Good News Amidst War • see page 25

Baptist World Congress Reflections
Statue Donated to BWA

The son of a prominent African American Baptist leader donated a statue to the Baptist World Alliance on December 9, 2009.

Sculpted in 1944 by H. Fowlie, the statue depicts Jesus kneeling with three disciples at his feet. L. Venchal Booth, vice president of the BWA from 1970-1975 and a founder of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, posed for the Jesus figure.

William Booth, son of L. Venchal Booth, donated the statue in honor of his father’s memory and contribution to the BWA.

Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Neville Callam recounted the great contribution that African Americans have made to the BWA over the years, including C.H. Parrish, a former slave who rose to become president of Simmons University in Louisville, Kentucky, and who addressed the inaugural Baptist World Congress in 1905; and E. C. Morris, who was elected the sole black member of the 16-member committee chosen during the 1905 congress to design the structure for the continuing of the BWA.

Callam said he hoped the donation of the statue would inspire African Americans to become more integrally involved in the life of the international Baptist organization, noting that their participation has slackened over the years. “If this gift helps us realize the dream of re-engagement by African American Baptists with the BWA, what a wonderful purpose it would serve. . . . I think this gift could serve as an event around which we could issue a rallying call for the renewal of African American Baptists’ active involvement in the ministry of the BWA.”

William Booth is a former director of the Religious Studies program at Hampton University in Virginia and assistant vice president of Academic Affairs for distance learning at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. He is currently director of the John Leland Center for Theological Studies master’s program at Hampton Roads in Virginia and a member of Leland’s Advisory Board for Hampton Roads.
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At various events and locations, Neville Callam addresses priorities of the “global movement” which comprises the BWA. Human rights and the defense of religious liberty are themes.

30 **In Memoriam**
Good books are a real gift that should never be taken for granted and those who write them perform a rich service to readers, researchers and other interested persons.

Beginning in 1905, some care has been taken in the provision of a record of the proceedings of the 19 congresses of the BWA. The diligence of Baptists who undertook this work has bequeathed a legacy for which we will not cease to be thankful. The library of every theological college, university or seminary where Baptists study should have BWA Congress Report books on its shelves!

Tracking attendance at past congresses reflects the way the Baptist movement has grown over the years and the increasing involvement of Baptists from East and West, North and South, in the wonderful instrument of unity that the BWA represents.

In 1905, 3,000 persons from 26 countries were present at the inaugural congress in London, England. When the BWA celebrated its Golden Jubilee, the congress was again held in London, England, with 8,524 official delegates from 49 countries. At the centennial congress in Birmingham, England, there were some 14,612 registered participants from 115 countries. Had so many persons not encountered visa issues, the number would have exceeded 16,000!

Many are the memories that people cherish of past congresses. Recently, I read with interest the biography of outstanding retired Australian Baptist leader Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Blackburn. His exquisite description of tours from Australia to several congresses opens a beautiful window on what it means for one to be a member of a local Baptist church. That membership opens the door to a much wider fellowship extending across the oceans. It would be worth your while reading the 322 pages of Blackburn’s *Beyond Imagining: 65 Years of Christian Ministry* (Burwood, Victoria: Brown Prior Anderson, 2001).

The stories told by Baptists from all over this planet who have attended even a single congress – accounts of blessing received, insights gained, networks established, and friendships that live on – are but a small indicator of the wealth of opportunity that Baptist world congresses afford.

As we scour the corners of our memory to take a retrospective look at past congresses, we find so much to celebrate. Would it not be a good thing if more persons were able to join in and enjoy the blessings of the experience of a BWA congress because others lovingly contributed to make this possible?

Remembering our oneness, let us plan to attend and celebrate at the upcoming 20th BWA congress. Let us also help others who otherwise would not be able to come to discover the joy we have found in attending and participating in a Baptist world congress.

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**Book Note**

**Bill J. Leonard**

*Baptist Questions, Baptist Answers: Exploring Christian Faith*

Westminster John Knox Press, 2009

Even though Baptists are highly diverse with a “historic tradition for dissent,” Bill Leonard, founding dean of the Wake Forest University School of Divinity in North Carolina in the United States, attempts to answer 84 questions he deems common to Baptists.

“Baptist Questions, Baptist Answers: Exploring Christian Faith” assumes an American audience, but as Leonard draws on some of the earliest Baptist statements of faith from the seventeenth century, Baptists of various traditions, theological and cultural, may discern common roots.

Widely embraced Baptist beliefs concerning the necessity of a personal salvation experience, the autonomy of the local church, and religious liberty, are explored. But also prominent are differing views and positions between General Baptists who embrace Arminian theology, and Particular Baptists who are Calvinist in theology, on matters such as the process, the result, and the assurance of salvation.

Bedeviling questions concerning Baptist polity, the nature and work of Christ and the status of Christian scripture are some of the bold questions addressed by the professor of church history. Here and there, Leonard gives a nod to issues that divide Baptists on issues doctrinal, social and moral.

One gets a peek at some of the more obscure Baptist groups within the United States, such as Appalachian Baptists – including Primitive and Old Regular Baptists – who, for the most part, are Calvinists, and who may spurn missionary and evangelistic activities, a trained or full-time clergy, a Sunday school ministry, and music in worship services.

The small volume may prove useful, as the writer himself suggests, to a new members’ class, persons preparing for baptism, or retreat settings that explore basic Baptist beliefs or that offer a brief survey of Baptist identity.
Arnoldo Canclini, a former president of the Evangelical Baptist Convention of Argentina, received a prestigious outstanding citizen award from the National Congress of Argentina in August 2009.

A renowned historian, writer, philosopher, professor and evangelical Baptist pastor, Canclini is the first evangelical Christian to receive the award, given to recognize persons who have made outstanding contributions in literature, the arts, public service and in other fields.

Canclini received the award for his long service to theological education and historical research. He is an honorary member of the Argentine Baptist Association, the National Academy of History, and a former president of the Argentine Biblical Society. He is a member of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Baptist Heritage and Identity.

A pastor for more than 50 years, Canclini has taught at several seminaries. A prolific writer, the Argentine Baptist leader celebrated the publication of his 100th book, having released his first book when he was 15 years old.
By Tania Willis

Sunday, June 28, 2009, our world in Honduras at Faith Home Child Care Center changed. Honduras President Manuel Zelaya was arrested and flown out of the country.

We didn’t know what that would mean for us missionaries and the 78 Honduran children and 16 houseparents who live on the Faith Home campus.

Our houseparents and attorney informed us on a daily basis whether it was safe to travel. We stockpiled groceries. Our electricity was shut off several hours each day, and we heard news of demonstrations and possible other troubles.

Sunday night, July 5, fellow missionaries Sid and Vicki Smith came to our house with news that several veteran missionaries in our area were leaving. They knew much more about the situation than we did. After consulting with the mission office in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, the decision was made for us to leave, too.

All the airports in Honduras were closed, so we thought we would drive to Guatemala. Maybe we could stay there a few days and then return or just fly home.

My heart was broken. My husband, David, and I got on our knees and cried and prayed that God would intervene.

I was sick. How could I leave the kids? How could I tell them I was not going to stay and face whatever was to come with them? What would God really have me do?

The airport opened the next day, so we ordered tickets to fly out Tuesday. We met with the houseparents and the kids to tell them the plan.

Our attorney and the superintendent of Willingham Bible Institute would be on campus to take care of them. We told them not to worry. We would be back hopefully in a week or two. They cried; and we cried. We all hugged, and they encouraged us to go and be safe.

We were in the United States almost a month. I was so excited to get word at the General Baptist Mission & Ministry Summit at the end of July that we could go back!

On August 3, four General Baptist missionaries, with others to follow, returned to smiling faces and lots of hugs at Faith Home.

Things are still a little crazy here, but we are back where we belong.

Tania Willis is a missionary with General Baptists International, a department of the General Association of General Baptists, a BWA member body.

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Baptists in Germany commemorated the fall of the Berlin Wall with worship services on November 8 and 9, 2009.

Uwe Damman, host pastor of the worship service at the Baptist Church in Berlin-Weissensee on November 8, described the destruction of the wall as “a miracle” that made freedom possible. “The Lord has done great things and we can be joyful today. He gave us freedom – even behind walls,” Damman said.

The significance of the change brought on by the removal of the wall was not missed during the ecumenical worship service at the Gethsemane Church in Berlin the following day. In 1989, police and military troops surrounded the church to prevent Germans from entering the building, which served as a sanctuary and place of refuge. “Armed police and military divisions tried to prevent the peaceful demonstration against the GDR regime” in 1989, the German Baptist union reported. In 1989, the song “Dona Nobis Pacem” (Grant us Peace) during a candlelight vigil “was a power that the powerful were not able to handle.”

During the service on November 9, 2009, at the Gethsemane Church, police and troops again surrounded the building, this time to protect those worshipping inside, including government leaders and dignitaries. Regina Claas, general secretary of the Union of Free Evangelical Churches in Germany (the German Baptist union), reminded the congregation, “You are the light of the world; let it shine so that the people may see your good deeds and give honor to your father in heaven.”

Christian Wolf, emeritus professor at the former East German Baptist seminary in Buckow who taught at the former West German seminary in Hamburg after reunification, admonished his listeners to seek peace by all means in a world that has become “at once localized and globalized.”

Baptists Celebrate 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Exhibits put on by the Union of Free Evangelical Churches in Germany to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall

(Photos courtesy of the Union of Free Evangelical Churches in Germany)

Christer Daelander, EBF Religious Freedom Representative, expressed concern that the three Baptist leaders may be prevented from holding positions of leadership in the Baptist union or any other organization. Baptist unions in the EBF are being mobilized to pray for the Baptists in Uzbekistan as well as to make representations to Uzbek embassies in their respective countries.

Uzbekistan has had a checkered history in the practice of religious freedom. In 2006, six Baptist Christians were detained and fined in the southern town of Karshi and Bibles and hymnals were burned.

In February 2008, a Baptist in the eastern city of Fergana was fined the equivalent of nine months wages after a raid by state officials on his house where approximately 40 Baptists were gathered for Sunday morning worship. He was charged and convicted for holding “illegal religious meetings in his house.”

A Baptist pastor and members of his congregation were severely beaten and jailed in April 2008 after police raided a house church meeting in the city of Samarkand.

Freedom of religious expression and association is officially protected under the Uzbekistan constitution, but religious groups complain that the country’s religion law is harsh and does not conform to the constitution or international standards of human rights and religious freedom.

Non-governmental organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, as well as the Council of the European Union and the United States Department of State, have repeatedly cited Uzbekistan for its human rights violations. Reports from these bodies maintain that the violations are most often committed against independent groups and civic organizations, including members of religious communities, and include torture, arbitrary arrests, and various restrictions of freedoms.
Youth leaders from 10 countries, mostly from West Africa, attended a peace conference in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in November 2009.

The conference, held within a region where several countries have been affected by internal conflicts and civil wars, was planned by the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Youth Department and the All Africa Baptist Youth Fellowship.

Three young men from Sierra Leone shared stories of how they lost their right arms as a result of their reluctance to join rebel forces. “But for the physical evidences, their stories sounded so unreal, as if we were listening to a script from a horror movie,” said Emmett Dunn, director of the BWA Youth Department. “What was even more alarming, one of the three was born physically challenged but that did not stop the rebels from amputating his right arm.” Dunn said that “this aspect of the conference left a lasting impression on the participants and stressed why it is important to avoid war.”


Karin Wiborn, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Sweden, said that its seminary, the Stockholm School of Theology (SST), would be adversely affected by the change if the policy is enforced. “This is a big problem in Sweden in many ways,” Wiborn explained to the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), indicating that “a lot of theological institutions have great problems” with the proposed change.

According to Owe Kennerberg, rector of SST, “It is true that the Swedish Board of Higher Education is questioning that the government is paying the education of those becoming priests and pastors, because they think it is partly too ‘confessional’ and ‘unscientific’.” He informed the BWA that the government has not approved the SST’s application for a master’s level program, “despite the fact that the school has qualities far beyond several of the comparable departments at the big universities.”

Kennerberg stated that at least two other schools, Örebro School of Theology (OTS) as well as Johanelund School of Theology, are “risking losing their right to grant a recognized bachelor’s degree in theology.”

A consequence of the agency’s directives is that theological schools could lose accreditation status for their degree programs, or have their application for accreditation denied. Those that follow the government guidelines fear that pastors and priests may not be properly prepared for Christian ministry.

Theological schools in Sweden tend to be ecumenical. Even though SST is owned by the Baptist, Methodist and Covenant churches, approximately 40 percent of its theological students are training for the priesthood in the Swedish Lutheran Church, formerly the state church which was disestablished in 2000. SST has 500 students in two programs, theology and human rights. OTS is owned by Interact, a Baptist group, and educates 200 full-time and 160 part-time students from a variety of denominations.
Baptists responded to devastating floods that affected sections of south India in early October 2009. The floods, which caused widespread devastation in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra, were the worst floods to affect south India in 100 years. An estimated 250 people died and 5,000,000 were displaced.

Baptist World Aid (BWAid), the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance, and European Baptist Mission (EBM), which is based in Germany, gave initial donations of US$5,000 and US$7,000 respectively, for emergency assistance.

At least 1,100 families, mainly in areas close to the city of Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh, received direct assistance through the relief efforts of the Nellore Baptist Field Association (NBFA), a group of 22 Baptist churches from around the city of Nellore in Andhra Pradesh. Food, clothing and medicine were among the items distributed with funds donated by BWAid and the EBM.

“Distribution is done without bias to caste, creed or religion [and] with the cooperation of Baptist pastors,” wrote Devaraj Voola of the NBFA. “We are greatly indebted to you and may the Lord bless you abundantly,” he said.

Victor Durodola, special assistant to Olusegun Obasanjo, former president of Nigeria and a Baptist layman, read a message on the behalf of the former Nigerian leader. Obasanjo has been credited with helping to negotiate and broker peace in Africa.

Other speakers included Paul Msiza of South Africa, president of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship; Naomi Tyler-Lloyd from the United States, a member of a number of BWA committees, including the Youth Executive Committee and the Human Rights Award Committee; Kojo Amo, general secretary of the Ghana Baptist Convention; Cassandra Jones from the US, who sits on the BWA Commission on Church Leadership and the Study and Research Executive Committee, among others; Victor Akande, a pastor from Ibadan, Nigeria; and Dunn.

More than 250 delegates from Benin, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Togo attended the conference.

Montacute indicated that there are positive changes, such as an increase in the food supply and a more stable currency. While Olan’g, who heads a Baptist university in Tanzania, visited Baptist seminaries and pastors in the southern region of the country, Montacute inspected projects and met with pastors and leaders in the central region.

Among the greatest needs identified was for water purification in order to counter an outbreak of cholera, a water-borne disease. Several thousand Zimbabweans died and approximately 100,000 were affected by the epidemic, beginning in August 2008 into 2009.

Emmanuel Baptist Church in Harare, Zimbabwe’s capital, received permission from the city council to clean up the Warren Park community. Approximately 250 volunteers drawn from the church and the community participated in the exercise. C. H. Chiromo, a former president of the BWA Youth Department and pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, said, “We want to sustain the combat on the deadly cholera epidemic by helping remove the rubbish and also foster a clean community.

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During the corporate worship celebrations and Bible study sessions, there will be separate morning and evening programs for younger children and youth on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, including a youth seminar. A special youth concert will be held on Friday night.

On Saturday afternoon, both men and women will have the opportunity to participate in separate rallies in Honolulu.

The children’s and youth events will run concurrently with the regular congress events in the mornings and evenings, with afternoons mostly free for family time, such as exploration of the island of Oahu, where Honolulu is located.

A day camp for children 7-11 years old will be held, along with small group study and worship groups, followed by festival events during the night. For youth, there will be recreation and team building events on the beach, as well as variety shows where youth will perform skits and other events.

Children and youth will be taken on special excursions during the five days of meetings, visiting Waikiki Beach; the USS Arizona Memorial, which honors those who died in the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941; and Iolani Palace, the official residence of the Hawaiian Kingdom’s last two monarchs. Children and youth will also go snorkeling.

All those who attend the congress, including children and youth, will have the opportunity to be involved in local mission projects in Honolulu and its environs.

The events are being planned by the Baptist World Alliance in conjunction with Passport, Inc., a United States-based nonprofit organization that plans activities and programs for children and youth.

Events at the congress venue are covered in the registration cost for the congress. However, events outside of the congress venue, such as the excursions, will incur additional charges. During the registration process, children and youth must indicate whether they will participate in the activities.
Stories of Some Remarkable Men and Women
by Geoffrey Blackburn

In 1905 in London, England, more than 3,000 delegates from 36 countries gathered for the first Baptist World Congress. It was at this congress that the Baptist World Alliance was born. Among its objectives was the fostering of fellowship worldwide among Baptists. Since then 18 other congresses have been held. On each occasion thousands of delegates have gathered from all over the world.

The 20th Baptist World Congress will be in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, July 28 to August 1, 2010. If you possibly can, plan to attend. You will find, as I found, that it is a mind boggling, soul enriching experience as you meet and fellowship with fellow Baptists from other countries and other conventions and unions. I am 95 years old and have attended 11 Baptist World Congresses. I find attending a congress so inspiring I plan, God willing, to be at the congress in Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

My first congress was in 1955 when a brother minister and I chartered a ship to take 400 Australian and New Zealand Baptists to the Baptist World Alliance Jubilee Congress in London, England. The voyage of 12,000 miles took six weeks. Today one can travel from Australia to England by plane in 24 hours. Modern technology may have changed the world when it comes to travel but there is still a hunger in the human heart for fellowship with others and with God, which is met at a Baptist World Congress.

The 1955 Jubilee Congress was attended by 8,524 delegates. On the opening day I made my way to Albert Hall, the main congress venue, wondering what experiences were ahead of me. The first thing I noticed was the multinational nature of the delegates. While most delegates were in Western attire, many delegates, especially the women, wore attractive national costumes. There were the Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish women in their colorful national dresses and bonnets. Also delegates from many African and Asiatic countries. There were, of course, many delegates from the British Isles and 3,600 delegates from America.

While English was the congress language, provision had been made for simultaneous translation of all proceedings into French, German, Serbo-Croatian and Spanish. Small radio receivers and earpieces were available for free. Each day there was Bible study in small groups, seminars on different topics and plenary sessions open to all.

At a Baptist World Congress, you hear the story of some remarkable men and women, what they have done or suffered for Jesus Christ. One such person was the Rev. Yakov Zhidkov, who spoke at the 1955 Jubilee Congress. He had been released after 15 years imprisonment in Siberia after the death of the Russian dictator, Stalin, in 1953. His offence? Only that he was a Baptist pastor. He was a patriarchal figure, thin and gaunt in appearance, with a great crop of white hair and a long white beard. This was an historic occasion, the first occasion since 1917 that Russian delegates had been allowed to leave their country and attend a Christian meeting overseas. Mr. Zhidkov had no words of criticism for his unjust imprisonment. He told instead of the faith that the Baptists in his country and how the church was growing in spite of restrictions placed upon it. He spoke of visits to Russia in the past two years of Baptist world leaders and expressed the hope that “ties with the West will in the future be widened and strengthened for the benefit of the cause of the kingdom of God, and the strengthening of peace and friendship between nations.”

The final congress meeting was at night at the Arsenal football stadium where Billy Graham spoke to a crowd of more than 50,000 people. That was the first of many occasions when Billy Graham has spoken at a Baptist World Congress.

A feature of every Baptist World Congress is the singing, as the final act of worship, the hymn “Blest be the tie that binds...” The author was John Fawcett, a Baptist pastor in a village church in England. Fawcett had accepted a call to a prestigious church in London. Farewell services had been held; Fawcett had loaded his horse-drawn wagons with his furniture; he and wife and family were about to leave the village and journey to London. His church members were lining the street pleading with him to stay as their minister. Their tears and entreaties, evidence of their love and affection, made him change his mind and continue as their minister. Shortly afterwards he wrote this hymn.

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

When for awhile we part,
This thought will soothe our pain,
That we shall still be joined in heart
And hope to meet again.

My final word. If you possibly can, do attend the Baptist World Congress, Honolulu, Hawai‘i. You’ll never regret it.

Geoffrey Blackburn of Camberwell, near Melbourne, Australia, is a former vice president of the Baptist World Alliance

(Congress Reflections continued on the next page)
I have three highlights in my Baptist World Congress history. Number one is the BWA Congress in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1975, where I had the privilege to do my first simultaneous interpretation service. I also had the chance to listen to Rev. Billy Graham in the final open air rally at Skansen in Stockholm. The congress was amazing in every respect.

Number two is the BWA Congress in Melbourne in 2000. Two events are worth mentioning: the first being the fantastic sermon given by H. Beecher Hicks Jr., based on his book “My Soul’s Been Anchored.” I thought I had landed in the middle of a gigantic revival meeting, which I actually had. Secondly, the concluding conference meeting, where Mrs. Ruth Graham was the preacher, made me think that I was listening to Rev. Billy Graham himself when I sat there with my eyes closed!

Number three took place in Birmingham, England, in 2005. I remember in particular the gorgeous choir that made the large audience join in singing the most wonderful hymns. An enormous contribution to the fantastic atmosphere in the various meetings was given by Rev. Rick Warren from the USA. His sermon got the congregation to understand because this preacher really used a vocabulary which every human being could grasp.

Åke Svensson is a member of First Baptist Church in Linköping, Östergötland, Sweden

My wife Linda and I, along with Michele and Mark Miles from our church in Bowie, Maryland, USA, attended the 2005 Baptist World Centennial Congress in Birmingham, England. It was our first such meeting and we were thrilled to be among fellow Baptists from around the world.

Imagine our delight when we unexpectedly ran into some friends from Zimbabwe. Rev. Champion Chasara, pastor of Harare Baptist Church and former president of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe, had visited our church on two previous occasions, along with former general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Zimbabwe, Rev. John Mazvidgadza. Although we had maintained email correspondence, we did not know it would be possible for them to attend the Baptist World Congress. Somehow Champion spotted me on an escalator in the assembly hall and shouted out my name. Thus began a joyous reunion with Champion and John, and introductions to Champion’s daughter, Margaret, and other members of their church. That evening over dinner we enjoyed a time of great fellowship with our Zimbabwean friends.

The next day, also in the crowded lobby of the assembly hall, I saw Rev. Kingley Perrera, general secretary of the Sri Lanka Baptist Sangamaya, who also had visited our church a few years earlier. During our conversation I learned that he and Champion were staying in the same church hall while in Birmingham. What is the likelihood that the paths of three pastors from Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, and the United States should ever cross, much less meet again? In the words of a hymn, the Baptist World Alliance truly is “one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth.”

Bruce Salmon is pastor of Village Baptist Church in Bowie, Maryland, USA

I was passionate about attending the BWA Women’s Leadership Conference 2005 to be held in Birmingham, England, so with my family in tow we arrived at our hotel around midnight on July 22 after having traveled thousands of miles and experiencing many delays.

We had no plans to attend the BWA Congress, but a sister and family friend from our home church convinced us to remain since there were programs for the whole family. We pondered the possibility and prayed for God’s guidance. After having received such tremendous blessings from the women’s conference I thought, “Why not?” Our teenage son and daughter who had fallen in love with the city were excited about the idea.

Each day we walked to the nearby convention center expecting to be spiritually fed. The Bible study sessions awakened in us a hunger and thirst for God’s word. We felt especially privileged to
I began attending the annual BWA meetings and congresses in 1976. It was an assignment in my work with the Southern Baptist Convention’s Home Mission Board. Through the years I have missed very few meetings. All of them have held special memories and meanings, but there was one that I shall never forget.

The 1985 congress was held in Los Angeles. I worked hard at persuading my pastor that he ought to attend. An incentive was provided by Delta Airlines. For an additional $50 to the L.A. fare, you could go on to Hawai‘i. Our pastor’s wife helped make the decision to attend that congress. I wanted everything at the meeting to go well as I belonged to a large church that needed to be involved in ministry beyond itself.

It was heart-wrenching to learn of the sacrifices many of our fellow Baptists made to be at the congress. We have remained motivated over the last four years and continue to encourage others to join us in Hawai‘i. Three families totaling nine have already committed. May God be praised!

Dalton Hope Hamilton lives in Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands, in the British West Indies.

No Other Place I Would Rather Be this Side of Heaven
by Emmanuel McCall

I began attending the annual BWA meetings and congresses in 1976. It was an assignment in my work with the Southern Baptist Convention’s Home Mission Board. Through the years I have missed very few meetings. All of them have held special memories and meanings, but there was one that I shall never forget.

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At one of the Bible study sessions during the congress, we were greatly annoyed with continual talking going on behind us. The Bible study teacher was exceptionally good, as they all are. We were just annoyed by the constant mumbling. At one point, I turned around with a disapproving look as a means of letting the talker know he was disturbing us. I looked into the eyes of three men and an interpreter. I did not realize that without the translator they would have missed the blessing we were receiving. I noticed tears streaming from the face of one man. My frown turned into a

smile and a handshake. The translator introduced the men to me afterwards. They were Russian pastors who were given special permission to come from behind the Iron Curtain to attend the meeting. It was their first taste of freedom even though KGB personnel were there to spy on them and the meeting.

Since then, I have appreciated the gifts of interpreters and translating devices. I want the whole world to receive the blessings of a BWA Congress. About 20 people from my church are coming to Hawai‘i.

Emmanuel McCall is pastor of the Fellowship Group Baptist Church, East Point, Georgia, in the United States, and a vice president of the BWA.

Sharing Our Common Faith
by Faith Bowers

We attended the last three BWA congresses in Buenos Aires, Melbourne and Birmingham.

For me, the great joy of these occasions is sharing our common faith with people from different cultures. I remember a seminar I chaired in Argentina. It was to be in Spanish, of which I speak little, but there would be a facilitator to translate. He proved to be an elderly American missionary who spoke fluent Spanish and fluent Texan English. He had always used either one or the other but not both at the same time; he had never before attempted live translation. He was also deaf.

The room was designed to accommodate 30 comfortably. We were told to expect 40-45. I watched with dismay as 80 people crowded in, squeezing into every corner and climbing on the window sills. When the chairperson rose to introduce the session in carefully prepared Spanish, her chair was grabbed and she had to find a perch on the table. It all seemed a recipe for disaster!

But no, the Holy Spirit was present – doubtless hovering on the ceiling as the only remaining space! Goodwill prevailed. Rene Padilla, the theologian everyone wanted to hear, had done doctoral studies in England and could translate for himself. He could also adapt his planned session when there was no room for small groups. Discomfort forgotten, all listened intently. Good questions flowed.

The mood was so good that the facilitator suggested ending in song rather than prayer. “Fine,” I said, “if you can quickly think of something well known in both languages.” He began, “I’ve got
that joy, joy, joy down in my heart” and with the old Sunday school song that strange scholarly occasion ended in exuberant fellowship.

We had taken books to give away in Buenos Aires. My turn to staff this free book stall fell on the last day with only a few German theological tomes left. No one seemed interested. After 50 minutes an Argentinean appeared. “Have you anything on work with the mentally retarded?” Challenged by a local need he had come that day from a distant town, believing God’s promise that he would find help. In my bag were several books by a colleague and me about such a ministry in England. Able to read English, he seized on them with delight. We both knew we were where Christ wanted us that afternoon.

Faith Bowers is a member of Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church in London, England

I Saw with New Eyes
by Tunrayo Adegbilero

I used to think that the Baptist World Congress was exclusive to a particular group of people. This perception changed in 2004 when I heard the announcement for the BWA Centenary Congress at one of our Baptist Women’s Missionary Union meetings in Nigeria. I immediately started saving towards it and also sought help from my relatives.

The BWA Women’s Leadership Conference preceded the general congress, so, I arrived at Aston University, Birmingham, England (venue of the women’s meeting), on Saturday, July 23, 2005. About 750 women

Tunrayo Adegbilero, far right

In 1995 we went to Argentina. I think many of us were surprised that it was winter in Argentina and that it was very cold. This was the congress where you wore all your clothing, layer upon layer, nearly every day just to keep warm. The building housing the congress was not made to keep the cold out. With stone and concrete floors it was difficult to get warm. It also took several days before we figured out how to turn on the heat in our hotel room.

However, with the warm welcome and enthusiasm of all the people gathered, how could you not be excited? The large auditorium where we met each evening was transformed with beautiful banners and it became a place of worship and celebration to God. When you have that many believers lifting their voices to God in praise, how can you not think you are close to heaven?

What better way to bring in a New Millennium than to be on your way to a BWA congress in Australia, the part of the world that would first greet the new century!

The congress in Melbourne was a tapestry of bringing God’s people together. This was displayed in the backdrop for our worship and program each evening. The huge tapestry was reworked for each evening to reflect the theme of the night. Each section played its part in the overall pattern to become a work of beauty and grace, just as each participant from different parts of the world came together to show God’s love of all mankind, irrespective of race, color or creed.

Birmingham, England, was a beautiful setting for the 2005 congress. The BWA was back in the country where the first gathering was held in 1905. It is always such a joy to meet in person people you have worked with by mail, email or phone. The registration areas became a place of hugs and shouts of joy as old and new friends came together; friends coming from all parts of the world to celebrate together and be a part of this international gathering. I stood in awe of the procession of countries as the banners were brought into the conference hall, realizing how wide God’s love is. Sharing in the singing in so many languages and pure praise to God has always been a favorite time for me.

A BWA congress is a special time. A time you will never forget. Each one is different. Each time you come away renewed and confident that the Lord has been present and blessed this time.

SEE YOU IN HAWAI’I!

Lee Hickman is assistant to the director of Baptist World Aid

Great Memories
by Lee Hickman

Having been on staff at the BWA for some years now, I have attended four congresses. Each has been a wonderful and stimulating experience and at the same time each has been very different.

We went to Seoul, Korea, in 1990. Our congress used the same facilities as the 1988 Summer Olympics. My heart was full of anticipation, not knowing what to expect. What we received was a tremendous welcome from the warm hearts of the Korean people. I remember being in awe of being in the Olympic stadium and also realizing that my feet were doing a lot of fast walking. I had the responsibility of checking on each one of the breakout groups to make sure they had everything they needed. That meant hustling through the depths of the large stadium and going between stadiums. I think I know what runners feel after a race – exhaustion! A few minutes of rest and I was on to the next assignment.

The Korea congress will always be for me memories of the mass baptism. It will be memories of the opening ceremony in the large stadium when the Koreans came around and gave each participant of the congress a personal gift. It will be of the communion service at the end of our time together.

In 1995 we went to Argentina. I think many of us were
from 63 countries came to celebrate their unity in Christ and see better ways to share God’s love in a needy world. We came to see God’s call upon our lives with “new eyes.” I indeed saw with new eyes when an African, Dorothy Selebano, emerged at the close of the conference as the new BWA Women’s Department president.

The Baptist World Centenary Congress opened on July 27 at the Birmingham International Centre. I was awed by the attendance of about 12,000 delegates from more than 100 nations. I did not know Baptists existed in so many nations of the world – Africans, Asians, Americans, Europeans, and Caribbean, etc. It was wonderful to meet great men of God like former US President Jimmy Carter and the “purpose-driven” Rick Warren. I was proud to see the general secretary of my convention, Nigeria’s Solomon Ishola, mount the podium to speak on “Empowerment of the Spirit.”

In all, the BWA congress has been a blessing spiritually and socially.

_Tunrayo Adegbilero of Nigeria is the president of the Baptist Women’s Union of Africa_

**A Little Taste of what Heaven Will Be**

*by Fernando Hernandez*

My name is Fernando Hernandez. I live in Melbourne, Australia. I had not had any experience with the Baptist World Congress until I was elected by the Baptist Union of Victoria to be part of the Local Arrangements Committee for the 2000 Congress in Melbourne, Australia.

I then had a first hand experience of what the Congress is all about and the tremendous amount of work and cost involved to see a good outcome in such a great event.

For more than four years the committee worked very hard, but at the end it was worth it. Somebody described the congress as a miniature of Revelation 7:9: “A great multitude from every nation, tribe, people and languages, standing... in front of the Lamb.”

I consider that the Congress is like a little taste of what heaven will be one day for all of us.

After the experience in Melbourne, I went to Birmingham in 2005 and we (my wife and me) plan on going to Honolulu as well as attending all the congresses in the future, as long as the Lord keeps us alive and gives us strength. I don’t want to miss this experience, particularly as it only happens every five years.

There are no words to describe the marvelous, unforgettable experience to see people from all nations under heaven worshipping in the same spirit and the same Lord. We made friends from many nations.

Sometimes we have the tendency to believe that we are isolated in our part of the world, but the congress made me realize how vast and great are the people of God.

May the Lord bless all the work that our brothers and sisters have to do in preparation for Honolulu.

We expect a wonderful congress as all others in the past.

_Fernando Hernandez lives in Melbourne, Australia_

To remember the congress in London is like reliving a great party, a spiritual refreshment to us mortals, designed by the King of kings. It is a valuable experience to repeat.

It was impressive to see so many families, even with children, registering as participants.

It seemed that the generational gap that is so prevalent in Latin American countries was lost with so many families sharing.

I enjoyed seeing so many people from so many races and ethnic groups from different cultures interrelating with one another, embracing, shaking hands, sharing a smile or just a word. Others took photographs, exchanged business cards and shared email

(Continued on next page)
Taking part in councils and congresses of the BWA has always been a special gift for my wife and me. I remember the world congress in Melbourne, Australia, at the turn of the century in 2000. Rev. Eckhard Schaefer as general secretary, director Rev. Elimar Brandt and I took part in this congress as delegates from the German Baptist union. Furthermore, a choir led by F. Kormannshaus (Berlin) arrived to present a repertoire of sacred songs from our continent in a noble singers contest at the congress – with great success by the way.

Highlights of this congress were the evening events, usually evangelistic worship services with the congress theme “Jesus Christ forever – Yes.” At first we – guests from Germany and Europe – were irritated: Why were they trying to evangelize us? All of us were in the ministry of the church and had been involved in evangelistic or charitable mission. But then the “Aha-Moment” came.

We religious people, we, who were well-established in our unions: We also need to dedicate ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ over and over again. In these days, during which Baptists from all over the world gather to worship God and listen to his word, we should also speak a “loud commitment in our time”: Jesus Christ forever – Yes.

Back in Germany, we reported on our experiences in Melbourne at the next union executive meeting. We quickly caught on to the idea. We as executive committee members committed ourselves anew to the Lord and Initiator of our service: Jesus Christ forever and ever again – we say yes and amen.

May the people in our union and the Baptists all over the world be called in this way under HIS lordship time and time again, so that HIS kingdom may be built in our time as well – until HE comes: JESUS CHRIST FOREVER –YES.

Wolfgang Loren is a former president of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany.

Acts 2:5-7 tells of “God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven” that came together and were confounded “because each one heard them (the disciples) speaking in his own language.” Some marveled because all the disciples did not speak like they were Galileans.

Baptist World Alliance congresses put a new spin on and give a new meaning to speaking in tongues; speaking in all languages. All who attend these congresses literally experience delegates speaking in their own tongue, praying in their heart language, preaching in their own vernacular. Who would not want to experience this at least once in a lifetime?

I’ve been to five congresses – the 15th congress in Los Angeles, California, in the USA in 1985 with the theme “Out of Darkness into the Light of Christ;” the 16th congress in Seoul, Korea, in 1990 themed “Together in Christ;” the 17th congress in 1995 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, “Celebrate Christ: The Hope of the World;” the 18th congress in Melbourne, Australia, in 2000, with the theme “Jesus Christ Forever. Yes!” and the Centennial Congress.

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Wolfgang Loren is a former president of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany.
The 2005 congress provided a place to meet lost friends face-to-face as we Baptists from Orissa, India, met our BMS World Mission friends. We saw God’s countless blessings as we interacted for His people in Orissa state of India, who 187 years ago were first touched with the Gospel in 1822, brought by the Baptist missionaries from England. On Christmas Day in 1827 Reverend Bampton baptized the first convert and today we are nearing 3,500 churches.

Congress in Birmingham, England, in 2005 with “Jesus Christ, Living Water” as the theme.

Being in a position to experience all the above congresses “up-close and personal,” I can truly say that each congress had its own unique flavor! Each congress, with its different theme, held in unique venues of the world, had lessons to teach, new joys to offer, new cultural excitements, and has helped me on my journey in this realm of existence.

Certainly there have been challenges, but the blessings always outweigh the challenges. This upcoming congress in 2010 in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, USA, will be filled with new and exciting adventures; a parade of delegates in their native dress; the meeting of new Christian friends from around the globe.

Come expecting a life-changing experience. Come expecting a blessing!

Minnie Jackson is assistant to the director of the Baptist World Alliance Youth Department

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The congress is a memorable platform to hold each other as friends, even without touching. God Bless!

Swarupananda Patra is vice president of Orissa Baptist Evangelical Crusade in Orissa state, India

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### An Incredible Gathering of Christians
by Rebecca Cuquemy

I have already attended two Baptist World Congresses. The first one was in Melbourne, Australia, in 2000, and the second one was in Birmingham, England, in 2005. Both experiences were most excellent.

First of all, what struck me was this incredible gathering of so many Christians, coming from so many different nations. It gives everyone the opportunity to meet people from literally everywhere in the world. When I was in Melbourne, I was surprised to discover during a conversation with a lady from the United States that we shared a common friend in France. This is definitely a small world.

What I thoroughly enjoyed was the beautiful and moving fellowship during the evening celebrations. However, the variety of the whole program and the quality of the speakers were very exciting. There were so many things to do, to listen to and to learn.

So many Christians in the same place does make a difference. A street hotdog vendor told me so in Birmingham!

I look forward to being in Hawai‘i, next summer, to experience the Spirit of God in a unique and special way.

Rebecca Cuquemy lives in Colombes, near Paris, in France

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### Beautiful Experience
by Mércia Madeira

The Baptist World Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1995, was a most beautiful experience. I never forgot the day when thousands upon thousands from around the world sang, each in his or her own language, “Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord.”

I imagined how wonderful it will all be, when we are all caught up in the sky.

Mércia Madeira lives in Brazil

(Congress Reflections continued on the next page)
Why a Baptist World Congress? That is an old question but a necessary reminder to consider again and again why we assemble together as Christians. One could also ask, “Why go to church on Sunday?” One could stay at home and watch a TV preacher. But, would one have been to worship?

Worship is something we do “together.” Together we pray. Together we sing. Together we give our offerings. Together we listen to the word of God. Together we fellowship with one another.

At the BWA congress in 1955 there was an old Romanian farmer who had traveled the long distance to the congress in London. Every evening he was talking out loud but no one understood him. Finally someone got a Romanian translator who told the people what the old Romanian peasant was saying. The old farmer said, “I sold my only cow to come to London. I haven’t understood a word that was said here. But, it was worth it to be with my Baptist brothers and sisters from around the world!”

When Baptists gather at a BWA congress they congregate to worship, fellowship, pray, and to encourage and support one another. Baptists who are a minority in their country are encouraged to know that their brothers and sisters around the world are praying for them. Those who suffer persecution are encouraged to know that there is a worldwide family that not only prays for them, but works for them in petitioning governments and societies for their freedom. When the first atheistic country of the world, Albania, was free of the shackles of communist slavery, a new believer came from Albania to our Baptist World Congress. She was so moved she said, “I did not know I had such a large family!”

In 1990, with the help of Billy Graham and Billy Kim, hundreds of Baptists from the former Soviet Union came to the BWA congress in Korea. They were greeted with joy and enthusiasm. Stories of their perseverance in the faith, in spite of persecution, encouraged the world family.

Is it worth it to go to a congress? Indeed it is…we must not forsake the assembling of brothers and sisters from around the world. It inspires us to pray and work more. It encourages the weak to have faith. It afflicts the comforted. It sets a signal and guide for the next five years of the worldwide Baptist movement. For me to miss a BWA congress is like missing church on Sunday morning! Don’t miss the blessing of the Hawaiian Congress! God’s Spirit is moving already and calling us together in Christ!

Denton Lotz is the former general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance.
The Baptist World Alliance launched its Legacy Fund on August 1, 2009, during the Annual Gathering held in Ede, Netherlands.

The fund was created to mark the 400th anniversary of Baptist witness, and is aimed at helping to secure the financial future of the BWA over the long term. As such, the fund will be built up over a number of years, until 2015. During this time, all Baptists and Baptist entities – churches, conventions and unions, schools and seminaries – are encouraged to make contributions, or a thank offering, in multiples of 40, 400, or 4,000 in their own local currency.

Legacy is a two-directional word. It points to the past on which we reflect with thankful hearts. From the vantage point of the present, we see very clearly the ways in which God has led us and blessed us. In retrospect, we discover good reasons to count our blessings!

Legacy also points us to the future on which we ponder with growing faith. Based on our past experience, we wonder about the ways in which we will continue to benefit from God's guidance and goodness. We wonder if the story of our future will be like the story of our past.

And we concern ourselves with legacy not simply because we want to look back! No, it's because we care about the present and the future.

Recently, we launched our BWA 400 Legacy Fund. In so naming the fund, we had two temporal reference points:

1) The past 400 years of God's glorious mercies renewed among our forbears and us! Anyone who has even a limited grasp of Baptist history will find countless reasons to celebrate what God has done among us and to offer thanks.

2) The future and its many opportunities! We have come too far, experienced too much, to lack confidence in what God will do for us as the years pass by. We will not fear for the future if we have any knowledge of God's deeds among us in the past!

Here's where the past and the future meet. In contributing to the BWA 400 Legacy Fund, we say thanks to God for what our Lord has accomplished among us in the past. Every Baptist is asked to make a financial contribution in multiples of 4, 40, 400, or 4,000 of their local currency. In this way, each one says thanks to God for the blessings of the past. But not only this!

Contributors to the fund will all become members of the BWA 400 Legacy Society. Those who make the BWA a beneficiary in estate planning through wills, bequests, annuities, properties and charity funds will also become members of the BWA 400 Legacy Society.

Members of two BWA support groups, BWA Ambassadors and the Baptist World Emeritus Club, will play vital roles in the success of the fund through their efforts to build awareness of the ministries of the BWA. Ambassadors and Emeritus Club members are persons specially recognized for their long and dedicated service to the Baptist cause generally, and to the BWA in particular, and who continue to display a committed interest in the work of the BWA.

Contributors may give online at: www.bwanet.org, email: PandD@bwanet.org, or write to:

Baptist World Alliance
BWA Legacy Society
405 North Washington Street
Falls Church, VA 22046
USA

The goal is to raise US $4,000,000.

The Legacy Fund will be a reserve that allows the BWA to provide money to initiate new ministries as well as to continue ministries critical to the Baptist cause, such as mission, evangelism, human rights and religious freedom, even in instances of economic downturn.

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Legacy Fund

Legacy Fund Launched

By Neville Callam

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When we contribute to the fund, we express our willingness to walk in the will of God to secure a sounder financial future for the worldwide Baptist movement. Through our gift, we vote for a vibrant future of BWA in mission. We say thanks and we affirm our pledge to serve God's purposes into the future of the Baptist cause.

We are grateful to all who have contributed to the fund. This includes the Emerging Leaders Network, BWA staff members, members of BWA committees, theological institutions, and so on.

Will you join us and let grateful respect for the past and confident faith in the future join hands as we celebrate our partnership with God and with each other for the future of the world Baptist movement?
The commitment to Christ and His children by individual Baptists in Asia is sometimes awe-inspiring. Among reports given at the BWA’s 16th international Living Water conference/mission consultation in Singapore, held October 27 to 30, 2009, was a wonderful testimony by a young Japanese missionary who has been called by God to clean out the clogged drains and ditches of Kathmandu in Nepal.

The missionary has set up an organization that mobilizes teams to do clean-ups of the debris, garbage and other filth that is so apparent throughout parts of Kathmandu that it cannot be ignored. It is not only an eyesore; it is a health hazard. It stands in severe contrast to the magnificent Himalayan scenery that surrounds Kathmandu, a visual reminder of the nation’s natural beauty being despoiled by the results of the poverty and neglect of the polluters.

The young missionary, a seminary graduate, an ordained minister, and missionary to an adopted land, has more than once asked God why he was sent to do this menial, back-breaking and distasteful work when he was called to preach the Gospel. With his hands being dirtied and with some horrific garbage needing to be recovered and dumped, he more than once has felt lonely and misused as a missionary of the Cross. Yet, always the realization comes to him that the Lord called him to be a servant, and, if by serving in the way God has directed he can advance the work of God’s Kingdom and see people attracted to the Suffering Servant, his own service will not be in vain. His testimony was a powerful challenge to all of us who complain when we encounter pain or hardship.

Another poignant moment in Singapore was when a Bangladeshi leader told how his daughter, a fine 24-year-old Christian leader, was selected to represent Bangladeshi young people at the Baptist World Congress in Melbourne, Australia, in 2000.

Two weeks before the congress was due to begin in Melbourne, the dedicated young woman visited a village church, preached the Gospel and returned home. She contracted dengue fever and died soon after. Her sudden and unexpected death meant she did not make it to the congress. She was never able to give the paper at Melbourne that had been scheduled.

This story had deep meaning for the delegates when the girl’s father recounted it to us in the context of God’s mission. He told of how his daughter’s death had affected his life and encouraged him towards a life now spent seeking to witness to Christ among the people of the majority religion in Bangladesh.

He set up a ministry to Muslims in his daughter’s memory and in her name, a ministry whose work continues today. This illustration was prelude to his presentation in Singapore on ways to witness to faith in Christ Jesus to people of another religion, a paper that came out of his life service to God and the life-changing death of his beloved daughter.
Most of the participants in this Living Water consultation are engaged in sharing faith and life with Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist people.

The focus of his and other’s presentations at the conference was something of a departure from other Living Water conferences. It was the first time that an intentional effort was made to carefully consider the most effective and meaningful way to preach the Gospel of God’s grace and love to adherents of the three non-Christian major world religions, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Most of the participants in this Living Water consultation are indeed engaged in sharing faith and life with Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist people. Some do this as an intentional vocation, some as part of the witness of daily life.

These three major world movements contend with the Christian faith for the allegiance of the mammoth mass of people who inhabit the Asian region. If the Gospel is to penetrate authentically, if there is to be a movement of God’s Holy Spirit throughout Asia, the believers there need to be equipped to be God’s agents to explain God’s love.

People thus engaged provided powerful illustrations, searching analysis, statistical data and helpful suggestions, as to how the churches of Asia can fulfil Christ’s commission to make disciples in their context. They were reminded that the challenge is to make disciples, not only among the animistic, tribal peoples who are as yet unreached (another emphasis of the consultation), but also from among those major religions basically suspicious of, or at least ignorant of, the faith we seek to proclaim and demonstrate and of the love of the God we love and serve.

A critical indictment of almost all things Western is increasingly hostile and passionate throughout the non-Western world. Shades of this impatience with Western standards and attitudes in Asia and elsewhere were articulated at the BWA’s Living Water consultation in Singapore. Thoughtful Asian speakers were quick to highlight weaknesses within their church cultures which sometimes were placed at the feet of Western mission policy in years gone by. However, the critique was offered alongside a genuine appreciation for the sacrificial service and holiness of most who came to serve Christ and their people in Asian lands. It was also interesting to realize that the speakers were often similarly critical of their own lack of effort and sound policy. The missionaries and ex-missionaries present at the conference were not defensive about the nature of the criticism and evaluations. The evidence is hard to refute.

The Living Water conference in Singapore was especially designed for mission leaders throughout Asia and attracted more than 80 people who generally fit that description. The Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF) identified the need to strengthen mission outreach in this vast region as a high priority. The BWA, through the Living Water strategy, cooperated in facilitating mission leaders, enablers and practitioners to attend the conference.

Crafted out of the subjects dealt with in Singapore, a committee drafted and presented a Singapore Statement for the use of APBF member bodies following the consultation.

This conference concluded with a very fitting and worthy memorial of Lilian Lim from Singapore, former president of the Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, who died in June 2009.

Tony Cupit of Melbourne, Australia, is the coordinator for the BWA Living Water conferences.
The BWA brought together Baptists in the somewhat troubled countries of the Balkans for a Living Water event in Novi Sad, Serbia, from November 5-8, 2009. It was the 18th Living Water event held this quinquennium.

The fact that the people of the Balkans were together as Baptists for the first time in living memory was warmly appreciated and often commented on by delegates who gathered from Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.

They delighted in being reunited. They rejoiced to be together once more. Old friendships were renewed, new friendships made. This is extremely important in a region where political, nationalistic and oppressive forces have blown people and nations apart and have created hostility and suspicion. These divisions could easily have happened between the Baptist communities of the Balkans. So, it was beautiful to observe the members of the various delegations to the Living Water conference greeting, hugging and exulting in the opportunity to be with Christian colleagues they had not seen for years. It was so important for Serbian Baptists to host these meetings considering the political events of the last two decades and the part that Serbia played in those events.

But as important as the realization of how Christian fellowship transcends political issues made by others – but that affect Christians too – was the opportunity for embattled believers in these countries to drink from the deep well that will never run dry. Baptists in these countries are a tiny flock. They are usually regarded as a sect, disregarded or badly treated by governments, the other religions and the major Christian denomination in the Balkans.

Stories and Challenges

One speaker from Serbia told the conference that he began a small church in Eastern Serbia in 1980 in Communist times. After a year, he was visited by a police officer who, after discussion and argument, announced that he was going to close the church. So the pastor responded, “Our church is a member of the Yugoslavian Baptist Union which is a member of the European Baptist Federation and the Baptist World Alliance. If you close my church the entire Baptist community around the world will know of your action.” The policeman quickly changed his mind. This incident helps us to understand how important the Baptist family is to isolated, struggling, even persecuted minority Baptist communities.

Successive speakers asserted that to be a Bulgarian, Romanian, Macedonian or Serbian you were expected to be of the Orthodox faith – otherwise you are not truly of the nation. It is similar for Baptists in Croatia and Slovenia with the strong Roman Catholic Church in those places. It is very hard to secure permission for repairing Baptist churches and
to secure land for new churches. Then there is Islam. Today 30 percent of Macedonia is Islamic.

Baptists in the Balkans need to drink deeply of the nourishing, living water. Freedom from communism does not necessarily guarantee other freedoms. However, all can have the freedom that Christ brings.

The Baptists of the Balkans are often thirsty souls needing the refreshment and encouragement of the Spirit of God, designated by Jesus as living water in John 7. A Living Water conference in the Balkans was very timely. It is only a decade since NATO bombs were raining throughout Serbia, regarded then as a pariah among the world’s nations. Yet, 10 years later, the Serbs were gracious and warm-hearted hosts of the BWA’s Living Water conference.

Various factors, perhaps including the all-persuasive influence of communism over many years, have caused some of the conventions and unions represented to have a certain conservatism in church life. For example, a pastor from Croatia was saying that the Lord’s Prayer is not said in his church because it is regarded as a Roman Catholic prayer! So features of other Living Water conferences like gospel and liturgical dance and foot-washing were not possible in the Serbia Living Water conference. However, the water pouring and special liturgies prepared on the living water theme were warmly embraced and a special drama effectively conveyed the conference theme. Teams of young Serbs led worship sensitively with a balance between different styles of music. The “Deeper River” theme song was quickly learned and enhanced worship and praise. And the teaching of emphases about servant leadership and evangelism was hungrily devoured.

Leaders from each country represented reported on the effectiveness or otherwise of its witness to God’s love in Jesus Christ. As has happened at previous conferences, the speakers displayed a determined desire to see their people come to a knowledge of Christ and for their churches to reach out to the community despite obstacles. It was moving and sobering to hear the leader from Slovenia, a country of two million people where there are just six Baptist congregations with about 200 people total, saying that unless we have repentance, reconciliation and revival among our Baptist people, in 15 to 20 years there may not be any Baptists in Slovenia.

The delegates to the conference were people committed to sharing their faith in Jesus the Christ and were looking for meaningful ways in their context for this to occur. There were some encouraging reports. Romanians talked about how missionaries are being sent not only to places in the Balkans, but even to countries like Italy and Spain. Church planting is a strong ministry in Serbia and Croatia. Young peoples’ work is active throughout the Balkans. There is a spirit of expectancy and the quality of leadership is encouraging.

There have been previous Living Water conferences in politically sensitive places, like Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, and in regions where Baptist believers rarely come together. But never before has the obvious joy of people formerly divided by war and the displacement of people been so manifestly evident as it was in Serbia. Plans were being made during the conference for visits between pastors of churches in adjoining nations, something impossible a few years ago.

The final word came from the president of Serbian Baptists, Ondrej Franka, who suggested that in view of the outstanding fellowship and the rediscovering of old friends in countries recently in conflict, an annual follow-up meeting for Baptists in the Balkans should be considered. The idea received warm approval.
The geographical area known as the Arab Middle East was the cradle of Christianity. Yet, even the casual observer knows it is now one of the most spiritually needy places in the world, not for religion, but for the Gospel. Islam has been the official and dominant religion for the peoples of this region for 1,400 years; nevertheless, the Christian church has always maintained a presence in the region.

What is the condition of the church in the Arab Middle East? Long before Islam came on the scene, the church had lost its effectiveness. How can the Christian church regain its effectiveness and become a light unto the nations and peoples of this region?

The historical churches in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) not only struggle to fulfill their role as a Christian witness and a light in the darkness, they also have difficulty accepting and working with the evangelical churches that are newly established in the region. Evangelical work in MENA, founded by Western missionaries and mission agencies during the middle of the twentieth century, has been rejected by the historical churches.

In countries where Christians, both historical and evangelical, comprise approximately only five percent of the population, finding ways for all Christians to work together should be a concern for all those who follow Christ and are called by His name. If the historical and evangelical Christian communities will accept and work equally with one another, then the entire Christian community will benefit.

The Identity of the Arabs

There exists a misunderstanding concerning the identity of Arabs. Many people equate Arabs with Islam. Kenneth Cragg states, “There are aspects of being Arab that almost necessitate its equation with Islam . . . . Yet, Christian faith had a long history within Arabia in the six centuries before Islam emerged to dominate the ethnic and cultural determinants of Arab existence.”

The Near East was the cradle of Christianity. Luke recorded that on the day of Pentecost, the beginning of the New Testament Church, the disciples spoke various languages. One of those tongues was Arabic (Acts 2:11). This indicates that some people there understood Arabic. In turn, the reader can infer that Arabs were present at this event. Paul in Galatians records his sojourn into “Arabia” (Gal. 1:17).
European Baptist Federation-supported indigenous missionaries are starting new churches and the Indigenous Mission Project is seeing significant fruit in changed lives and transformed communities. New churches are being planted in some of the most difficult places. We hear most of the time about the ongoing war in Iraq. However there is also better news that comes to us from that disturbed and wounded country.

According to the current reports of Baptist leaders who know the local situation, the Iraqi people are now much more open to the Gospel than ever before. In spite of the war there have been thousands of Bibles distributed, numerous...
Every Friday, the day off from work in Iraq, various groups have meetings, including children and youth. In addition, there are theological classes by extension and discipleship training classes. A total of more than 500 individuals attend the various events at First Baptist Church of Baghdad every week.

It is still possible to freely provide the Iraqi people with spiritual materials which come from various Baptist publishers. The vital part of the ministry though, is due to an evangelistic team that, on a regular basis, visits non-Christian families in order to share the Gospel. Another “follow up” group takes care of the new converts.

Indigenous missionaries are planting several new churches in Iraq. One of them is in a part of Baghdad where there is no evangelical witness and the vast majority of the population is not Christian. Some other church plants are in the north of the country.

Church Planting in Iraq

The Baptist work began in Baghdad in 1985 through international mission partnerships and close cooperation with the Jordanian and Lebanese Baptists. Thanks to the joint efforts, one indigenous missionary began working in 1990 with some families in home groups. This was an underground church. Such gatherings were not allowed, so the group constantly changed meeting places and dates. Eventually, on January 16, 2004, First Baptist Church of Baghdad was dedicated and its pastor was ordained.

The mission work faces numerous obstacles. Six churches in Baghdad and one in the north were attacked on July 12, 2009. Many times the roads in the district are closed, which hinders people from attending worship services. Despite the difficulties, First Baptist Church of Baghdad is growing and new ministries are opened. In addition to preaching and teaching, the church also developed a social ministry to support underprivileged families with parcels of food.

During the last five years, the church has grown very fast. The average attendance on a Sunday is more than 200 worshippers despite the unsafe conditions and difficult circumstances.

Indigenous Missionaries’ Reports

One indigenous church planter working in the north wrote in his recent report:

Our Christian meetings are going well and occur on a regular basis. Each week we have three cell groups joining us from three neighboring villages. Then we have another two Bible studies during the week which take place in another village. In 2008 there was a profound Bible study, and now we have started another series about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a new believer.

Last spring we organized evangelistic meetings for four days.

Lately, First Baptist Church of Baghdad sent us a lot of Christian materials that have been distributed for the public and used as an outreach ministry. Several people joined our church and nine persons got baptized during the last six months.

Also our visitation ministry is continuing as it helps the members to comprehend their role in the church. We celebrate the Lord’s Supper once a month for all of the six Baptist home churches that are in our district. We are working now on the official papers to register the church.

Another indigenous church planter reported from Baghdad:

The migration to the West is not helping the church at all. We are still about the same number because the
church is adding new people who are confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but a lot of current members are leaving the country.

Our church is being accused by traditional churches of attracting their youth and children. In the midst of all this, we find the Lord’s hand at work. We had 12 persons baptized on May 29, 2009, and we are looking to arrange another baptism in the Tigris River very soon.

The leaders are trained in theology by extension – a total of 37 students, and are involved in different kinds of biblical Christian leadership training. They attended six training courses in and out of Iraq. The goal is to prepare qualified leaders. Our church is also training other evangelical churches.

In addition, our church in Baghdad keeps helping and equipping the house churches in the north. This year we were able to provide many of their needs by supplying them with Bibles, Christian literature, as well as helping them with evangelistic meetings.

The insecure situation in Baghdad forced a lot of families to leave temporarily towards the north of Iraq. Therefore we have had to alter our structure and organize more services and train more leaders.

Church planters have discovered that prayer has great power. The chain of international prayer can encourage and support the indigenous church planters who work in Iraq.

Daniel Trusiewicz is the Mission Coordinator for the European Baptist Federation

The chain of international prayer can encourage and support the indigenous church planters who work in Iraq.
Baptists worldwide have made significant contributions in areas such as relief and development, mission and evangelism and human rights, but they have far to go in the area of unity, a Baptist World Alliance leader told a group at Dallas Baptist University (DBU).

Neville Callam, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), spoke October 19, 2009, at an academic convocation and a luncheon on the DBU campus. During the convocation, DBU awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Characterizing the BWA as “a global movement” rather than an organization, Callam outlined five priorities and offered a progress report on each.

**Promoting Responsible Theological Education**

The BWA has provided Baptists worldwide a venue for examining their own distinctive principles and for engaging in dialogue with other faith groups, he noted.

During ongoing dialogue with Roman Catholics has “entered into a more mature stage,” Callam reported, as Baptists and Catholics have been able to recognize areas of agreement, discuss matters about which they disagree and examine areas of common concern.

Baptists also have entered into interfaith dialogue, particularly with Muslims, he noted.

“We enter into dialogue sharing our convictions about the uniqueness of Christ but doing it in such a respectful way that we can be heard,” Callam said.

**Providing Relief and Development in Response to Human Needs**

From providing emergency aid to typhoon victims in Asia and the South Pacific, to ministering among displaced people in Sri Lanka and Africa, to supporting ongoing economic development programs throughout the developing world, Baptists are working together through the BWA to “be the face of Christ to those who are suffering, and to stand in solidarity with those who are in the midst of suffering,” Callam said.

**Protecting Human Rights and Religious Liberty**

Callam described conversations with former prisoners of conscience who described their periods of imprisonment as opportunities God gave them to minister to fellow prisoners and to “bear their cross in this world.”

He described visits to places where government officials prohibit public Christian worship, but Christians gather in homes around dinner tables for discrete observance of the Lord’s Supper.

The BWA exercises “quiet diplomacy” to work with governments to ensure the free exercise of religion and the protection of basic human rights, he noted.

**Promoting Mission and Evangelism**

The BWA does not send missionaries, but it works with member bodies and mission-sending agencies to “nurture a passion for mission and evangelism,” Callam said.

The BWA-sponsored Living Water evangelism training focuses on stimulating Christians to find effective means of sharing their faith in their own culture and context, he said.

**Enhancing Worship, Fellowship and Unity**

While participants in BWA-sponsored events such as the Baptist World Congress enjoy their worship times together, hearing music and messages from around the world, Baptists as a whole have “a long way to go” when it comes to experiencing unity, Callam said.

“There is too much capacity for splintering within the Baptist family,” he said.

Baptists need to learn how to disagree on nonessentials graciously and to “celebrate the treasure God has given us” in diversity, he added.

In an interview following his public address, Callam elaborated on that theme as he described major challenges and opportunities facing the BWA.

“We are one family, but we do things differently. We need to recognize we can learn from each other” as equals, he said.

The BWA must be intentional about engaging the emerging generation of Baptist leaders and to keep in mind its proper role as a “servant movement,” rather than an institutionalized structure, Callam stressed.

“We must get out of the institutional mode of thinking. That’s not going to work,” he said. “We need to clarify our position as a movement that is in service to the church.”

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**Baptists & Human Rights**

The Baptist World Alliance position on human rights has three major emphases – war, racism and religious freedom.

“The BWA has maintained constant vigilance in the area of human rights,” General Secretary Neville Callam said. “The BWA has repeatedly affirmed its opposition to war” and constantly “opposed racial discrimination and its parent, racism.” Callam also declared that “the very identity of the Baptist movement is inextricably bound up with the issue of religious freedom.”

Speaking during the annual Pruitt Memorial Symposium at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, in the United States, on Friday, October 2, 2009, Callam informed the audience of mainly university faculty and students that “the BWA understanding of human rights fits well into, and is continuous with, the general human rights theory advanced within the wider ecclesial community.”

Offering a sweeping overview of the BWA’s long tradition on human rights issues, Callam drew upon the many addresses, statements, manifestos, and resolutions of Baptist World Congresses and BWA General Council meetings over the past 104 years.

The international Baptist leader declared that, throughout its history, the worldwide Baptist organization has paid keen attention to social, economic and political rights, especially to children’s and women’s rights. Callam declared that the BWA has affirmed the right of disabled persons “to participate in community,” the right of the sick to receive “care and dignity,” the “rejection of torture and inhumane conditions in prisons and institutions for the mentally disturbed,” as well as “the right [of persons] to maintain cultural identity.”

**Baptist Unity: Requirement of the Gospel**

The Gospel requires that Baptist churches associate with each other.

This assertion was made by Neville Callam, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, in an address to the Ministerial Convocation during the 133rd Annual Meeting of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention (DCBC), in the United States, on October 26, 2009.

Callam said that associating is a principle grounded in the nature of God “who exists as triune being – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Such association, which is expressed in a covenant relationship, is essential to the very being, life and mission of the church. Christian communities that isolate themselves from each other should not “expect to enjoy healthy existence in Christ,” Callam stated.

Unity “is both a gift and a task,” said the BWA leader. It is a gift that is shared by all who have been incorporated into the church, and it is a task that must be lived out, “a demand that must be visibly realized.” Callam emphasized that Christians “are called to live as one people united in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, serving the one God and Father of all.”

Believers should not fail to associate with other believers and congregations should consider it an obligation to associate with other churches.

In reference to the autonomy of the local church common among Baptists, Callam warned that “autonomy and isolation are not one and the same thing. Autonomy and separation from the stream of the shared life in Christ are not identical.” Rather, he said, “autonomy confers on each congregation a larger responsibility and answerability for the way in which it conducts its relations under God.”

In affirming the fact and principle of autonomy, Callam said that “the autonomy of the local church is nothing less than the competency of the church, acting under the lordship of Christ and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to discover the mind of Christ.” The local church, he said, “knows it is only one expression of the church.”

Callam also gave the keynote address at the opening worship service of the Annual Meeting, held at Forte Foote Baptist Church in Fort Washington, Maryland, from October 26-27, 2009.

The DCBC, with offices in Washington, DC, represents churches in the capital of the United States and in areas of close proximity in the states of Maryland and Virginia.
In Memoriam

Ondina Maristany, a former Cuban missionary and seminary professor, died in September 2009 in Santiago, in eastern Cuba. She was 86 years old.

Maristany, described in her obituary as “a woman who was completely dedicated to the cause of Jesus Christ in Cuba all of her life,” served both the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba and the Baptist Convention of Eastern Cuba (BCEC). Due to her efforts, she helped to grow and expand the William Carey Mission into the William Carey Baptist Church in the Vedado neighborhood of Havana, taught at the seminary in Havana and did other work with the western convention.

She later moved to the east of the island where she spent more than 40 years working with the BCEC as professor at the Baptist seminary in Santiago, as president of the Women’s Missionary Union and as director of Christian Education. She represented the BCEC at several international events on the continents of Asia and Europe, in the Latin American region, and in the country of the United States.

Maristany and her late husband Rigoberto Cervantes, whom she met and married while working in Santiago, served several churches as pastor and missionary, including Los Hoyos de Sabanilla in Baracoa; a Baptist church in the city of Holguín; First Baptist Church of Las Tunas; and a Baptist church in Baire.

Maristany had several opportunities to leave or stay away from Cuba, but refused to do so. After completing her studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in the United States, she had the option of joining her parents who had migrated to Miami, Florida, but she returned to Havana instead.

After travel restrictions were imposed, she would not see her family in the United States for approximately 20 years.

Her husband, like other pastors, was imprisoned by the Cuban military for several years. “Ondina’s firmness helped her assume the role of pastor and mother of two small children without the presence of her husband and the distance from her parents,” reads her obituary. After his release, the family had the opportunity to leave Cuba, but decided to stay.

Following her retirement in 1999, Maristany devoted her time to teaching a laymen’s course at First Baptist Church of Santiago, assisting in services at Fourth Baptist Church of Santiago, and she founded a nursing home for senior citizens, which was still under construction at the time of her death.

“Ondina will always be remembered in the history of the Eastern Cuba Baptist Convention,” the obituary reads. “She looked out for the spiritual as well as the social needs of people.”

She studied law at Havana University, did special courses on juvenile delinquency in Los Angeles, California, in the United States, and theological studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

She leaves daughter, Onilda, son, Carlos, and four grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at First Baptist Church of Santiago.


Prior to joining ABC USA, Tuller served as assistant pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, DC, from 1939-1944; director of Christian Education and assistant executive secretary of the Connecticut Baptist Convention from 1944-1950; executive secretary of the Connecticut State Council of Churches from 1950-1955; and executive secretary of the Massachusetts Baptist Convention beginning in 1955 until 1957. He took up the position of associate general secretary of ABC USA in 1957, in which capacity he directed the convention’s fundraising program, before being named general secretary in 1959.

Tuller was instrumental in helping to broaden and diversify the membership of ABC USA by welcoming the American Baptist Black Caucus in 1968. He was also a strong supporter of the Civil Rights Movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr., participating in the “I Have a Dream” march on Washington, DC, in 1963 and in other Civil Rights demonstrations.

Tuller presided over the completion of the American Baptist Mission Center headquarters in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, in 1962.

He attended Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York. He also did post graduate studies at La Faculte Libre de Theologie Protestante in Paris, France, between 1938 and 1939.

He is a former member of the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance and the BWA Commission on Religious Liberty and Human Rights, and played significant roles in past Baptist world congresses.

After leaving the position of general secretary of ABC USA, Tuller and his wife, Rose, were appointed special service workers by the board of International Ministries, the international mission arm of ABC USA. He served as pastor of the American Church in Paris, France, until his retirement from active ministry.

A memorial service was held at First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh on August 29, 2009.

Vasili Logvinenko, former president of the All Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists based in Moscow, Russia, died on November 17, 2009. He was 83 years old.

Logvinenko, the first pastor of Central Baptist Church in Moscow, retired in 1992 after the breakup of the Soviet Union, and returned to his native Odessa in newly-independent Ukraine. Ukraine, like other republics, gained its independence after the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

After his return to Odessa, Logvinenko founded Grace Baptist Church; formed Grace Ministries, which owns a working farm and orchard; founded Grace Baptist Black Sea Camp; and established Grace Children’s Shelter, a shelter for street children.

A former member of the General Council of the Baptist World Alliance as well as the BWA World Evangelization Strategy Work Group, Logvinenko led Baptists in his country at a time when the government was hostile to the Christian church and persecution was common.

Funeral services were held on November 20 and memorial services on November 22.
FROM THE PRESIDENT
David Coffey

Finding Spain on the Map

A well known joke emanating from Spain concerns the geographical knowledge of the average world citizen. It is said that if you ask a range of people to identify Spain on a map, their finger will point invariably to Mexico! I doubt the veracity of this tale and intend to do my own market research, but remember – it is a joke.

We can be certain the apostle Paul knew the exact location of Spain because he shared with the believers in Rome his missionary vision to travel to the Western end of the Mediterranean, hoping to gain their support for a Spanish mission (Romans 15:23-29). Tradition ascribes the burial of the apostle James in the city of Santiago de Compostela and we know that Cyprian wrote to the church in Spain in 254.

Six hundred years ago when the Spanish and Portuguese explorers were at the height of their powers, Pope Alexander VI put his finger on the Iberian peninsula in 1493 and vertically divided the world between the two great maritime powers. The Portuguese extended their empire and religious influence mainly to West and East Africa and the Indian subcontinent, whilst Spain acquired the great territories of Latin America. Later the Portuguese successfully appealed against the rigid geographical boundaries and established their transatlantic colony of Brazil.

During these centuries, Christian mission in Latin America was backed by military force. I recall visiting Cajamarca in Peru and hearing from my friend Samuel Escobar the story of how Christianity was first presented to the Incas. In November 1532 the Spanish conquistadors led by Francisco Pizarro encountered the Inca Emperor Atahualpa in the town square of Cajamarca. The Spanish Friar offered the Inca chief a copy of the four gospels and said it was God’s word. The Inca chief put the gospels to his ear and said he could not hear God’s voice and threw the gospels on the ground. The Spanish saw this action as an insult to Christianity and their troops immediately opened fire. Seven thousand Indians were killed, the Inca Emperor was captured and by such atrocious exploits the course of Latin American history was changed forever.

We should weep for such violent “evangelism” (which misinterpreted tragically the words of Jesus to “compel them to come in”); but we can rejoice that in the succeeding centuries mission by bullets was replaced by mission by love, and now vibrant communities of Christian faith are present in all parts of Latin America.

In 2010 the fingers are again tracing the world map and pointing accurately to Spain. In the past 10 years there has been a massive migration movement from Latin America to Spain. In overall numbers, 300,000 Argentines have come to Spain since 2001; it is estimated that 244,000 Columbians are living in Spain; the largest group of migrants are from Ecuador with a conservative figure of 700,000. Whilst the global financial recession will revise these figures, the number of Latin Americans is a growing presence in the country. Many Baptists are among this migrant movement and they are enriching the life of Spanish Baptists with their spiritual vitality.

When I visited Spain recently, I was impressed at the multicultural diversity of many of their congregations. I attended the annual meetings of the Union of Evangelical Baptists in Spain (UEBE) in Gandia and then shared with the Baptist Association of Madrid.

It was good to renew fellowship with my friends Manuel Sarrias, the general secretary of UEBE for the past 20 years, and Jorge Pastor who is a former president of UEBE and a current vice president of the BWA. I was also the guest of Fernando Mendez, the president of the Madrid Baptist Association and professor of New Testament at the Madrid Seminary, who I first met when he was a doctoral student at Durham University. These leaders introduced me to Baptists from Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Columbia, Paraguay, Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Argentina. This rich diversity of people groups is contributing a unique Latino spiritual energy to the life of UEBE.

Spanish Baptists are marking 2010 as a year of focused evangelism when they are seeking to share the Gospel with this rapidly growing population. They have challenged their church members with a harvest theme and are praying for a new wave of mission fruitfulness.

So I suggest you find Spain on the map and join Spanish-speaking Baptists in praying for a mighty spiritual harvest.

As they say in Spain – “Preparados para la Cosecha.”
Hear the Spirit
at the
20th Baptist World Congress

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