the General Council that lays out guidelines and principles on relationships among members and groups within the international umbrella organization.

The purpose of the document, according to BWA General Secretary Neville Callam, is to assist “members of the BWA family to live into the oneness whose expression we regard as an essential part of our vocation.”

Theological assumptions underlying the document include a unity that derives from a proper understanding of creation, God’s grace, the church as a family or household of faith and a strong love ethic.

Titled Principles and Guidelines for Intra-Baptist Relationships, the document provides direction to the BWA in handling the diversity of language, culture, opinions and perspectives in meetings and in the various operations of the international body which represents more than 42 million Baptists in 223 member organizations in 120 countries. “Language is an index of one’s identity and affirms one’s history and culture,” the document states. “The BWA therefore, recognizes the need to provide for greater opportunities to assist members to hear and speak in their own languages.”

Callam declared that, if adopted and followed, the principles and guidelines will enhance fellowship, strengthen ministry and give credible witness to the unity Baptists seek in Christ. He said the adoption of the principles and guidelines will require vigilance to “ensure that we hold each other accountable.”

The document, prepared by a Special Commission on Intra-Baptist Relations, led by Daniel Vestal and Edward Wheeler, was recommended for acceptance at the meeting of the General Council in Jamaica in July.

IT AND STAFF CHANGES in the BWA International Office

The Baptist World Alliance® Executive Committee has approved a revised Human Resources Manual. The vote to approve the new manual was conducted electronically and was unanimous. BWA General Secretary Neville Callam expressed appreciation for the effort to prepare the updated manual by the Human Resources Committee led by Jerry Carlisle, which brought to completion the work commenced by the Personnel Committee under former chair, John Sundquist.

The information technology (IT) systems of the BWA office have been outsourced. The BWA-owned servers have been closed down and the IT services contracted. With the introduction of an outsourced IT system, BWA staffers have access to their emails and electronic files from any location in the world. This development has been a boon to staff members whose work involves international travel. It is having a positive effect on the ongoing work in which all BWA staff members are involved.

The new system has resulted not only in improved operational effectiveness but also in a reduction of BWA’s operational costs.

The decision to outsource the BWA IT system resulted in the departure from the BWA staff of Gary Helm, who had served as IT Specialist since 2002. During 2012, BWA lost the services of four other staff members – by retirement – Paul Montacute, Linda Falimy, Leola Hickman and Judy Campbell.

The BWA gained the services of Rothang Chhangte, Kendra Eastman and Shannon Cowett. These persons bring additional gifts to the staff team and we expect that their tenure will contribute to the renewal of the way we do ministry together as BWA staff.

Above: Helle Liht, assistant general secretary of the European Baptist Federation, leads worship during the BWA Executive Committee meeting

Left: Foreground: Durosinjesu Ayanrinola, BWA regional secretary for Africa and general secretary of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship, with BWA 1st vice president Daniel Carro.

Background: BWA President John Upton with George Bullard, BWA regional secretary for North America and general secretary of the North American Baptist Fellowship
welcome the opportunity to visit with BWA member bodies, to observe how they are seeking to carry out the mission God has entrusted to them and to encourage and challenge them in their quest for faithfulness to God. In this report, I make reference to four visits.

In October 2012, I observed among Baptists in the Australian state of Victoria a resolute effort to develop an effective response to the demands posed by their multicultural context. By addressing the nature of the witness they offer, and the type of advocacy required, and by developing appropriate forms of ministry, Victoria Baptists are pursuing faithfulness to God’s mission. The presence and involvement of a BWA leader in the Victoria Baptists celebrations marking the 150th Anniversary of their union and contributed to the strengthening of the partnership that exists between our two groups as well as between BWA and Australian Baptists together.

My unforgettable visit to Papua New Guinea (PNG) provided a potent reminder of the possibility of engaging in transformative ministry even when churches live in challenging settings marked by a measure of inter-tribal disharmony, a defective road network and inadequate financial resources. Baptists in PNG maintain a positive outlook and the spirit of daring, based on their faith in God. Their approach to ministry marks them out as worthy of emulation by other Baptist groups. In partnership with the wider Baptist community, they should do great exploits for God.

A visit to Nelspruit in South Africa, in December 2012, presented a telling reminder of the remnants of the evil system of apartheid which placed the local population in segregated communities based on the ideology of separate development. Yet, how hopeful was the 38th annual assembly of the Baptist Convention of South Africa, marking the 25th year of their independence as a convention. Repeatedly, a note of joy was sounded, a summons to continuing engagement in prophetic ministry was issued, and commitment to partnership in God’s mission was reinforced. In what appears to be a highly secularized region of the country, or else a setting in which “traditional religion” holds powerful sway, Baptists attending the South Africa Convention meeting in the eastern state of Mpumalanga expressed determination to seek Christ and to make Christ known. They should be able to rely on our prayers on their behalf.

Finally, when representatives from seven Baptist conventions and unions came together for the Bread of Life conference in Haute Limbe, Haiti, the devastation wrought by the earthquake of 2010 was still on their minds. They were also mindful of the effort Baptists made, and are still making, to help them re-establish their communities. Yet, Baptist leaders in Haiti were quite clear about the serious commitment they must maintain when it comes to their vocation to call the people in Haiti to faith in Jesus Christ.

There are more Baptists in Haiti than in all other countries in the Caribbean combined and their numbers could increase dramatically as locals and their partners continue to collaborate in proclaiming the Gospel both in inspired speech and in Holy Spirit-empowered deeds of love and mercy. The decision made at the Bread of Life conference to form an Alliance of Baptists of Haiti exemplifies the unifying function BWA still fulfills around the world.
Glen Stassen is the recipient of the 2013 Baptist World Alliance® Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award. He is being recognized for his prominent lifelong role as a theologian, ethicist, author, advisor and peacemaking activist, which has informed, inspired and influenced Christians of various traditions including Baptists for more than 40 years in their pursuit of just peace.

The award will be presented during the BWA General Council in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, in July.

A renowned Christian ethicist and recognized as one of the 20 th century “Shapers of Baptist Social Ethics” (Mercer University Press, 2008), Stassen has, for more than 50 years, engaged religious communities, civil society and governments in numerous public discussions on human rights, justice and peacemaking issues, ranging from nuclear nonproliferation to the opposition of wars. He has worked with these organizations to resolve conflicts in multiple places in the world.

He is credited with proposing a new globally recognized theory of just peacemaking rooted in human dignity and human rights in dealing with matters of war and conflict. He has done much to highlight the Baptist contribution to the Christian origins of the contemporary conceptualizations of human rights.

The BWA General Council, meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in July 2011, passed a resolution recognizing the Just Peacemaking theory as a basic platform for addressing issues of human rights abuses, injustice and violence. Academics, political theorists and Christian groups throughout the world have used Stassen as an advisor on issues of reconciliation and peacemaking.

Stassen’s intellectual contributions to the field of human rights and just peace studies are inseparably tied to his personal engagement with issues of human rights, religious freedom and just peacemaking over several decades. He has worked in or helped to found several organizations for peacemaking, worked behind the scenes to negotiate the removal of the short and middle range nuclear weapons from Europe, has testified at capital punishment cases and developed a strategy for defense attorneys in capital cases, founded and worked on advocacy of human rights for the mentally disabled and assisted nonviolent human rights and peace movements in East Germany (Stassen was present when the Wall came down), Kazakhstan, Myanmar, South Korea, Central America, Eastern Europe, and Southern Africa, among others.

Stassen’s ethical stand has had an impact on the research and public activity of many of the hundreds of graduate students from various countries that have completed their degrees under his supervision. Some of the most visible effects of Stassen’s teaching are found in his PhD graduates. For instance, he is currently mentoring a Christian student in the Philippines who is writing a theological condemnation of his country’s discrimination against the Muslim Moro people in Mindanao. A recent graduate of Stassen’s returned to his native Indonesia and is already recognized for his peacemaking and pursuit of justice there. Another recent graduate wrote a dissertation on how to minimize hate speech in Latvia and thereby promote peace between native Latvians and Russians.


Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context, which he co-authored with David Gushee, was awarded Best Book of the Year in the Theology/Ethics category by Christianity Today magazine in 2004. A former president of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, he is a member of the BWA Commission on Peace and president of the Council of the Societies for the Study of Religion. He has held a number of positions in the American Academy of Religion (AAR), including chair of the Religion and Political Science subsection and the Religious Social Ethics Group. He also co-chaired the Biblical/Contextual Ethics Group and Religion and the Social Sciences Section of the AAR.

Stassen served as the president of the Pacific Coast Section of the Society of Christian Ethics (SCE) and represented the SCE on the Council on the Study of Religion. He co-chaired the Strategy Committee of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign in the 1980s.

For almost 20 years, he co-chaired the Arms Race and International Conflict Committee of the Louisville Area Council on Peacemaking.

Since 1999, Stassen has been a member of the Board of Editorial Advisors for both Sojourners magazine and Creation Care magazine. He is a former board member of Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America and the Abbey of Gethsemane Center for Ethics; as well as a member of the Peacemaking Study Group of the National Council of Churches Apostolic Faith Commission. He was named Baptist of the Year for 2012 by EthicsDaily.com.

Stassen was influenced by his father, Harold Stassen, president of the American Baptist Convention (now American Baptist Churches USA) in the 1960s, governor of the state of Minnesota from 1939-1943 and a contender for the US presidency in the 1940s. Harold Stassen helped draft the charter establishing the United Nations in 1945 and joined the 1963 march on Washington led by Martin Luther King Jr.

Glen Stassen earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in physics from the University of Virginia, a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary in New York City and a PhD
The following are excerpts of a report submitted by General Secretary Neville Callam to the BWA Executive Committee.

**BWA and the Regions**

Like the BWA, the six regional groupings have the vocation to give expression to “the essential oneness of Baptist people” on what is commonly referred to as a continental basis. Forty-five years after the inaugural Baptist World Congress in 1905, the European Baptist Federation (EBF) was launched in October 1950. Fifteen years later, the North American Baptist Fellowship (NABF) was formed, after vigorous debate among North Americans.

The Caribbean Baptist Fellowship was formally constituted in 1970, followed by the Asian Baptist Fellowship (now Asia Pacific Baptist Federation) in 1972 and the All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF) in 1982. The effort to launch a Baptist Union of Latin America (UBLA) gathered momentum when Baptists within the region met in Rio de Janeiro in 1930, but the inaugural UBLA assembly was held in September 1976.

It was the BWA Congress in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1975 that approved the establishment of “regional or continental subdivisions on a world scale.” Yet, when he presented his report to the Executive in March 1983, BWA General Secretary Gerhard Claas found it necessary to note that “Regional Fellowships [would] strengthen Baptist ties on the various continents… However, they [could] never serve as a substitute for BWA.” He concluded that what was needed was for BWA to “structure the relation between the BWA and the Region.”

I applaud the tireless efforts made by two former BWA general secretaries, Gerhard Claas (1980-1988) and Denton Lotz (1988-2007) to deal with the thorny issue of BWA’s regionalization. During their time of service, consideration of matters concerning the relation of the BWA and the regions led to a number of significant constitutional changes. For example, the Toronto Congress in 1980 introduced the term “regional secretary” to replace the term “associate secretary.” At the Los Angeles Congress in 1985, changes were made “to clarify relations with the regional fellowship” and, at the Korea Congress in 1990, further constitutional changes were made to clarify the “Basis for Regional Fellowships (Federations).” The changes were predicated on the regional fellowships as “primarily expressions of the Alliance” that should “reflect the objectives of the Alliance within their geographical region” while not being “intermediaries between member bodies and the Alliance.”

In March 2009, I convened a consultation on the subject of BWA’s relation to the regions. Since the Santiago Gathering in 2012, I initiated a process involving all the regional secretaries, to secure convergence, if not consensus, around a profile of the role of the regional secretaries that would have implications for an understanding of the relation of the BWA and the regions.

In my opinion, the problems associated with BWA’s regionalization have their genesis in the limitations of popular Baptist ecclesiology, which does not manifest any appreciable capacity to treat convincingly with relationships beyond the local, that is, the congregational, level.

I welcome the research being undertaken by Ian Birch of the Scottish Baptist College and the suggestion he has put forward that may help rehabilitate what may be termed the traditional understanding of an inherent value in Baptist ecclesiology. Birch discusses what he calls “the intentional organization of a network of churches by which Particular Baptists related to one another [in the United Kingdom during the period 1640-1660].” He offers what I would characterize as prudential and theological reasons for what he calls “the organic, instinctive impulse towards networking that is characteristic of translocal Baptist ecclesiology.”

Even if we grant that Birch has proved his point, the contemporary emphasis on the autonomy of the local church, variously understood, has trumped any suggestion of a dominant theology of associational communion among most Baptists.

Consider, for example, the observations outstanding British Baptist scholar John Briggs made on the subject of the ecclesiology of the Baptist World Alliance. Briggs asserted that: “Fundamental to the life of the Alliance must be a sense of mutual need of one another.” On the question of BWA’s ecclesial standing, however, Briggs had this to say: “I am not sure how far a church model for wider Baptist fellowships beyond the local association/national union is possible. Should we look for alternative models? That is to say, rather than thinking of the BWA as local church writ large, would it be better to think of it in terms of a rather special kind of missionary/mutual-assistance society? Is a societal model more appropriate than a church one? In such a model, the terms of commitment can be more precisely defined by the terms of membership and participation, and functional purpose can be more clearly spelt out, and issues of ecclesiology per se, though not of mission imperative, put to one side.

Seen in the light of Briggs’ remarks, the problems associated with BWA regionalization can hardly be understood to admit of an easily available solution ecclesiologically. However, the further incorporation of the regional secretaries into the organized life of the BWA, together with the anticipated return of the vice presidents to the BWA Executive Committee, should strengthen the connection between BWA, the regions and the BWA member bodies. [They represent an attempt to respond to] demanding theological and existential problems related to our internal life as an organization.

From Duke University in North Carolina. He has been a visiting scholar at Harvard University, Duke University, Columbia University, the University of Heidelberg in Germany and the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic. He taught for 20 years at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.
Regional Reports

Developments in South Sudan and Kenya

The following are excerpts of a report submitted by Duro Ayanrinola, BWA regional secretary for Africa and general secretary of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship.

During my visit to South Sudan from February 11-14, 2012, two meetings were held with leaders of the Baptist Convention of South Sudan in Kajokeji and Juba, the capital. The purpose of the meeting was to encourage and share ideas.

In Kajokeji, there is a seminary, a primary school, a secondary school, and a hospital under construction. Most of their churches meet under trees. In Juba, the convention owns two properties. There is a temporary building on one and the other is yet to be developed.

Baptist work in South Sudan was started by Baptists in different refugee camps during the war. There are two groups of trained pastors: those trained at the Kenya Baptist Theological Seminary and those trained at the Uganda Baptist Theological Seminary. Most of the pastors have a B.Th (Bachelor of Theology) degree. Some are bi-vocational. One is pursuing a master’s degree at the University of Juba.

In the Baptist Convention of Kenya, the Lord pulled down a seven-year strong wall of hostility and bitterness that has hindered the progress of God’s work and in a specially called meeting, God united His children. A harmonized constitution and the transitional leaders were unanimously accepted. Elijah Wanje, leader of the transitional committee, wrote, “Indeed, the last six years of division opened the door to the devil to paralyze much of our work. Since we were asked to give leadership and work toward reconciling the church, God has done amazing things. In our joint meeting with the two camps, there was repentance and further commitment to bring the church to oneness.”

Sincere appreciation is extended to Neville Callam, BWA general secretary, for his leadership and also to the previous AABF leadership led by Paul Msiza, former AABF president, and former general secretary Harrison Olang, as well as current AABF president Michael Okwakol, who chaired the last meeting.

Caribbean Baptists to Establish Study Center

The following are excerpts of a report submitted by Everton Jackson, BWA regional secretary for the Caribbean and executive secretary/treasurer of the Caribbean Baptist fellowship.

Baptist witness in the Caribbean goes back to the 17th century when Baptists were deported from England and sent as indentured persons to Barbados. While these early records are lost, there is documented evidence of Baptist presence in the late 18th century and after. Although the history of this period has been researched, especially as regard to the evangelical missionary enterprise of the 19th and early 20th centuries, this has been done largely from the perspective of the social and political contributions of Baptists to Caribbean life and society.

Most of these studies were done primarily by non-Baptists and scholars from outside the Caribbean, so that the specific regional as well as theological emphases and polity that gave rise to Baptist activities in the Caribbean have largely been ignored or missed. A Center of and for Caribbean Baptist Studies (CCBS) is needed to give an authentic Baptist interpretation to the biblical and theological foundations upon which current Baptist witness was built lest in the future Baptists lose their true evangelical identity. Therefore, the decision was taken to establish such a center in the Caribbean.

The Center for Caribbean Baptist Studies will not only enable the voices and the perspectives of Caribbean Baptists to contribute their unique perspectives to this ongoing historical academic discussion but also to contribute an understanding of Baptist spirituality into the Caribbean ecumenical enterprise. The Center will therefore secure, and become the repository for, documents relevant to Caribbean Baptist life, history and thought, and will encourage research and publication in these areas and cooperate.
The following are excerpts from the report presented by BWA President John Upton at the BWA Executive Committee meeting.

I was visiting with the Baptists in Ghana. Steven Asante, president of the Ghana Baptist Convention, took off a week to travel with me across the country. The majority of our trip was in the Northeastern part of Ghana, in the Yendi region. It is an area that is 87 per cent Muslim. It is also the poorest region of Ghana and an area burdened heavily with malaria. We traveled each day deep into the bush. Steven said he had never traveled such difficult roads in his life. We were distributing treated mosquito nets to some of the villages in the bush. These were just mud huts with no electricity, no running water, no sanitation, and people with no jobs other than farming yams, and abject poverty.

Before we could enter a village we had to visit with the village chief to receive permission to enter his village. All the chiefs are Muslim. We entered one village and visited the chief. We told him what we wanted to do. He gave his permission but he also had a request of us. He asked if we would start a church in his village. When asked about his interest to start a church he said he wanted a church for two reasons. First, Christians, more than any other people he knew, are people full of hope. His people needed hope. Second, Christians are good people and good people have a better future. His people need a future. Would we start a church while we were there? I was very reluctant.

I will never forget: Steven and I standing under a tree singing while people from all over the village came. More than 150 persons raised their hands. We gathered them and from among their midst they identified five who would become their church leaders, three men and two women.

We gave each leader a Bible in the local language. Those five have been connected since to a training program where a trainer will travel once a week out to the bush to train the leadership. Steve and I started a church that afternoon and it is doing very well to this day.

There is one other thing I want to tell you about that experience though. After the service a young man pulled on my arm and asked, “How long has this good news of Jesus been known?” I told him about 2,000 years. He said, “Then what took you so long to get here? What of my father and my grandfather, why did you take such a long time to come?”

Good question.

The following are excerpts of a report submitted at the March Executive Committee of the BWA by Tony Peck, BWA regional secretary for Europe and general secretary of the European Baptist Federation.

The leadership of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (CBF) is committed to effective engagement of God’s mission. However, the level of effectiveness of the mission is reflected in the practice of faith and the level of mission engagement within the local churches of member countries. There is concern that many local churches, especially in some territories, may not have ready access to resources that would facilitate a deeper understanding of the church’s faith. There are challenges in living out one’s faith in today’s world – social, economic, spiritual, etc. There is also the concern that some pastors and other church leaders could benefit from additional theological training and development to assist them in their service to God and their fellow human beings. It is in response to these and other concerns that the CBF decided to offer a Ministry Development Program (MDP) to member countries of the CBF.

The aims of MDP are to broaden and deepen understanding of the church’s faith, encourage bold and confident witness, facilitate leadership development in service to God and fellow human beings and explore opportunities for more effective engagement in mission.

The following are excerpts of a report submitted at the March Executive Committee of the BWA by Tony Peck, BWA regional secretary for Europe and general secretary of the European Baptist Federation.

We took the important decision to move the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) from Prague to Amsterdam. This followed a crisis in the finances of IBTS, mainly caused by the downturn in the global economy, which led to three years of careful discussion and evaluation about the best way forward for IBTS. Several possible locations for IBTS were looked at in detail, with Amsterdam emerging as the most viable option. Having the decision, a group has been set up to implement it, with the hope that the move will be complete by the start of the 2014-15 academic year in September 2014. The EBF will also move its office to Amsterdam.

(Continued on next page)
IBTS will become an “embedded institution” in the Theology Faculty of one of the leading universities in Europe, the VU (Free) University of Amsterdam, which has a Christian foundation in the 19th century and seeks to preserve a Christian “ethos.” Academically, this will put IBTS in a wider context than has been possible in Prague, with Mennonites, Pentecostals, Dutch Reformed, Dutch Baptists and others who are already part of the Faculty. The major emphasis will be on doctoral studies (the growth area at IBTS in recent years), with some possibilities also for Masters level, in what will be something like (the exact name not decided yet) the International Baptist Theological Study Centre (IBTS Centre).

The commitment of IBTS to center its life on a worshipping and learning community will be carried forward by the re-development of a Baptist church building quite close to the VU University. The Baptist Union of the Netherlands has already proved itself to be an excellent partner in this venture, and the union will carry out the redevelopment with IBTS becoming the main tenant of the “Baptist House” (including a reduced, but specialist, library). The BU Netherlands, the Dutch Baptist Seminary and the EBF will also share the facility, together with the small local church that will continue to meet for its Sunday worship. Architects are already engaged in drawing preliminary schemes for the building.

The whole plan has been carefully and responsibly costed, but it is dependent on two factors that are somewhat outside our control; obtaining the “right price” for the buildings in Jeneralka, Prague, and achieving what we need from the investment of the capital in order to run the IBTS Centre. We hope and pray for a good outcome regarding these variables.

The move to Amsterdam will be another new beginning for IBTS and we see ahead some exciting new possibilities, not least a greater emphasis on biblical and theological reflection on the profound social and missiological issues facing our churches and unions in contemporary Europe and the Middle East. In the new urban setting of IBTS these will be all around us, and we can connect with some very interesting and innovative projects already happening among the churches of Amsterdam and the Netherlands.

The transition period will throw up many challenges; new leadership and staff, new ways of working, Czech staff who have served IBTS for many years coming to the end of their contracts; and not least keeping the status quo going in Prague while the new reality unfolds. We value the prayers of the BWA for us as we work to make it all happen.

North American Baptists Mark Major Milestones in 2014

The following are excerpts of a report submitted to the BWA Executive Committee by George Bullard, BWA regional secretary for North America and general secretary of the North America Baptist Fellowship

2014 is the 50th anniversary of the formation of the North American Baptist Fellowship. This took place in 1964 and was symbolized by a gathering in May 1964 called Baptist Jubilee Advance. On March 6-7, 2014, NABF will celebrate the missional past, present, and future of Baptists in North America, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This is also the 200th anniversary of the Triennial Convention among Baptists in the United States.

The Triennial Convention, so-called because it met every three years, was founded in 1814. It was the first national Baptist denomination in the United States of America, with headquarters in Philadelphia.

The NABF is bringing together a task force to encourage the participation of North Americans in the BWA World Congress in Durban, South Africa. We believe this will be an important gathering, both because it is a World Congress meeting in Africa, and also because Baptist World Alliance® President John Upton is from North America and will be presiding at this meeting. We desire to support Baptists from throughout the world, but especially our African sisters and brothers with our presence. We will also be encouraging North American Baptists to engage in a missional activity in Africa before or after the World Congress.

NABF, like BWA, is primarily an organization of Baptist conventions, conference, and unions. As such, strengthening these Baptist organizations is a key part of the work of NABF. To this end, NABF has followed the lead of BWA by initiating a Denominational Leaders Network. Only as our member bodies are strong and thriving can the work of NABF and BWA be strong and thriving, and can the work of the Great Commission be strong and thriving.

The Denominational Leaders Network seeks to support and encourage the work of the chief executive officer and/or president of each member body. It provides a safe environment where they can talk about key issues of denominational leadership in a culture that keeps telling us we are in a post-denominational era when it is really a denominational transformation era. How to be and do denominationalism in the 21st century is indeed chaotic (a mix of chaos and order).
Preparations are in high gear for the 16th Baptist Youth World Conference in Singapore from July 17-21.

More than 6,000 youth from approximately 100 countries are expected to attend.

A major feature of the conference is a series of workshops for youth, youth leaders and young adults.

More than 20 workshops will be targeted toward the thousands of youth going to Singapore. Among these are Practical Advice for Growing in Faith, The Role of Christian Youth in the Fight against HIV/AIDS, and establishing ministries through the creative arts, sports and creation care. Others will examine how to live out one’s faith in school, how to study the Bible, the dynamics of worship, social media, women in the sex trade, the environment, and peace and justice issues.

Some sessions will focus on youth telling their stories of life and ministry in difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances.

Youth leaders workshops include Integrating Youth into the Church, Engaging Youth who are Involved in Risky Behavior, Balancing Career and Youth Ministry, Encouraging and Leading Young People in Short Term World Mission, and discussions exploring why youth are leaving the church.

Young adults will discuss Living a Life of Mission at Home, Connecting with Young Adults Outside the Church, Maximizing Ministry, and Discovering God’s Purpose, among others.

Facilitators and presenters are drawn from around the world such as India, Singapore, Nepal, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Argentina, Germany, New Zealand, Canada, the United States and other countries.

Registration for the Baptist Youth World Conference may be done online at www.bwanet.org.

One of the major emphases of the Baptist Youth World Conference in Singapore from July 17-21, 2013, is mission. It was decided at the onset of the planning process that conference participants should have an opportunity to make an impact and that mission is the means to accomplish this.

One unique mission opportunity is a School Kit Project, sponsored by Baptist World Aid (BWAid), the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance®. Approximately 1,000 kits will be assembled at the youth conference and distributed to Myanmar children living in refugee camps. There are an estimated 31,000 school children living in seven refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border. People living inside the refugee camps are prohibited by the government of Thailand from seeking employment outside the camps and are dependent on donations for their daily necessities. The kits will be used to help meet the educational needs of refugee children, most of whom were displaced by wars, conflicts and disasters.

Youth groups traveling to Singapore are asked to indicate how many kits each group can contribute.

BWAid is encouraging youth leaders to challenge their youth to either make monetary contributions or to bring school supplies on their travels to Singapore. They can make a monetary donation of US$10 to purchase a hand woven, environmentally friendly school bag made by women in the refugee camps, plus school materials such as pencils, sharpeners, crayons and rulers; or US$15 to purchase one school kit filled with school supplies, US$75 to purchase five school kits, or US$150 for 10 school kits.

Youth also have other opportunities for mission during the conference. The BWA has partnered with Stop Hunger Now to fill two 20ft containers of pre-packaged meals for distribution in Asia.

Stop Hunger Now is an international hunger relief organization that coordinates the distribution of food and other life-saving aid around the world. Its meal packaging program provides volunteers the opportunity to package dehydrated, high protein, and highly nutritious meals that are used primarily to support development programs and to save lives in developing countries.

It is estimated that in order to fill these containers, the BWA will require 2,000 volunteers during the youth conference, working two shifts of four hours each. If successful, these containers will carry 285,120 meals. Already, the BWA has secured US$45,000.00 in funding for one container with the hope that additional funds will be forthcoming to fill a second container. The youth conference Local Arrangements Committee in Singapore is confident that this goal will be reached.

In addition to the School Kit Project sponsored by BWAid and the partnership with Stop Hunger Now to provide pre-packaged meals, participants attending the youth conference will have other mission opportunities in Singapore, Indonesia, Cambodia and Thailand leading up to, or following the conference.

Emmett Dunn is youth director of the Baptist World Alliance. Rothang Chhangte is director of Baptist World Aid.
Edmund Chan (Singapore)
Chan leads the Covenant Evangelical Free Church in Singapore. He has authored several books to include, Growing Deep in God; Mentoring Paradigms; Growing Deep in Faith; and Cultivating Your Inner Life.

Diana Francis (Bahamas)
Francis is president of the Student Christian Movement of Bahamas and the host of a youth television program, “U Gat Issues.” She is a song writer and the author of the book, Straight Up Youth Talk. She is the co-pastor of the First Baptist Church in The Bahamas.

Thembelani Jentile (South Africa)
Jentile is senior pastor at the Mamelodi Baptist Church in South Africa. He is a columnist for Sunday Sun, a national newspaper, as well as a regular contributor of the Move Magazine. He has authored two books, Repairing Broken Alters and Broken but Blessed.

Lucas Leys (Argentina)
Leys is director of the Hispanic Division of Youth Specialists and the President of Publishing at Vida Publishers, the Spanish division of Zondervan. Lucas has authored fifteen books including Effective Youth Ministry and 500 Youth Ministry Ideas.

Dave Overholt (Canada)
Overholt is founding pastor of Church on the Rock, one of the largest and longest running Next Generation-targeted Baptist churches in North America. He is author of Reasons to Believe; Live What You Believe; and Soul Searching the Millennial Generation.

Christian Rommert (Germany)
Rommert serves as head of the German Baptist Youth Department and co-initiator of the “Safe Churches” campaign that deals with the question of child protection.

Rachael Tan (Taiwan)
Tan is a former member of the faculty at the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary and served as associate dean of the graduate school at the Asian Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary. She also served as pastor for more than 10 years in the Philippines and was a member of the BWA Emerging Leaders Network.

The kind of fellowship and spiritual boost I experienced during that conference charged my spiritual battery. There is a ceaseless flow of God’s blessings and spiritual warmth in these conferences.

— Brickson Sam, Sierra Leone

We are a part of the same movement of God in the world! It is an opportunity to see so much diversity, so many different things and people. It was also an opportunity to become aware of what God was doing through people that were as young as I was.

— Denise de Vasconcelos Araujo, Brazil

We were blessed by incredible times of worship. It was a celebration from the beginning!

— Dale O. Stairs, Canada
### 16th Baptist Youth World Conference

#### SCHEDULE

**Wednesday**

Setting the Stage, Embracing the Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Registration Opens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Opening Celebration</td>
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**Thursday**

God Reaching Out to Us • John 3:1-21

**MORNING – EXPLORATION**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 am–10:15 am</td>
<td>Morning Worship (Bible Study presentation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 am–11:30 am</td>
<td>Family Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 am</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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**AFTERNOON - APPLICATION**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:30 pm–5:00 pm</td>
<td>Seminars and afternoon programs (Global Village, Mission Opportunities, Fringe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 – 2:30</td>
<td>Seminar #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 – 3:45</td>
<td>Seminar #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 – 5:00</td>
<td>Seminar #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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**NIGHT - CELEBRATION**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Gathering</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 pm – 9:30 pm</td>
<td>Worship Celebration</td>
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**Friday**

Reaching One Another in the Body of Christ • John 13:1-17

**MORNING - EXPLORATION**

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am – 10:15 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 am</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 – 2:30</td>
<td>Seminar #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:45 – 3:45</td>
<td>Seminar #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 – 5:00</td>
<td>Seminar #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 pm – 5:30 pm</td>
<td>Youth World Committee Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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**NIGHT - CELEBRATION**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Gathering</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 pm – 9:30 pm</td>
<td>Worship Celebration</td>
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**Saturday**

Reaching Out to Others in Ministry and Mission • John 17:6-18

**MORNING - EXPLORATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 am – 10:15 am</td>
<td>Morning Worship (Bible Study presentation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30 am – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Family Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 7:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch/Experiencing Singapore</td>
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**NIGHT - CELEBRATION**

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Gathering</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 pm – 9:30 pm</td>
<td>Worship Celebration</td>
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**Sunday**

Reaching the World • John 3:16

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 am – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Closing Worship Celebration</td>
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*APRIL/JUNE 2013* 23
A Jesus Christ Bread of Life (BOL) conference planned and sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance® brought seven groups, including two that are already member organizations of the BWA, to focus on holistic development as an expression of authentic Christian witness and evangelism. This is the first time in living memory that such a diverse group of Baptists in Haiti has met to participate in an event.

“It was a very good conference,” said BWA General Secretary Neville Callam, who presented a paper on the Haitian Baptist story within the broader context of Baptist history. Callam was impressed by the vision exhibited by Haitian Baptists and is of the view that Christian ministry in the Caribbean country has both a rich heritage and a bright future.

In his paper Callam, who is Jamaican, reminded Haitian Baptists of the strong historical links between Baptists in the Caribbean. He named a number of Jamaican Baptists who served as missioners in the French- and Creole-speaking country, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Spanish-speaking Dominican Republic. “Here in Haiti, we celebrate the way God has blessed the church and we are thankful for the growth of the Baptist community,” Callam said.

Callam also updated Haitian Baptists on Baptist witness around the world, particularly in mission, the meeting of human need, and in the fight for freedom and justice.

The BWA general secretary and Fausto Vasconcelos, the BWA director responsible for mission and evangelism, reported that the seven groups represented at the conference decided to form an Alliance of Baptists for Haiti, an umbrella organization where the groups, while maintaining their independence, may share opportunities in fellowship and ministry. This is of significance, Callam declared, as Haiti has more Baptists than all of the rest of the Caribbean combined.

A well-known Haitian Baptist was honored during the BOL conference. Emmanuel Feliz, a retired government civil servant and judge, served time in prison for his quest for human rights during the rule of François ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier. Feliz now distributes solar radios throughout Haiti, carries out a preaching ministry and focuses on training church leaders in personal evangelism. He is also a presenter for a radio station in Haiti.

The BOL conference, which ran January 30 to February 2, was held at the Christian University of North Haiti in Haut Limbe. Presenters included Vasconcelos; Everton Jackson, BWA regional secretary for the Caribbean and executive secretary/treasurer for the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship; and Andre Jean, professor of Old Testament, Old Testament Theology, Hebrew and Pastoral Leadership at the university, among others.
The Haiti-Jamaica Baptist Connection

It is a real pleasure for me to be here in north Haiti. As a Jamaican, I am aware that many of my fellow Jamaicans preceded me here. These Jamaicans had the privilege of serving alongside your countrymen and women here in Haiti. I wonder how many of these names you remember:

Rev. George Angus from Second Baptist Church in Montego Bay, who served in St. Marc; Rev. Daniel Kitchen from Falmouth Baptist Church, who worked in Port de Paix and Trou de Nord; Rev. R. H. Rowe from Jericho Church, together with Miss Harris and Miss Clarke, who served in Jacmel and St. Marc; Rev. L. T. Evans, who arrived in Jacmel in 1893; Rev. J. Alfred Pearce who served at Grand Riviere and Port de Paix; Judge Clarke and Harold Wildish, who in 1933, undertook their evangelistic mission in Acul-du-Norde, Limonade, Petit Anse and Quartier-Morin; Charles Stanford Kelly and Mae Kelly from Brown’s Town who served especially at Trou; (Of course, Kelly was born in Jamaica of British missionary parents and, in his first years in Haiti he was not a Baptist).

Leslie Harris from Brown’s Town, who came here in 1958 and has done outstanding work especially around Creve; Nurse Maisie Hall (Docteur Miss) from Sturge Town who worked in Cap Haitien and Ms. Edna Chang, who labored at Gonaives. And there were others whom I have not mentioned.

I am tempted to include in this list that great missioner, Arthur Groves Wood. He was born in Agra, India, of British missionary parents. After returning to England, he received the opportunity to serve as a teacher at the Calabar High School, a Baptist operated school in Jamaica. Like some past Haitian Baptist pastors such as Solon Gabeau, he trained for the ministry at Calabar Theological College in Jamaica.

After serving in two groups of churches in Jamaica, Arthur Wood arrived at Jacmel on October 15, 1923. He came with sponsorship from the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church in New York City and under the banner of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Later, he was joined by his wife, Alice, who was born in Jamaica, a granddaughter of a British Baptist missionary there. Alice was a graduate of the Westwood High School, the first High School for girls started by Baptists in Jamaica.

After spending a year in Jacmel, Arthur Wood went on to Cap Haitien, and what a vital contribution he made to the work in northern Haiti and, through his service as General Missionary for the American Baptist Home Mission Society in Haiti, to a much wider sphere in this country! Arthur spent 32 years in Haiti, leaving in 1955. We celebrate the memory of his work. And there are many others – John Turnbull, Wallace and Eleanor Turnbull and a vast company of other servants of God who did great exploits in ministry among you.

During his retirement, Mr. Wood returned to Jamaica, and, for a few months, he served as my pastor, when Ivan Parsons, my pastor was ill. Later, for a short time, one of Arthur’s adopted daughters was associated with a church in Jamaica where I served as pastor.

Origins of Baptist Witness in the Caribbean

We celebrate the contribution of African Americans to the start of Baptist work in several Caribbean countries. Frank Spence started Baptist work in Bahamas in 1780; George Liele did the same in Jamaica in 1783, and William Hamilton in Trinidad and Tobago in 1816.

Shall we forget Thomas Paul who arrived here in Haiti in 1823, even if the work here is believed to have started in 1836? Thomas was sponsored by the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society. Soon after this, according to G. W. Smith, writing in "Conquests of Christ in the West Indies," the American Baptist Free Missionary Society appointed Mr. and Mrs. William Jones who arrived in Port au Prince in 1844. You may recall that Mr. Jones became a Seventh Day Adventist and in 1847, the Society sent Rev. and Mrs. William Judd and Ms. Electa Lake as replacement for the Joneses.

We offer thanks and praise to God. These men fulfilled their calling and to them, the Baptist leaders and people of Haiti, and the many men and women after the pioneers, we owe a debt of gratitude for the work in which we are privileged to share today.

In the 1800s, Baptist work started in Turks and Caicos Islands (1836), in Dominican Republic (1843) in which Haitians played a role, in Cuba (1883), in Guyana (1878) the work of Baptists from China, in Cayman Islands (1885), and in Puerto Rico (1899).

During the first half of the 1900s, Baptist work commenced in Barbados (1905), in Bermuda (1932), in Martinique (1940s), and in St Lucia (1948).

More recently, especially since the 1960s, Baptist work has spread to many of the Windward and Leeward Islands in the Southeastern Caribbean.

We celebrate all that God has enabled through this witness across the Caribbean even as we remember that, today, there are more Baptists in Haiti than in all the other countries of the Caribbean combined.
The Baptist World Alliance® (BWA) Women's Department hosted a parallel event during the 57th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

The CSW, established in 1946, is the principal global policymaking body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Each year, representatives of member states gather at UN headquarters in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment worldwide.

NGOs such as the BWA sponsor “parallel events” that run concurrently with the sessions held by the UN.

The BWA’s panel discussion, which included women from other faith traditions, focused on issues related to religion and violence against women. It included participants such as Lisa Gelber, associate dean and rabbi of the Women’s League Seminary Synagogue who has worked on domestic violence projects within the Jewish community; Robina Niaz, a social worker, activist and advocate for Muslim women’s rights; Marie Fortune, pastor in the United Church of Christ in the USA and founder and senior analyst at FaithTrust Institute; Denise Starkey, theologian and professor at the College of St. Scholastica; and Alexia Salvatierra, director of justice for the Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America who has more than 35 years experience in a variety of social justice ministries.

Vi Mundy, first woman Chief for the Ucluelet First Nations in Canada, shared first hand stories about First Nations’ women and violence. She has been awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for significant contribution and achievement of leading and successfully negotiating a treaty for her tribe.

Nancy Murphy, executive director of Northwest Family Life, a Christian counseling center working with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, moderated the panel discussion. Murphy, whose parents were Baptist missionaries in British Colombia, Canada, is a professor, therapist and author.

Lauran Bethell, an international consultant on issues of human trafficking and prostitution who works with International Ministries of American Baptist Churches USA in countries such as Thailand and Netherlands, was facilitator. Bethell received the 2005 BWA Human Rights Award during the Baptist World Congress in Birmingham, England.

The parallel session affirmed a 2006 declaration on violence against women made by religious and spiritual leaders. The declaration acknowledged “that violence against women exists in all communities, including our own, and is morally, spiritually and universally intolerable.” Because “our sacred texts, traditions and values have too often been misused to perpetuate and condone abuse,” the religious and spiritual leaders vowed to “commit ourselves to working toward the day when all women will be safe and abuse will be no more.”

Declaring that “religious and spiritual traditions compel us to work for justice and the eradication of violence against women,” the leaders promised to “draw upon our healing texts and practices to help make our families and societies whole,” and called on “people of all religious and spiritual traditions to join us.”

The 18-member BWA delegation was led by Patsy Davis, director of the BWA Women’s Department.

Below: Some members of the the 18-member BWA delegation at the UN parallel event in New York.
Carolyn Fossen broke new ground. She is the first female treasurer of the Baptist World Alliance®.

Fossen was elected BWA treasurer in 2010 and chairs the Budget and Finance Committee. But to her, these are not remarkable achievements. She said the BWA has always given opportunities of leadership and participation to women, and not only through the BWA Women’s Department. Women have held other senior positions in the international organization, including as vice presidents and chairs of committees and commissions.

Baptist groups around the world have had women leaders, including president/moderator and general secretary/executive coordinator of conventions and unions, and many of these women have played meaningful roles in the life of the BWA. Raquel Contreras, the current president of the BWA Women’s Department, previously served as a vice president of the BWA, president of the Union of Baptists in Latin America – one of six regional fellowships of the BWA – and president of the Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Chile.

Regina Claas, daughter of former general secretary Gerhard Claas, is a vice president of the BWA and is general secretary of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches (Baptists) in Germany. She chaired the BWA Commission on Freedom and Justice, which preceded the Division of Freedom and Justice, created in 2008. Anna Maffei was, for a number of years, president of the Christian Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy and is vice chair of the BWA Commission on Doctrine and Christian Unity. Karin Wiborn, former general secretary of the Baptist Union of Sweden, served on commissions and workgroups of the BWA. She is currently general secretary of the Christian Council of Sweden.

Other women Baptist denominational leaders include Sonia Paynter, president of the Bermuda Baptist Fellowship, Isabel Gianella, president of the Baptist Convention of Bolivia, Brenda Halk, president of Canadian Baptist Ministries and Suzii Paynter, who took up office as executive coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) on March 1 this year. Both the CBF and American Baptist Churches USA have had women serving as moderator (CBF) and president (ABC USA).

A number of female theologians and college and seminary professors have served, and are serving, the BWA and have made presentations of significant theological papers at BWA gatherings.

“The BWA continues to strive to include women and are overjoyed at their involvement,” Fossen stated. “While the role of women is being debated among many theologians, the BWA is continuously trying to advance women.”

Fossen’s involvement in the BWA began in 1977, shortly after graduating from college. Jane Denny, wife of then BWA General Secretary Robert Denny, invited her to join her (Jane Denny’s) Sunday School class at Memorial Baptist Church in Arlington, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, DC. “The class took a tour to the Philippines and attended the Baptist Youth World Conference in 1978,” Fossen said. “The experience was transformational. When I got to go the Philippines, I was so excited to see the world represented there that I wanted to be a part of it. It has expanded my Christian understanding.”

She has given unbroken service to the BWA since then. “I joined the BWA Budget and Finance Committee before I was 21,” she explained. “I have now been supporting the BWA for 36 years.”

A native Virginian, Fossen loves the diversity represented within the BWA. Referring to the recent BWA Executive Committee meetings in March, she said “it was so interesting to hear accents from Africa, from Europe, from South America. The whole world was represented there. I love the BWA because it helps me see beyond [my local] community.”

The BWA, more than any other entity, makes a unique contribution to Baptist unity. “The BWA is tremendously unique. Baptists tend to split, especially in North America. The BWA allows everyone to get together and have a chance to fulfill Christ’s command to be unified. The BWA provides an umbrella for all to stand together, where we can find out together how much bigger the Baptist world is.”

While the BWA is now doing a lot, Fossen would like the support base to grow stronger so that it can do even more. “I would like to see us develop our support so that we can expand on the operations we already offer. It would be great to do what we already do on a grander scale, provide more training, more conferences.” This, she said, depends on the level of support that Baptists around the world are willing to give to the organization. “By giving to the BWA, you are giving to the worldwide church. The BWA serves known and unknown regions all over the globe.”
leaders of the Baptist World Alliance® representing 42 million Baptists in 223 member organizations in 120 countries, offered congratulations to Pope Francis who was elected the 266th head of the Catholic Church on March 13. The election of Francis, formerly Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina, by the Papal conclave, came after the resignation of Benedict XVI in February. He is the first Latin American and first Jesuit to be elected pope.

BWA President John Upton said, “The BWA celebrates with the Catholic Church the announcement of Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope Francis. The prayerful discernment process of the Catholic Church in selecting the pope has been a comfort to us all.” Upton stated that “Pope Francis will have our prayers as he begins his responsibilities.”

General Secretary Neville Callam said, “The BWA welcomes the election of Cardinal Bergoglio as Pope Francis. As archbishop of Buenos Aires, the former cardinal’s commitment to the proclamation of the Gospel, his record of solidarity with victims of social injustice, his affirmation of the value of a simple lifestyle and his exemplary humility has provided much encouragement to the community of believers in Christ.”

Callam indicated that the new pope “will be accompanied by the prayers of the members of the world Baptist family, who also anticipate the pope’s positive contribution to the realization of the vision of the church reflected in the High Priestly prayer of our Lord.”

Upton represented the BWA at the inauguration of Pope Francis on March 19 at the Vatican. Callam, who has a prior engagement in India, is unable to take up the official invitation from the Vatican to attend.

Upton and Callam also expressed their appreciation for Pope Benedict XVI after the announcement of his intention to resign.

“I have deeply appreciated the inclusion by the pope of other Christian fellowships such as the BWA, in serious discussions of matters that have confronted the Christian world,” said Upton. “The pope has always been gracious in his welcome to the Vatican and respectful of the insights and opinions of other Christian communities.”

Callam acknowledged “the ministry that Pope Benedict XVI exercised, in particular his contribution to ecumenical relations.” Callam took note of the pope’s theological works and his pastoral ministry that have “provided the Christian community with a rich storehouse of spiritual reflections worthy of detailed study.”

“I applaud the pope’s openness to bilateral dialogues that have both strengthened understandings and furthered Christian witness,” Upton said. “He has demonstrated his love of the church and he will be remembered fondly for his scholarly and gentle leadership.”

Callam recalled the private audience the pope gave to participants in the dialogue involving Baptists and Catholics during their meetings in Rome in 2007. In receiving the delegates, Pope Benedict XVI expressed his hope that the dialogue would result in “increase of understanding and cooperation between Catholics and Baptists.”

Baptists and Catholics have participated in theological dialogue since 1984. The first round extended from 1984-1988 and the second from 2006-2010. Callam acknowledged the pope’s support of the second round of the dialogue.

This ecumenical openness, according to the general secretary, was on full display during the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops of the Catholic Church where the Baptist community was represented by Timothy George, dean and professor of divinity, history and doctrine at Beeson Divinity School in the state of Alabama in the United States.

“We convey best wishes on a well deserved retirement,” Callam stated. “His immense contribution to world Christianity will not be forgotten and we pray for him God’s blessings in the coming years.”

**Paul R. Dekar, Community of the Transfiguration: The Journey of a New Monastic Community, Cascade Books, 2008**

Paul Dekar tells the inspiring story of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Victoria, Australia. Readers are introduced to the story of a monastery that is of Baptist origin and polity. The monastery maintains a close relationship with the Baptist Union of Victoria, but welcomes postulants who do not come from Baptist origins and are not practicing Baptists. Dekar helps readers appreciate the rich tapestry of Baptist spirituality.

**Faith Bowers, When Weak, then Strong: Disability in the Life of the Church, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, 2008**

The book explores the contribution people with disability make to the life of the church and suggests ways in which the churches may intentionally make room for the participation by disabled persons in their ministry., Faith Bowers gives voice to the perspectives of disabled persons and, by this means, she edifies especially members of the Christian community who believe they do not have a disability. Bowers helps liberate the churches by canvassing God’s love for people with disability and by painting a portrait of what divine love requires.
In Memoriam

Saw Tamla

president of the Self Supporting Kayin Baptist Mission Society (SSKBMS) in Myanmar, died on January 3. He was 68 years old.

After ministerial training at the Home Mission Bible School in Yangon, capital of Myanmar, Tamla served as pastor of the local village Baptist church in Thay Nwe Khee in a remote area in Kyaukkyi Township.

From 1969 to 1979, he was assistant pastor of the Phado Self Supporting Kayin Baptist Church, becoming senior pastor in 1980.

Tamla served SSKBMS in a number of capacities, including as youth president, chairman of the Minister’s Council, and president of the Phado Area Churches. He was elected SSKBMS president in 2002 and served in that position until the time of his death.

Despite failing health, he led the planning and organization of the Centennial Celebrations of SSKBMS that was hosted at the church he pastored in Phado in April 2012. Thousands gathered for the event.

Tamla was also actively involved in the Myanmar Council of Churches and hosted the 84th Annual General meeting of the ecumenical church body in Phado in June 2012.

He is survived by his wife, Thramu Naw Lah Eh, and 11 children.

Ralph Frederick Bevan Bullen,

general secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Baptist Federation (CBF) for 22 years, died on January 19. He was 92 years old.

Born in Plymouth, England, Bullen migrated to Brantford in the province of Ontario, Canada, with his parents in 1924.

He was ordained to the Christian ministry in 1941, and pastored Baptist churches in Sault Ste. Marie, St. Catharines and Brantford before being elected general secretary-treasurer of the CBF. The federation merged with Canadian Baptist International Ministries to form Canadian Baptist Ministries in 1995.

Bullen served the Baptist World Alliance® in a number of capacities, including as a member of the General Council, the Executive Committee, the Committee on Relief and Development, the Commission on Evangelism and Mission and the Commission on Christian Ethics.

Bullen was active in the Canadian Council of Churches and was awarded the Knight Great Band for the Humane Order of African Redemption in recognition of leadership in World Relief Projects.

He earned degrees from McMaster University and other institutions of higher learning.

“Fred was a long-time supporter and friend of McMaster Divinity College, and was one of those responsible for instigating our Baptist Heritage Room,” said Stanley Porter, president of McMaster Divinity College.

Bullen was predeceased by his wife of 62 years, Ruth, in 2003. He leaves a daughter, Jane, and a son, John.

Funeral services were held at First Baptist Church, Brantford, on January 25.

Justice Anderson

noted Baptist missiologist, died on December 29, 2012, of a heart attack. He was 83 years old.

Anderson taught for 27 years at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in the United States, including 20 years as director of the seminary’s World Missions Center, which he helped found in 1980.

Anderson and his wife were missionaries to Argentina from 1959-74, during which time he was professor of church history and homiletics at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires. He also served as president of the Argentine Baptist Mission in 1965 and 1972; vice president of the Evangelical Baptist Convention of Argentina, 1962 and 1966; and interim president of the seminary from 1968-69.

After their return to the US, he served in several pastorate and interim pastorates in the states of Texas, Oklahoma and Connecticut before taking up his post at Southwestern.

After retiring from Southwestern in 1998, Anderson taught classes as an adjunct professor at Dallas Baptist University, Truett Theological Seminary and the B.H. Carroll Theological Institute.

Anderson is a former member of the Baptist World Alliance® Commission on Baptist Heritage and Identity, the World Evangelization Workgroup, and the Evangelism and Mission Workgroup.

He earned degrees from Baylor University in Texas and Southwestern seminary, and is the author of several books in English and Spanish, including An Evangelical Saga: Baptists and their Precursors in Latin America, published in 2005.

He leaves wife, Mary Ann; sons, Timothy and Brad; and daughters, Sandi and Suzie.

Funeral services were held January 2 at Agape Baptist Church in Fort Worth, with interment at New Baden Cemetery.

Zachariah ‘Zac’ Patnaik

of Kolkata, India, a vice president of the Baptist World Alliance® from 2000-2005, died on February 2 in the state of California in the United States after a long illness. He was 72 years old.

Patnaik served the BWA in a number of capacities, including as a member of the General Council, the Executive Committee, the Budget and Finance Committee, the Officers Search Committee, the Membership Committee, the Promotion and Development Committee, and the Commission on Baptist Heritage and Identity.

Patnaik represented the BWA on a number of occasions, including touring disaster zones in the state of Gujarat after an earthquake affected India in January 2001, killing approximately 20,000 persons.

He owned and operated Automatic Controls, a manufacturing business and Evangelical Literature Depot, a publishing and printing operation. Patnaik’s printing
According to a report authored by the Baptist World Alliance® and American Baptist Churches USA (ABC USA), more than 60 churches and approximately 200 villages have been destroyed by the military in Myanmar (Burma).

The report claimed that “hundreds of civilians, mainly Baptist Christians, continue to suffer under the offensive attack of the army” in Kachin state, the northern most region of Myanmar, which borders China.

Christianity is dominant among the Kachin, one of three main ethnic groups from which the state gets its name. Most Kachin are Baptist Christians and are affiliated with the Myanmar Baptist Convention, a member organization of the BWA.

The report, which was submitted to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR), claimed that “nearly 70,000 IDPs (Internally Displaced People) are trapped between the Burma-China border, causing a humanitarian crisis.”

The BWA and ABC USA report that both “the Burmese military and the Chinese government have blocked the UN and international aid agencies from distributing aid to the IDP camps.” Thousands of IDPs are “without adequate food, shelter, clothing, sanitation and access to healthcare.”

There is continued tension between the government of Myanmar and Kachin state. The state has a history of agitating for independence from Myanmar, formerly known as Burma up until 1989. Renewed fighting between the Kachin Independence Army and the Myanmar army began in June 2011 and continued throughout 2012, as a result of the Myanmar government’s pressure on the Kachin Independence Organization/Army to transform itself into a border guard force. Most recent estimates put the death toll at 1,000 persons in what some refer to as a civil war.

Representatives of the Kachin Alliance, which also contributed to the report, visited the offices of the BWA and gave details of the ongoing conflict. The Kachin Alliance is a network of Kachin communities and organizations across the United States formed to advocate for the rights, equality, and freedom of the Kachin people. They presented documented evidence, including picture slides, of churches and villages destroyed as well as human casualties.

The Kachin group, accompanied by representatives of the BWA and ABC USA, traveled to the UN offices in New York in February and met with OHCHR.

The BWA will continue to closely monitor the situation in Myanmar.

**In Memoriam continued**

Business republished *Baptist World*, the quarterly magazine of the BWA, making it available in India, Bhutan, Nepal and other countries in South Asia.

He was honorary pastor of the Howrah Baptist Church in Kolkata for more than 20 years. More than 30 years ago, he founded a school for children of slum dwellers in Kolkata.

Patnaik is a former member of the Board of Trustees of California Baptist University in the US. He was actively involved with Gideons International and other organizations.

Memorial services were held on February 18 at Carey Baptist Church in Kolkata and on February 23 at First Baptist Church in Redding, California. Burial was in Kolkata.

He is survived by wife Conica, son, Rajiv and daughter, Ritika.
It was Advent season. A Sunday School teacher asked my son’s fifth grade Sunday school class if they knew what the word Advent meant. The teacher informed them it meant “to wait.” The teacher then asked if they knew what they were waiting for at Advent. My son answered innocently, Santa Claus. The teacher laughed and said that was not the correct answer, we were waiting for Jesus, he told them. My son was very confused because in his mind Jesus had already come. My son was further confused because he believed that Jesus was with us every day. How could we be waiting for him, he was already here?

Of course, it was one of those moments where both were right. Yet, the question is still a very good one. What is it we are waiting for as Christians? What does it mean to “wait for Jesus?” That is not just an Advent question, it is an everyday question.

To be honest, are we really waiting for anything? Are we anticipating anything tremendous? Who among us is living with active eagerness? Who among us is expecting any kind of breakthrough of holiness into this world? Who is living with an open armed expectation of redemption? Bringing it closer to home, who in the Baptist World Alliance® family has any real sense of anticipation that it will make a difference in the world? Who is expecting a breakthrough of justice to come into the world because of what the BWA is doing? Who expects a global impact to happen evangelically because of what we are doing? Who is anticipating that our youth will see a bigger and more connected Christian family in the world, and because of that, will be inspired to deeper levels of Christian commitments?

We don’t anticipate because we know better than to believe in miracles anymore. Our experiences have taught us that when people get all whipped up with excited hopes, reality rolls in and crushes them every time. Life happens, or more often, doesn’t happen, and we are left with so much disappointment and frustration that we become cynical.

When that happens life just becomes a matter of “getting through.” We have hopes but they are reasonable hopes now. So, we move through our days, our ministries, our churches with our heads down, occupied with daily demands and details and distractions and fulfilling other people’s expectations of us.

The result is that the part of us that would dream doesn’t really seem to be breathing anymore. We take our comforts as we can and enjoy the various diversions of food, entertainment, books, movies, music, gadgets, projects, and so on. If we pray we keep our prayers rather small. The wisdom we have come to live by is acceptance. Accept what it is for what it is and be content.

To that disposition Jesus had something to say and we need to hear it fast. For the soul of the BWA, and for our own souls, we need to hear it. To this disposition Jesus said, “Wake Up! Stand up and lift up your heads, your redemption is drawing near.” (Luke 21:28) He said these words the week of his death. He says this to remind us that hope always comes in the week of his death. He said these words the few years ago, Ban Ki-moon said something that has stayed with me. He said the one thing that he most admired about Christians is their conviction that in the end all things will come together in Christ and all will be made new and all will be made right. You and I have a calling. We are to live every day in the anticipation of God’s peace, of God’s fairness, and that every tear will be wiped away. Let us stand and raise our heads. Our redemption really is drawing nigh. In that good hope may our lives become the expectant prayer, “Come, Lord Jesus, come.”

We live in a severely broken world. It is hard to find much that would encourage us. The global economics continue to devastate the poor. Wars emerge daily. Rocks fall from the heavens at random threatening human existence itself. It seems that little has been changed by our efforts.

Yet, we wait. We anticipate. There is a promise of a Second Coming, the final Advent of Christ. The language Jesus uses to describe that is a kind of surreal poetry. It is deeply symbolic, pointing to impenetrable mysteries. This much I think we can say from what Jesus has told us. The end of all things, whether it is the end of the world or the end of your life or mine, or our lives together as we have known it, the end will have God’s purpose in it and the end, yours, mine, or the world’s, the end will bear the face of Christ to us.

Jesus is telling us to stand up and lift up our heads. Don’t live with our heads down, don’t live weighed down with all those numbing distractions and with the stupor of our present disappointments. Stop living mindlessly, forgetting the perfect love that is shining on us. We need to open our eyes and be alert to the power of love that can still astound us. We need to believe again that God’s love can change us and the world.

We need to start living our lives by leaning into that hope, live as if we truly believe it to be true. We need to live as if we are anticipating the power of that love. We need to give people reason to live with an expectation of the breakthrough of the love of God.

I believe in the power of God to work in the BWA. When Neville travels to speak, when Fausto leads workshops on evangelism, when Raimundo speaks of justice, when Emmett plans a Youth Conference, when Rothang offers aid to the devastated, or when Patsy leads the women and Forestal the men, I know they are pouring out their lives to help Baptists of the world dare to dream again. They dare to help the dream begin even now, to come true.

When Billy Kim invited me to visit with Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations a few years ago, Ban Ki-moon said something that has stayed with me. He said the one thing that he most admired about Christians is their conviction that in the end all things will come together in Christ and all will be made new and all will be made right. You and I have a calling. We are to live every day in the anticipation of God’s peace, of God’s fairness, and that every tear will be wiped away. Let us stand and raise our heads. Our redemption really is drawing nigh. In that good hope may our lives become the expectant prayer, “Come, Lord Jesus, come.”
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