Perspectives on Baptism

Brothers in a Rescue Mission  .  see page 21
The final session in the second round of theological conversations between the Baptist World Alliance and the Roman Catholic Church took place December 12-18 in Oxford, England.


The objectives of these international conversations were to increase mutual understanding, appreciation, and Christian charity toward each other; foster a shared life of discipleship within the communion of the triune God; develop and extend a common witness to Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world and the Lord of all life; and to encourage further action together on ethical issues, including justice, peace and the sanctity of life, in accord with God’s purpose and to the praise of God’s glory.

An overall aim was to explore the common ground in biblical teaching, apostolic faith and practical Christian living between Baptists and Catholics, as well as to examine areas that still divide the two Christian traditions.

The first round of talks between the BWA and the Vatican occurred between 1984 and 1988 and was followed by the publication of Summons to Witness to Christ in Today’s World in 1990.

Paul Fiddes, professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Oxford, and former chair of the BWA Commission on Doctrine and Interchurch Cooperation, led the BWA team. The Catholic team was led by Arthur Serratelli, Bishop of Paterson, New Jersey, in the United States.

Members of the BWA and Roman Catholic teams who attended the fifth and final session of the Baptist-Roman Catholic talks at Oxford University in England. The first session was held in 2006.
**Baptism: A Brief History**

James Smith provides a concise overview of Christian baptism as practiced by many traditions, from the New Testament to the current time.

**BWA General Secretary Visits Countries in Europe & Africa**

In recent multi-nation visits, Neville Callum fostered unity and fellowship as he represented and affirmed the work of the Baptist World Alliance.

**BWA Delegation Visits Thai/Myanmar Border**

Alan Marr, chair of the BWA Freedom and Justice Commission on Peace, and Raimundo Barreto, BWA Director of Freedom and Justice, explored human rights issues among the Karen Baptists of Myanmar, including those in refugee settlements in Thailand.

**BWA Director Attends UN Conference**

“Advance Global Health: Achieve the Millennium Development Goals” provided a forum for Director of Freedom and Justice, Raimundo Barreto, to network with NGOs and CSOs from around the world.

**Brothers in a Rescue Mission**

Baptist laymen Igor Bravo describes his role in helping to rescue the 33 trapped miners in Chile while pastor Marcelo Leiva reports on a spiritual ministry in the midst of fear.

**2010 Baptist Women’s World Day of Prayer**

Reports from the 2010 Baptist Women’s Day of Prayer celebrations, held around the world in November, provide blessing and inspiration.

**Baptists Praise the Lausanne Congress**

Wendy Ryan reports on Baptist delegates at the Lausanne Congress held in South Africa. Participants, from countries around the world and across the range of Christian churches and denominations, reaffirmed that evangelism is an essential focus of the church.

**In Memoriam**

**Book Notes**

Mark Wilson, *William Owen Carver’s Controversies in the Baptist South*; and Kate Coleman, *Seven Deadly Sins of Women in Leadership*. Also, a selection of new books provided to the BWA.

**COVER PHOTO**

A baptism in Thailand

Unless otherwise noted, photos in the issue are by BWA staff.
The Subject of Baptism

In a 676-page book fully worth every minute required to read it, the Baptist General Conference and Bethel College and Seminary have told their exciting story, *Decades of Growth and Change, 1952-2002*, which is edited by James & Carole Spickelmeir, was published in 2010 by the History Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA. In one of the chapters he contributes to the text, James Spickelmeir surveys the trends in faith and life during the life of the Baptist General Conference. The author identifies the emergence within the churches of a growing emphasis on experiential and pragmatic faith. He suggests that this, together with a drift toward a post-denominationalism, is leading to less emphasis being placed on the separation of church and state, less involvement in congregational government, and a de-emphasis on baptism and church membership.

Spickelmeir rightly celebrates the growth in the number and membership of the churches and the great concern displayed for a personal relationship with Christ. He admits, however, that the shift from the modern to the postmodern age is producing many Christians who are less and less informed biblically and theologically – an emerging feature of some Baptist churches especially in the Western world. How can churches that hold the Bible in such high esteem appear so indifferent on some doctrinal matters?

Based precisely on their understanding of the normative nature of the biblical witness, Baptists have developed an ecclesiology – an understanding of church – that places emphasis on the baptism of people who can speak for themselves in matters of faith. Over the years, this emphasis has been discussed in the dialogues between the Baptist World Alliance and other Christian World Communions. In frank, honest and respectful dialogue, the different emphases in the churches’ understanding and practice of baptism have been probed.

In two of the more recent conversations, salutary attempts have been made to register some progress toward a common understanding of baptism, which the Baptist/Anglican dialogue describes as presenting “something of an impasse.” The search for common perspectives on baptism was pursued by probing, for example, the question of the relation of grace and faith in baptism and the location of baptism in the pilgrim’s journey with Christ. Perhaps a similar approach will be reflected in the ongoing Baptist/Roman Catholic conversations, a report on which is expected in 2011.

Although it cannot be said that in the discussions involving Baptists and Anglicans, and Baptists and Roman Catholics, consensus has been achieved on the subject of baptism, progress toward a common understanding has been registered. Such progress has exceeded what was achieved in, for example, the dialogue between representatives of the Federation of Evangelical Baptist Churches and Roman Catholics in France. The report is published in *Du Baptême L’Église, Accords et divergences actuels*, Comité Mixte Baptiste-Catholique en France, Les Éditions du Cerf, 2007, pp. 11-29. Meanwhile, the report on the recently concluded six-year dialogue between a Bavarian Lutheran-Baptist Working Group in Germany reflects an appreciation for what is potentially helpful in the wider discussion among churches on the subject of baptism. (See *Learning from one another – believing together, Convergence Document of the Bavarian-Lutheran-Baptist Working Group*, 2009). By locating baptism in the overall process of Christian initiation, the dialogue partners have found a way to go forward in greater harmony.

One main source for the increasing mutual understanding of baptism has been the discussion that has taken place within the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. This discussion gathered momentum when fresh reflections on the role of worship in the search for unity emerged at the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order, held in Santiago de Compostela in Spain in 1993. A new stage in the discussion on baptism took shape from around 1998. It focused on the search for an understanding of baptism as it is manifested both in the faith and in the life of the churches. The aim has been to help the churches discover whether, notwithstanding their different baptismal theologies and traditions, they are able to discern in one another’s baptism the one baptism into Christ.

During these discussions, Faith and Order has provided excellent materials for analysis and reflection. See, for example, the publication, *Baptism Today: Understanding, Practice, Ecumenical Implications*, Thomas Best, ed., WCC Publications, 2008. The renewed discussion on baptism is attempting to register a convergence that goes beyond what is detected in *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, the so-called Lima text of 1982.

Soon, we expect to see the publication of a study document on *One Baptism*, presenting the latest results of the multi-lateral discussions on the subject. In anticipation of what will be a significant document worthy of study by all disciples of Jesus Christ, this issue of *Baptist World* offers various perspectives on the subject of baptism and on the anticipated publication of the *One Baptism* text. Our aim is to whet the appetite of our Baptist family for meaningful engagement with the substance of the upcoming publication.

Meanwhile, we continue to celebrate the outstanding achievement reflected in Everett Ferguson’s *magnum opus* on baptism - *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*, Eerdmans, 2009. We also anticipate the remaining two parts of the three-volume series being coordinated by a Nordic Committee of scholars led by Baptist theologian, David Hellholm, dealing with Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity and published in English and German. This is a very significant project involving more than 50 international scholars producing a comprehensive guide that should prove a rich resource for the churches’ ongoing discussion on baptism.

Whatever the forces that are inclining many Baptist Christians toward a practice of the faith that is somewhat indifferent to the foundations of our religious self-understanding, shall we not insist that faithfulness to the Gospel does not allow us to ignore biblical teaching? And must we not persist in the search for mutual understanding around a subject so fundamental to the churches as baptism?
The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) congratulated the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) on the signing of a peace accord between three nationalist groups in the Northeast Indian state of Nagaland on September 18.

For decades, the three groups, the NNC/FGN, the GPRN/NSCN, and the NSCN/GPRN, have been in conflict with each other and with the Indian government over issues of autonomy and sovereignty for Nagaland state and the Naga people. Between 1992 and 2009, more than 2,330 insurgency related fatalities have been recorded in Nagaland. As a result of the longstanding disputes, which date back more than 50 years, exceptionally tight security has been imposed on the state by the Indian government, with multiple checkpoints scattered throughout the state. International visitors require special permits to enter and move around Nagaland.

The FNR comprises several organizations, including Baptist groups, all of which pledged to work to end the conflicts. Wati Aier, principal of the Oriental Theological Seminary in Dimapur and a past vice president of the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation, one of six regional fellowships of the BWA, was elected interim convener.

“We are greatly encouraged by the recent news coming out of the September Summit in Dimapur,” read a letter sent to the FNR by BWA General Secretary Neville Callam and Director of Freedom and Justice Raimundo Barreto. “We appreciate the symbolism of this covenant, and the impact it might have among the Naga people. We also understand that any process of reconciliation and healing needs to be nurtured every day. We urge those who signed the covenant to remain committed to this reconciliation as it will make a lasting impact in the lives of their people.”

A release from the FNR claimed that the leaders pledged to “end all violence and bloodshed amongst the Nagas.” The meetings and the resulting covenant, the release said, were in response to “the deep yearning of the Naga people” and that September 18 “will go down as another ‘historic landmark’ in the struggle for Naga rights.”

The BWA and Baptists have helped to broker several peace meetings in the past, including a meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in June 2008, all of which ended in failure or with breaches of signed agreements.

The Covenant of Reconciliation was signed in the city of Dimapur, the main commercial hub of Nagaland.

“We express our heartfelt gratitude to the Naga people for their patience, understanding and support to Naga Reconciliation,” the release stated. “We encourage the Naga people to fearlessly speak and work for reconciliation in the spirit of forgiveness. Along with the Naga people we are deeply thankful to the Baptist World Alliance, Quakers and American Baptist Churches USA for their prayers and for walking with the Nagas in our Journey towards Reconciliation.”

There are about 600,000 Baptists in Nagaland, representing approximately 90 percent of ethnic Nagas in the state.
Baptist World Aid (BWAid), the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), sent emergency funds of more than US$52,000 into Haiti to help counter the recent cholera outbreak. The funds were sent to Baptist Haiti Mission (BHM) and the Baptist Convention of Haiti (BCH), two BWA member bodies in the north Caribbean country. The funds are being used by Baptist churches “to transport patients, pay medical help and supplies, and getting clean water to those in need,” said Edrice Romelus of BHM.

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Above and Right: Children at the school of the Hand of Hope Orphanage at Gressier in Haiti. Baptist World Aid helped fund the rebuilding of the school after the January 12, 2010 earthquake

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A BCH project proposal indicated that relief efforts will focus on “education, information, water treatment, latrines to poor families, and drinking water to vulnerable communities surrounding some of our local churches.”

The convention, Dorsinville told the BWA, is engaged in providing information and educating the public on how to prevent the disease from spreading. He stated that proper water treatment is a necessity.

As of early December, more than 2,000 people had died and thousands more were hospitalized from the outbreak that began in October in the north of the country before spreading. Contamination is believed to have emanated from the Artibonite River, the longest river in Haiti. Some reports concluded that the epidemic began with an imported strain of the disease that could be traced back to leaking from a United Nations Nepalese peacekeeping base that infected the river system.

Cholera can be a deadly disease if left untreated. Symptoms include severe diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. Transmission is primarily through contaminated drinking water or food.

Haiti is yet to recover from a devastating earthquake that occurred on January 12, 2010, that killed tens of thousands of persons, injured several hundred thousand, and displaced more than one million, many of whom are still living in “tent cities” in and around Port-au-Prince, much of which was destroyed by the temblor. Since the quake, the BWA has spent several hundred thousand dollars in relief and rebuilding efforts in Haiti.

Baptists and other Christians in Baghdad say they are living in fear following an attack on a Roman Catholic Church in the Iraqi capital that left more than 50 Christians dead.

The massacre occurred on October 31 when al-Qaida-aligned gunmen attacked worshipers from Our Lady of Salvation Chaldean Catholic Church in central Baghdad leaving at least 58 dead, the majority of them worshippers, including two priests, and another 75 wounded.

The pastor of the Baptist Church in Baghdad informed Tony Peck, Baptist World Alliance (BWA) regional secretary for Europe and general secretary for the European Baptist Federation (EBF), that the “Christian community is now very fearful for its safety” and that “some of the Baptist believers are talking about moving away from Baghdad to North Iraq, others to Jordan and Syria.”

Baptist churches in the Middle East are affiliated with the EBF, one of six regional fellowships of the BWA.

Peck fears that “this very understandable response would leave the Christian church in Iraq even weaker than before.” It has been estimated that since the invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies in 2003, approximately half the Christian population have fled the Middle Eastern country, leaving an estimated 550,000 believers. Many of those who remain are increasingly harassed and often experience violence.

News reports suggest that part of the motivation for the attack was the plan by a pastor in Florida in the United States to burn the Quran, Islam’s holy book, in September. The pastor abandoned his plans, under pressure. “It shows again how Christians in the West must be wise and considerate in the way they engage critically with Islam,” Peck declared.

In the wake of the attack, Baptists in Baghdad are considering changing the day of worship from Sunday to Friday, the traditional day of worship for Muslims, and a practice already adopted by Christians in several Muslim-majority countries.

“We deeply regret the unjustifiable murder of Roman Catholic Christians during worship last Sunday in Baghdad,” said BWA Director of Freedom and Justice, Raimundo Barreto.

“We affirm our profound solidarity with the Christian community in Iraq as they mourn those who lost their lives. We assure our brothers and sisters in Iraq of the prayerful support from the larger Christian family around the world,” Barreto stated. “As followers of Jesus Christ we advocate for true and lasting peace in that region. We call on Christians all over the world to work diligently to prevent any escalation of violence, by not repaying evil with evil, but by overcoming evil with good” (Romans 12:17, 21).

Peck asked the Baptist pastor in Baghdad to assure believers in the city of the prayers of the worldwide Baptist family.
The 6th Trans-World Chinese Baptist Mission (TWCBM) Conference was held in the Chientan Youth Activity Center, Taipei, Taiwan, from September 7-10, 2010. The bilingual (Mandarin and English) conference was attended by nearly 500 pastors and church leaders from 21 countries, including the United States, Canada, various countries in Asia Pacific, and even Portugal, Sudan, and Brazil.

Chow Lien Hwa, president of the Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary and chairman of the Board of Trustees of Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary, expounded on the theme of the conference, “Great Century, Great Commission, Great Action,” when he delivered the message, “Here and Now,” during the opening night. Afeef Halasah, executive director of Arabs for the Arabs (AFTA), preached on the theme message on the next two nights and Isaac Yim, chairman of the Malaysia Baptist Convention, preached on the last part of the series on the last day of the conference.

Aside from theme messages, there were two special messages on the topics of “Challenges Faced by the Churches in this Generation” and “The Gain and Loss of Mission in the Chinese Churches,” delivered by Peter Chung, senior pastor of Mandarin Baptist Church of Los Angeles, and Lin Tat Kit, executive director of Hong Kong Baptist Church, respectively. Testimonies and PowerPoint presentations on mission and church planting experiences in Japan, Mongolia, Paraguay, Lebanon, Iraq, Central Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and other places were also shared throughout the conference.

“Adoption and Prayer” was the focus of the morning session on September 9, while workshops were conducted in the afternoon of September 8 and 9.

The topics in the Field Exploring Workshops included “North West China: Mission and Education;” “Mission Model for Medium Size Churches;” “Mission Challenges in Buddhist Countries;” “Ministry for the Aboriginals in Taiwan;” “Back to Jerusalem Movement;” and “Recruiting, Training and Sending of Missionaries.” The topics in the Target Group Mission Workshops included “Theological Education and Mission;” “Children’s Ministry and Mission;” “Ministry and Mission for Senior Citizens;” “Social Ministry and Mission;” “Bivocational Ministry and Tentmakers in Missions;” and “Mission Partners in the Arab World.” The consistent challenge and overarching call to all the Chinese Baptists around the world is that they should be united together to fulfill the Great Commission in this great century through great action in mission.

TWCBM was established in 1995 “to unite Chinese Baptist conventions, Baptist churches and mission organizations from various parts of the world in order to further enhance the task of mission.” The triennial mission conference is one of the main projects of TWCBM with “the aim of mobilizing all the Chinese Baptist churches worldwide for the combined effort of continuing the mission.”

The mission conference this year was organized by the TWCBM Executive Committee headed by Deacon Tan Kok Hui of Thailand as chairman. It was co-organized by the Chinese Baptist Fellowship of the United States and Canada, the Hong Kong Baptist Convention, the Macau Baptist Convention, the Malaysia Baptist Convention, the Singapore Baptist Convention, the Thailand 12th District of the Church of Christ, in addition to the Chinese Baptist Convention (Taiwan) for local arrangements.

By Rachael Tan

Rachael Tan is assistant professor of Biblical Studies at the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary and associate dean of the Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary

NOTES
2 Ibid.
In December 2008, veteran Methodist ecumenist Geoffrey Wainwright shared his perspectives on the progress and challenges of the modern ecumenical movement with the delegations to the conversations between the BWA and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Members of both delegations were taken aback by his opening observation: “As far as the issue of baptism goes, the Baptists have won.”

Professor Wainwright was referring to the current ecumenical consensus that believer’s baptism by immersion is the normative biblical practice from which the practice of infant baptism derives its significance. The widely acclaimed convergence text *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* issued by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1982 states, “Baptism upon personal profession of faith is the most clearly attested pattern in the New Testament documents.” Many Baptists would be surprised to learn that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* now regards immersion as the mode of baptism most theologically expressive of the significance of baptism.

The WCC study text *One Baptism* . . . asks infant-baptizing churches to consider how their communities might help those baptized as infants become committed disciples. The document fails, however, to address a variation of the latter scenario with which many Baptist congregations must deal: members of Baptist churches who were baptized as believers but now testify to personal faith in Christ to be rebaptized, inasmuch as personal faith precedes baptism in the New Testament pattern. By shifting the emphasis from chronological orderings of faith, baptism, and formation in faith to the whole journey of the Christian experience in the company of the church, *One Baptism* offers a way for Baptists to discern in other patterns of baptismal practice comparable journeys of Christian experience, even while Baptists continue our internal practice of baptizing only believers as a witness and gift to the rest of the church.

On the question of rebaptism, *One Baptism* calls churches that require those previously baptized as infants to be rebaptized as a condition of membership, and churches that require the same of those previously baptized as believing adults but in a church of differing faith and order, to reflect on the implications of those requirements. The document fails, however, to address a variation of the latter scenario with which many Baptist congregations must deal: members of Baptist churches who were baptized as believers, but at rather young ages, who later in life question whether they really understood the commitment they were making and now wish to be baptized following their more mature embrace of faith. Baptists may nonetheless find help...
We have a new pastor at our church, and I have noticed that when he baptizes candidates he gently lowers them backwards into the water before very quickly bringing them forward out of the water. Although he doesn’t do it so abruptly to hurt anyone, he does make quite a baptismal stir. The candidate emerges from the water like they have actually been resurrected with Christ! Witnessing this, I am often reminded of the careful solemn work of placing Jesus in the tomb and the victorious earth shattering resurrection from the grave. Indeed baptism isn’t just about the candidate; it’s more like a sermon, bearing witness to Christ’s saving work in the life of the believer – a saving work that the believer confesses, by a faith-act of obedience, as central to her identity.

Everett Ferguson’s work on *Baptism in the Early Church* is his crowning achievement as professor emeritus of Bible

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*Sudan*  

*Sudan*  

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One Baptism is a study text rather than a proposal for ecumenical convergence. The appropriate Baptist response to it is to study it! Some Baptist churches are struggling with debates over whether church membership policies should be revised so that candidates who were baptized as infants in other churches but now profess personal faith in Christ may be admitted to full membership without rebaptism. Careful study of *One Baptism* will help everyone involved in such deliberations think through the implications of their decisions about this matter for their stances on the legitimacy of non-Baptist churches and their members’ faith. Whether all Baptists find agreement with it or not, the study of *One Baptism* by Baptist ministers, laypersons, and whole congregations will yield a greatly enriched Baptist theology of baptism and potentially a more powerful baptismal practice.

*Steven R. Harmon is Adjunct Professor of Christian Theology at Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity in Boiling Springs, North Carolina.*

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A RESPONSE TO

Everett Ferguson’s

*Baptism in the Early Church*

By Sheila Klopfer


We have a new pastor at our church, and I have noticed that when he baptizes candidates he gently lowers them backwards into the water before very quickly bringing them forward out of the water. Although he doesn’t do it so abruptly to hurt anyone, he does make quite a baptismal stir. The candidate emerges from the water like they have actually been resurrected with Christ! Witnessing this, I am often reminded of the careful solemn work of placing Jesus in the tomb and the victorious earth shattering resurrection from the grave. Indeed baptism isn’t just about the candidate; it’s more like a sermon, bearing witness to Christ’s saving work in the life of the believer – a saving work that the believer confesses, by a faith-act of obedience, as central to her identity.

Everett Ferguson’s work on *Baptism in the Early Church* is his crowning achievement as professor emeritus of Bible
and distinguished scholar-in-residence at Abilene Christian University. This 953-page volume is a comprehensive study that is arranged chronologically and geographically. Six helpful indexes at the end complete it as a significant encyclopedic reference for studying baptism. The wonder of his work is that Ferguson leaves few stones unturned – from pre-Christian and Christian writings to catacomb frescos, gravestone inscriptions, baptistery mosaics, and baptismal fonts. As a whole, I found the materials on art and archaeology, which include a dozen pages of black and white photographs, the most fascinating sections in the book. Ferguson concludes that, with some exceptions, early Christians practiced baptism by immersion. Interestingly, the candidates were not laid backwards into the water. Rather, they often kneeled in the water and their upper bodies were bent forward, dipping their heads under the water.

In combing through the historical roots of baptism, Ferguson argues that although Jewish religious washings served as a background to John the Baptist’s work, he was doing something new. Christian baptism originated with John’s work and the dominical command of Matthew 28:19. Paul significantly furthered the theological development of connecting baptism by immersion with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Ferguson’s exegesis of the New Testament material leads him to conclude that full immersion of adults was the typical practice during the Apostolic era. There is no firm evidence for infant baptism before the latter part of the second century. He conjectures that infant baptism likely originated from emergency baptisms of sick children. Later, with the adoption of Augustine’s doctrine of original sin, it became the norm in the Western Church.

The New Testament material leads him to conclude that full immersion of adults was the typical practice during the Apostolic era.

Ferguson is most helpful in his defense of the baptism of adults by immersion, but he often makes hasty leaps from his exegesis to arrive at a desired theological position, particularly the necessity of baptism for salvation. In his final conclusion he states that the early Christians were “virtually unanimous in ascribing a saving significance to baptism” (p. 854). Largely from his exegesis of Acts, Ferguson concludes that only in baptism is the believer gifted with the Holy Spirit (p. 183). He makes this conclusion even though the author of Acts recognizes the Spirit working before, in, and after baptism. Relatedly, Ferguson asserts that baptism mediates divine forgiveness, “accomplishing” forgiveness of sins (pp. 93, 160). While I agree that the water-rite is associated with cleansing of sins, I would contend that forgiveness is “accomplished” in Christ’s work (Mk 2:7; Col 1:13-14). Just as we pray for forgiveness in the Lord’s Prayer, the baptizand repents, confesses Christ, and looks forward in hope to the forgiveness that is “accomplished” in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

(Continued on next page)
Unfortunately, Ferguson has also downplayed baptism as an act of obedience, concluding that baptism is not a human act, but a divine work (p. 854). In his analysis of the Pauline Epistles, Ferguson states, “Contrary to the modern evangelical understanding that faith effects this new life and baptism is a subsequent human work, for Paul it is God who does everything and a person nothing in baptism and the new life that God gives to faith begins at baptism. The Christian’s existence as a Christian does not occur without baptism” (p. 164). I would agree with him that baptism is not a legalistic ritual performed by a candidate who has expressed faith in Christ. Indeed obedience is important to one’s identity as a follower of Christ. I disagree however that baptism “effects” salvation. Salvation is by grace through faith alone (Eph 2:8). God’s grace makes human obedience, the act of following Christ, possible. In this way the believer, summoned by the Holy Spirit, follows Christ by faith into the baptismal waters.

Sheila Klopfer is associate professor of Religion at Georgetown College, Kentucky, USA.
as *The Beginning of the Christian Life and the Nature of the Church*. The purpose of this dialogue was to see whether a “church fellowship” (as defined by CPCE) was possible with European Baptists.

The CPCE-EBF dialogue found ready agreement on an understanding of the essential nature of the Gospel, so concentrated more on baptism. Here, despite some agreements, we came up against not only our differing theologies of baptism, but also our differing ecclesiologies which give rise to them.

Some theological convergence seemed possible by way of work done by Professor Paul Fiddes (Baptist) on “a process of Initiation.” He suggested that whilst representing the integrity of both the believer’s Baptist and paedobaptist traditions, it was nevertheless possible to recognize that an individual Christian believer who had received infant baptism, followed by Christian nurture and Confirmation, was *de facto* at the same stage in his or her Christian life as someone who had been nurtured in a local Baptist church, been baptized as a believer and joined the church. Thus whilst most Baptists could give no more than limited validity to infant baptism itself, it was nevertheless possible to recognize one another’s “journey of Christian beginnings” as a whole.

The implication for Baptists is that more Baptist churches might consider “open membership” whereby those in good standing in paedobaptist denominations could come into membership of a Baptist church without undergoing believer’s baptism. This is already the case in several European Baptist unions. The challenge put to the CPCE churches is to see infant baptism as something that should always lead to nurture within the church and hopefully Confirmation at a later stage.

This approach was found to be helpful by both sides, though it is true to say that some European Baptists would not want to give even a derived validity to infant baptism in this way; and some CPCE churches, notably Lutherans, struggle theologically with the idea that Christian initiation is a “process.” Further reflection is needed on this.

At the end of the dialogue, which was seen as valuable on both sides, it was nevertheless recognized that, because there was still outstanding disagreement on baptism, it was not possible for European Baptists to enter into a full “church fellowship” with CPCE.

The question then remained how it might be possible for the EBF to be in a continuing relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ in CPCE. Various models were suggested and rejected by one side or the other. At one point the EBF felt that perhaps we should withdraw from the attempt to find a formal agreement and cooperate informally and locally.

The challenge put to the CPCE churches is to see infant baptism as something that should always lead to nurture within the church and hopefully Confirmation at a later stage.

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This Agreement will enable us to work together on some of the challenges facing all Christians living and witnessing to their faith in contemporary secular Europe.

However our CPCE partners encouraged us to persevere and eventually the “Agreement to become Mutually Cooperating Bodies” emerged and was agreed by both communities.

A separate but welcome development was the 2010 Apology offered by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) to the World Mennonites with respect to the Lutheran Anathemas against the Anabaptists in the 16th century and the resulting suffering and martyrdom of so many Anabaptists. This moving gesture by the LWF at its meeting in 2010 will also go a long way toward improving Baptist–Lutheran relationships.

The story of EBF-CPCE cooperation now enters a new phase with this Agreement. It will enable us to work together on some of the challenges facing all Christians living and witnessing to their faith in contemporary secular Europe. It will join us to other churches springing from the same 16th century Reformation in which Anabaptists and Baptists have their roots. And, it will enable us to continue our theological dialogue on issues such as baptism, looking to the Spirit of God to illumine our journey. As the Reformation “watchword” which we added at the end of our Agreement document proclaims – *Soli Deo Gloria!* (To God alone be the Glory!)

Tony Peck is the Baptist World Alliance regional secretary for Europe and general secretary of the European Baptist Federation.
The New Testament teaches that those proclaiming “Jesus Christ is Lord” publicly identified with his death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-7), followed his example (Matt. 3:13-17) and obeyed his command (Matt. 28:18-20) through baptism. Believers were blessed as family by the Father, incorporated into the body of Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit. Repentance (Acts 2:38) and informed faith (Acts 8) were prerequisites. There remained a transforming call:

“Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love” (Eph. 5:1).

Baptists frequently use “ordinance” to describe baptism (and the Lord’s Supper), as Jesus “ordained” these acts reflecting inner spiritual transformation experiences. Most Christian communities have preferred the term “sacrament,” which in ancient Latin (sacramentum) often meant a “vow of loyalty” – a faithful commitment occasioning public observance. One’s credo (“I believe”) was offered before baptism, with the Greek term baptizo (commonly “immerse or cover”) suggesting the mode.

“If not in cold, then in warm”

A second-century church manual, the Didache or “Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,” prescribes after fasting: “Baptize in running water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If you do not have running water, baptize in some other. If you cannot in cold, then in warm. If you have neither, then pour water on the head three times.” The earliest treatise on baptism, De Baptismo, by Tertullian of Carthage, North Africa, notes preparatory fasts, vigils, confession of sin, renunciation of the devil and (after baptism) anointing, laying-on of hands for blessing, then milk and honey. He prefers that “innocent” children delay baptism (ch. 18) until they can learn more, know Christ truly, and inquire into salvation. Such statements advocate “believer’s baptism,” while also evidencing (ca. 200) the early practice of “pedobaptism,” baptizing children.

Although infant baptism is not clearly in the New Testament, some referenced Matt. 19:14 (baptism as “coming to Christ”), Acts 16:15, 33 (households baptized) and Col. 2:11-12 (parallels with Jewish circumcision). The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus of Rome (ca. 220) mentions little children being baptized first and, if unable to answer for themselves, family members speaking (ch. 21). In the fourth century, practices were mixed; theologian Gregory Nazianzus, raised in a Christian home, was baptized in his 20s.

By the fifth century, the Western church commonly baptized infants, usually at Easter and Pentecost. Scriptures above were cited. Constantine, as first Christian emperor (after 313), had lifted the threat of persecution – and whole families entered the church, seeking incorporation. Augustine of Hippo’s understanding of original sin as guilt meant children dying without baptismal cleansing grace were lost (On the Merits and Remission of Sins and Infant Baptism 2.4). As church and state became identified, and the culture of Christendom formed, baptism became a birth rite also conferring legal rights. By 1150, Peter Lombard’s Book of Sentences defined seven sacraments, affirmed by councils Lateran IV (1215) and Florence (1439). Throughout the Middle Ages (to ca. 1500), excepting a few sects and baptism

South Korea
of missions converts, infant baptism as a “means/conduit of grace” in the Roman church was virtually universal – with catechism and sacramental confirmation later.

The Eastern Orthodox churches, since before Origen of Alexandria (early third century), have typically practiced infant baptism – a triple immersion followed by chrism/confirmation and the Lord’s Supper (eucharistic “thanksgiving”). With less emphasis on original guilt than in the West, the goal is illumination deeper than intellect, impartation of the Holy Spirit and incorporation as full members in the church. Rather than “sacrament,” the term “mystery” is preferred, emphasizing restoration of the image of God in the human person.

Enter the Anabaptists

In the 16th century, Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican “Protestants” broke with Roman Catholic authority – yet continued infant baptism. For Lutherans, it was a promise of divine grace, for Calvinists a pardon and participation in Christ’s gifts for the elect community, for Anglicans a “sign of regeneration.” Catholics at the Council of Trent (1545-64) affirmed baptism as containing/conferring grace on those posing no obstacle – and an instrument of salvation for unreached peoples.

Only Radical (e.g., Anabaptist) reformers advocated believer’s baptism as a biblical norm involving full immersion, beginning with Conrad Grebel in 1525 and advanced by Mennonites and others. In the early 1600s, Thomas Helwys (Arminian “General” Baptist) and John Smyth (Calvinist “Particular” Baptist) inspired the movement in England, which reached the American colonies and worldwide. By the eighteenth century, some dismissed water baptism due to rationalism or a spiritualized approach (e.g., Quakers). Conversely, Evangelical Covenant churches (1885), citing “freedom in Christ,” offer both infant and believer’s baptism without preference.

These streams of baptismal practice remain to the present day. Baptists and Mennonites celebrating believer’s baptism (often linked with “membership”) have been joined by missional groups such as Pentecostals, Churches of Christ (baptismal regeneration), Calvary Chapels and independent churches from the Two Thirds World.

Christians have a rich, if mixed, baptismal heritage. As a pastor and teacher, I have taken part in observances ranging from ivory fonts to 55-gallon drums, from ocean waves to swimming pools, from sanctuary tubs to field troughs – and the post-Vatican II Catholic Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) provided for new believers’ in-pool baptism. Worldwide, the Lord continues to invite those coming to faith: “Come to the water.” For us, that means the practice of baptism by immersion.

James D. Smith III is professor of Church History, Bethel Seminary San Diego in California in the USA, and has served as a Baptist General Conference (technical name is now Converge Worldwide) senior pastor in Boston, Minneapolis and San Diego. This article was originally published in the April/May 2010 issue of Converge Point. Reprinted with kind permission.
Baptist World Alliance (BWA) General Secretary Neville Callam visited Bulgaria, Austria and Spain in October.

Callam spoke at a conference to celebrate the 130th anniversary of the founding of Baptist witness in the town of Russe in northeastern Bulgaria, held October 7 through 9, and preached at the Baptist Church in Sophia, Bulgaria’s capital, on October 10.

Callam commended Bulgarian Baptists on “the remarkable history of the Baptist movement in Bulgaria.” He recounted the contribution of Baptist pioneers in the southern European country, including V.A. Pashkov, Martin Heringer, and Georgi Chemonev. “We give God thanks for your faith and faithfulness,” Callam told the gathering.

Callam updated the Bulgarians on the level of growth being experienced by Baptists worldwide. “Between 1985 and 2009, membership of Baptist churches associated with the BWA has grown significantly,” Callam said. African Baptists grew from 1.3 million to 7.6 million members; Asia and Oceana grew from 1.8 million to 5.4 million; and South American Baptists numbered 1.7 million members in 2009 from a previous figure of 677,000 in 1985. “Some of this growth reflects the addition of new BWA member bodies from these areas, but most of it is a sign of the growth of the Baptist churches in these areas,” Callam stated.

Such growth did not happen by accident, Callam claimed. “Many Baptist Christians are leaving their homes and traveling to foreign lands to spread the Gospel.” For instance, there are 650 Korean Baptist missioners in 47 countries, and 563 Brazilian Baptist missioners in 65 countries. “Baptist Christians in South Africa are bearing witness to the gospel in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland, and Malawi,” he informed the assembly.

Many Baptist Christians, Callam said, “are living out the demands of their faith even while facing persecution,” rendering “costly service for the benefit of humankind to God’s glory.”

Callam visited with the Baptist Union of Austria from October 11 to 14 where he commended Austrians on their faithfulness and commitment to the cause of Christ and their involvement in the worldwide Baptist movement. “We are grateful to God for what has been accomplished here through Baptist witness,” he stated. “Yours has not been an easy journey. From time to time, you have faced opposition,” he said, recalling that, in times past, Baptists were expelled from Vienna, Austria’s capital.

Callam informed the Austrians that, of the number of Baptists around the world, 2.1 percent are in Europe. The largest number of Baptists is in North America at 57.1 percent with Africa having 20.2 percent, the second largest total. Asia/Pacific comes next with 14.5 percent, then Latin America at 5.3 percent, and the Caribbean at 0.8 percent.

In addressing the 58th conventione of the Evangelical Baptist Union of Spain in Valencia, held October 14-17, Callam highlighted the work of the BWA in fostering unity and fellowship, mission and evangelism, relief and development, freedom and justice, and theological reflection. “As Baptists, we are a missionary people and we believe that the mission of God is the fundamental reason for our existence,” Callam declared. “This is vital for our purpose under God. The Baptist World Alliance is a vehicle to encourage all Baptists in the task of making disciples of all nations.”

The Christian commitment to mission is grounded on the understanding of God as Creator, Callam told the Spanish delegates. “God is owner of all that is.” As such, we are stewards, “given trusteeship of the resources of life and creation,” making us “answerable to God for the ways in which we exercise responsibility for all that has been entrusted to us.” Stewardship, Callam emphasized, “is concerned with every sphere of life, every aspect of life, every moment of time, and all that we think, feel, say and do.”

Tony Peck, BWA regional secretary for Europe and general secretary for the European Baptist Federation, also attended the meetings in Bulgaria.

The BWA, founded in 1905, is a fellowship of 218 Baptist conventions and unions in 120 countries.
In November, BWA General Secretary Neville Callam visited Nigeria where he gave a lecture at a Baptist university and met Baptist leaders.

On November 5, Callam presented the Fifth Convocation Lecture at Bowen University in the city of Iwo, which is given the day prior to the Graduation Exercise. He spoke on the crisis and opportunity of leadership to a gathering of the university and civic community. Callam stated that effective leadership requires vocational commitment, an inspiring vision, integrity, and recognition that leaders are merely servants of God and servants of the people. “Effective leaders know that, as servants, they are stewards...entrusted with authority and responsibility” and “are answerable to others and to God for the way they exercise leadership,” the BWA leader stated.

Callam declared that “there is a crisis of leadership in our world today” and that the world “desperately needs leaders who are gifted, committed, and responsible.” The Baptist leader acknowledged that “those who are called to positions of leadership are entrusted with an onerous responsibility,” but Christians can draw on the power of the Spirit “to be the visionary, disciplined, honest, humble, courageous leaders that the world needs today.”

Bowen, a university owned by the Nigerian Baptist Convention, was established in the city of Iwo in Osun State in 2002. It has a student population of some 4,500, is fully accredited, and grants degrees through its faculties of Agriculture, Science and Science Education, and Social and Management Sciences.

Callam also attended a prayer meeting convened by the Bowen University Council, where he presented greetings; met and brought greetings to the staff at the Nigerian Baptist Convention; attended a gathering of faculty and students at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomoșo, which has a student population of 700; and visited with the staff at the Woman’s Missionary Union offices in Ibadan.

In addition, the BWA general secretary visited the facilities of the Baptist Press (Nigeria) in Ibadan, and the Nigeria Baptist Convention’s Beulah Conference Center just outside Ogbomoșo, which is being built to accommodate 30,000 persons.

On Sunday, November 7, Callam preached at the annual Thanksgiving Service of the Oritamefa Baptist Church in Ibadan where approximately 2,500 worshippers were in attendance.

General Secretary Callam praised the high level of Baptist witness in Nigeria and gave high marks to Baptist leaders in the most populous country in Africa. “The Nigerian Baptist community benefits from highly qualified and able leaders at all levels,” Callam said.

The Nigerian Baptist Convention has 2.5 million members in some 9,300 churches. The smaller Mambilla Baptist Convention numbers some 23,000 members in 255 churches.
Raimundo Barreto, BWA director of Freedom and Justice, and Alan Marr, chair of the Freedom and Justice Commission on Peace, traveled to the Thai/Myanmar border to check on human rights concerns in early September.

After a visit to a Karen Kawthoolei congregation in Melbourne, Australia, they traveled to Bangkok, Thailand, and then to Mae Sot, where they met with the leaders of the Karen National Union, the Karen Refugee Committee, the Centre for Internally Displaced Karen People and the Karen Women’s Organization, led by Blooming Night Zion. During these meetings the BWA delegation interviewed people and collected data on the situation of those living on the border between Myanmar and Thailand. They learned that there are more than 300,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living along the border in very precarious conditions. These people have either been forcibly relocated or are threatened with relocation. Estimates are that around 70,000 of these people are Baptists.

During the meetings they also heard how tensions had escalated since the Myanmar government announced elections for November 2010, which were opposed by minority ethnic groups, including the Karen. These minority groups believed that the continuous detention of political prisoners, the abolition of several political parties and the adoption of restrictive election laws were some of the signs that the military junta did not intend to take any risks of losing power. In February 2010 many Karen were forced over the border because of fighting in their area. However, when the open hostilities ceased, the IDPs were forced back to Myanmar because there was no longer any fighting in the area, even if they believed and heard that it was not safe for them to return.

Barreto and Marr were informed that the same thing happened in July 2010. The lives of the IDPs are extremely precarious, since they are completely isolated and are only reachable unofficially. They are trapped between...
She was 13 years old, but looked much younger than that. She has packed more suffering and grief into her young life than most of us can imagine.

Until early this year, her family had lived in the same village in Karen State in Myanmar for generations. In recent years a Myanmar military post was established nearby. Since then family life has been overshadowed by regular visits from soldiers demanding food or money from the family.

The family understood that refusing the soldiers’ demands would bring drastic consequences upon them. They knew that other homes had been burned to the ground and people had disappeared, sometimes for months at a time; sometimes forever.

The young girl lost both of her parents to easily preventable diseases. The Myanmar government has seriously curtailed provision of health services in the Karen area, so medical help was not available for them. Seriously ill people are forced to flee to Thailand if they wish to receive medical help. Many die on the way.

When her parents died, the young girl’s grandparents took care of her and her sister but things became progressively worse for the family. The soldiers continued to press for more and more food, but the family had less and less to give them. They knew that sooner or later something terrible would happen.

One day the grandparents decided that the next time the soldiers approached, they would flee to the jungle and try to make it to the Thai border. They made their plans and on the day the soldiers approached they ran for the protection of the jungle.

The soldiers opened fire and the grandfather was killed. The rest of them made it to safety.

After a three or four days walk, they reached the border and eventually were welcomed into the Mae La Camp. There is still a deep sadness in the young girl’s eyes, but when asked what it is like to be in the refugee camp, she replied, “It feels safe.”

She is able to attend school each day without fear. She is one of the displaced persons who have made it to the camps. Although they are safe they are not recognized as refugees and therefore there is no official food or housing allocation made for them. They must depend upon the generosity of other Karen families to support them.

It is anticipated that there are 300,000 more Internally Displaced Persons inside Myanmar who live each day in fear.
BWA Director of Freedom & Justice, Raimundo Barreto, attended the 63rd Annual United Nations Department of Public Information’s Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) Conference in Melbourne, Australia, from August 30 - September 1, 2010.

The theme of the conference was “Advance Global Health: Achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” and attendees included 1,600 delegates representing more than 350 NGOs from more than 70 countries.

The UN conference reaffirmed that the MDGs are basic to human development, to human rights and to equity, and declared that achieving the MDGs is a moral imperative. Participants worked on a highly publicized conference declaration. The approved declaration was taken to the MDGs High Level Summit, which gathered government leaders in New York from September 20-22 to discuss and deliberate on the UN commitment to eradicate extreme poverty. Luiz Nascimento represented the BWA at this event.

The key mandate of the Melbourne Declaration on Global Health called on state representatives meeting in New York City to increase their efforts to achieve the MDGs, particularly those more directly related to improving health worldwide. Taking advantage of the identification by the UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon of global health as a strategic aim to achieve the MDGs, the NGO representatives demanded that more be done by the states to achieve MDGs 4 (reduce child mortality), 5 (improve maternal health) and 6 (combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases), and offered suggestions for action.

At the conference, the ongoing contribution of NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in achieving the MDGs was highlighted, not only due to their work done on the field, but also due to their presence in the policy debate surrounding and engaging governments. In addition, these organizations play a role in creating alternative programs and bringing pressure upon national and international authorities.

Other themes discussed during the conference included indigenous health, the need to treat different health problems in a more integrated manner thereby increasing effectiveness, and the relationship between economic development and health development.

Barreto commented that “the conference was a unique opportunity for networking and deepening the BWA’s knowledge of the intricate ways the United Nations relates to NGOs and CSOs, and vice-versa. The more the BWA is able to participate, the more opportunities will arise for the BWA to play more active roles in that setting, and to gain more respect as an organization seriously committed to advocating for human rights for all people at the international scene.”

Thai/Myanmar Border continued

led by Baptist leaders in that context. They heard about the peace building training provided by the Karen Women’s Organization under the leadership of Blooming Night Zion. They were inspired by the work of Simon, recipient of the BWA Human Rights Award in 2000, with more than 200 orphan children in the camp. They listened to the music and stories offered by students and teachers of the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist School and College, a school teaching the Bible and theology to more than 300 young people in the Mae La camp.

Additionally, Barreto and Marr had the opportunity to preach during the camp’s worship services and used the occasion to encourage them and reaffirm that they are not forgotten by the large Baptist family around the world. They met with more than 30 pastors of the Karen Kawthoolei Baptist churches who shared moving testimonies of faithfulness in their ministry with IDPs and in the camps.

Simon, who has lived and ministered in the camp for more than 20 years, is the best known but not the only example of one who is committed to stay and minister the gospel in a very precarious situation. The presence of the BWA delegation in the camp for a few days was perceived as a sign of encouragement.
Working on the rescue plans at the mine, we as a company and as professionals were all committed to finding the miners, not knowing at first whether they were still alive.

Later on I was informed by my family that Samuel Henríquez was among the miners. I was very worried as things changed from rescuing people I did not know to someone whom I knew.

I remember the time as a child when some evangelical preachers passed by our home. One was Samuel who played the accordion. Although his name is José Henríquez, I

(Continued on next page)
knew him as Samuel, which is why I did not immediately recognize his name among the list of miners who were trapped underground. His family lived two houses away from my parents, so we knew him well.

When the search for the miners began, my company’s responsibility was to place sensors inside to determine the structural stability of the mine and to determine if it was safe for rescuers to enter the mine. If conditions were unsafe, we were to give warnings for all to evacuate the mine. This was exactly what happened and we had to abandon the plan. Meanwhile, drilling continued until eventually it was discovered that there were people who were still alive in the mine.

The plan was now to conduct as safe a rescue as possible. I began to look for Samuel’s family in order to offer my support. It took me some time to find them, until eventually I met his daughter, Hettiz. She told me that there was no evangelical pastor present in the mining camp and that 33 New Testament Bibles that were sent had not reached the mine.

I spoke with the person in charge of logistics and sought his help in getting the New Testament Bibles to José Henríquez. His response was, “Bring them to me and we will send them right away.” We did not know where the Bibles were so we requested an additional 33 copies.

I went to the bookstore to make the purchase and found one with the dimensions that could fit into the chute, but the store had only two copies. I took the two along with 33 bookmarks that the bookstore offered to me and I returned to the mine. Once there, I gave the Bibles and bookmarks to be sent to the mine and was also informed that the 33 Bibles were located.

I asked the people in my company to give their full support to the Henríquez family. We were in a desert-like place where everything was scarce and the company had the resources to offer help. We became the logistical support for the Christian work that was being done at the mine. We were blessed to be used by God.

Concerned that there was a lack of pastoral or missionary support at the mine, I called Pastor Luis Cortes of the First Baptist Church of Santiago. In two days we were able to have Pastor Marcelo Leiva at the site with the support of Brother Bernardino Morales, the director of the Network of Social Witness of the Union of Baptist Churches of Chile. José was informed and immediately asked to speak with the pastor so that they could sing and pray together.

Hettiz requested that music and Bible studies be sent down into the mine. Again, I contacted Pastor Cortes in Santiago. In less than an hour my email was filled with spiritual songs and Bible studies, plus some video greetings from the Henríquez family who had not yet reached the mine.

Several days later we learned that the number of miners that came to know the Lord increased from three to five. This gave us more strength to continue ministering in that place. Hettiz told me that her father wanted hardcopy Bible studies, so I went to the bookstore and ordered some and delivered these to the Henríquez family who in turn delivered the materials, as well as a flute, to the mine.

Hettiz took the initiative to have some T-shirts made with Bible verses.

God placed us at the mine to offer logistical support for his work and we did not hesitate. Samuel and I, who knew each other, and who are both Christians, found each other. Each was on a different side of the rescue operation. Each of us played our part. This was not planned, but was done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to fulfill God’s purpose.

To God be the glory.

Igor Bravo, business owner of Geosinergia, which played a major role in the rescue of the 33 miners in Chile, is a member of First Baptist Church in Santiago, Chile.
Three years ago the Lord challenged my wife and me to go to the third region of Chile and pastor the Baptist Church of Vallenar. The Lord has always challenged me, and I have learned in this beautiful land that God demands my all and wishes me, as a disciple, to follow Him in obedience and love.

It was like that when I received the call from the Social Testimony Network to go to camp Hope at the copper mine in San José. The Lord always does things with a purpose. A few days before the Lord had put on my heart to pray for the 33 miners. I knew that God had challenged me to go to this place as soon as I received the call.

When I shared this invitation with my church, I told them I couldn’t say no because this was a challenge given to me by the Lord. Praise the Lord! They encouraged me to go for them, and they would support me with their prayers. They understood what all that meant, and that I would be away from the city for at least a month.

I had to praise the Lord for the blessing to pastor a church with a vision of God’s Kingdom because it was not an easy time to be away from our church because we are developing a mission project in the Valle del Huasco.

On September 28, I traveled to Copiapó and from there I went to the San José mine. The Lord had already put in place brother Igor Bravo, a member of the First Baptist Church in Santiago, who was working at the mine and was an instrument of God that was put in this place to be a light in the middle of such suffering.

My first day I was at the mine for 20 minutes, but I was immersed in the reality of the camp, and I met the Henríquez family who housed me during the two weeks that I was in the camp.

Two pastors, one Adventist and another Pentecostal, had been working there for two weeks, but the Henríquez family wanted an evangelical pastor that would minister to them and the families of the miners.

Among the 33 miners there were three Christians, but in the middle of this ordeal two more had accepted Christ as their Savior thanks to the evangelistic and spiritual work of Brother José Henríquez, who was trapped in the mine, sharing the gospel within the mine.

Every day he would have a prayer service with 15 to 20 of the miners, as well as discipling the new Christians.

The next day I was in touch with brother José by way of a letter. He in turn talked with the other miners who authorized and asked me to be in touch with their families. This authorization was necessary in order to realize the work that God had entrusted me with. Thanks to the support of the Henríquez family I had the credentials that authorized me to move around in all of camp Hope.

With this I had to get to work. In the beginning I didn’t know what to do, but I put all my confidence in the Lord that He would give me the strategy to use. Sometimes I had my Bible in hand, and other times I talked about my life and shared that God is our strength and protection. But, for the most part, I listened to the people and watched how the Holy Spirit worked in the middle of us.

I have no doubt that the Lord was in our midst. Even in the most difficult moments I saw the hand of God. God had sent me to share His love and compassion and that is what needed to be done.

I began talking with the people and listening to what they had to say. I shared God’s message with the police, journalists, families of the miners and even a Catholic missionary. Some of them knew I was a pastor and others didn’t, but with all of these I shared that God is great and wonderful and He took me from the confines of the earth to love me and obey Him and serve Him.

Marcelo Leiva is pastor of the Baptist church in Vallenar, Chile.
The first Monday of November each year has been set aside to celebrate the Baptist Women’s World Day of Prayer. For more than 50 years, this day has brought together Baptist women from around the world to pray and to give so that our world will be impacted for Christ. The one-day celebration has expanded to include, in some situations, a weekend prayer retreat, special activities for the entire church, and other opportunities throughout the month of November.

In 2010, a new theme was launched: *In Step with the Spirit* based on Galatians 5:25, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Over the next five years, Baptist women will be *In Step with the Spirit* as we study the fruit of the Spirit. This will help Baptist women to be actively involved in our mission to work toward peace, reconciliation, justice and development through prayer, witness and service.

The following reports from the 2010 Day of Prayer celebrations, held on November 1, are a blessing and inspiration.

Before the day began on the east coast of the USA, reports of Day of Prayer celebrations had already begun to arrive. Julie Belding from New Zealand and president of the Baptist Women’s Union of the South West Pacific reported: “Here in New Zealand we’ve already had three Day of Prayer events. Two of these were in Auckland, my town. On Saturday we did a Day of Prayer lunch, followed a few hours later by a Day of Prayer dinner at another church.”

Jessica Miller from the USA sent good news. “We had a total of 102 people registered and 87 people checked in for the [Day of Prayer] event. I was told to only expect 35-40 so we more than doubled what was expected. The offering was the largest ever taken. Praise God!”

On October 31, the Day of Prayer program was celebrated in the Htee Ger Nee Church in the Mae La refugee camp. There were about 500 church members who participated in the worship experience. Blooming Night Zion reported, “We had a beautiful program which included sharing the history of the Day of Prayer, experiences from the Leadership Conference, activities of the BWA Women’s Department and Day of Prayer, as well as why we celebrate this Day of Prayer. We also heard the words of God with the singing of the Day of Prayer theme song.” On another day at the Hway Num Kun Baptist Church about 30 kilometers outside of Mae Sod, she was able to show the Day of Prayer PowerPoint program that she downloaded from the Women’s Department website.

On the Baptist Women in Ministry blog, Pam Durso, executive director, shared, “Today I am grateful for the Baptist Women’s World Day of Prayer. I found comfort knowing that women across the globe were praying along with me. Today I have felt a great sense of peace for I know that I am not alone but walk in this faith journey with a worldwide community of Baptist women.”

Vera Orlova who is responsible for the women’s ministry in the northwest of Russia shared the following: “We are pleased to announce that on November 4 at our church, Worship Hill Baptist in St. Petersburg, we held a World Day
of Prayer meeting. All sisters were inspired by the theme and actively participated in the Bible studies and worshiped the Lord. The intercession prayer for the needs of our fellow sisters in all the continents was a blessing.”

Nora Lozano, professor and person responsible for the 2009 Day of Prayer project, *Latina Leadership Training*, had this to share: “I want to share with you that for the first time, we celebrated the Day of Prayer at Baptist University of the Americas. We had an open chapel, and different people went to pray throughout the day. We had prayer stations, each one highlighting the needs of the women in each of the continental unions.”

On Nancy Palmer’s blog, she shared the following: “One of my big surprises when moving from North Dakota to Mbingo, Cameroon, in 1979, was that the women’s group in the church observed the November Baptist Women’s World Day of Prayer. We had observed that prayer day in Ashley Baptist Church in North Dakota, USA, where I previously lived, but in Ashley I had secretly doubted that the day of prayer was really a ‘world day of prayer.’ After moving halfway around the world, I was so encouraged by the seriousness of the Mbingo women’s observation of the Day of Prayer program.”

The Women’s Department of the BWA has received reports from the Yangon Kachin Baptist Church in Yangon, Myanmar; Jacksonville, Florida USA; Kirby Muxloe, England; Colombo, Sri Lanka; Wichita, Kansas, USA; and Hong Kong. All these and more may be found at www.bwawd.org. These are just a few out of the many who came together to celebrate unity in Christ among Baptist women of the world and to work toward peace, reconciliation, justice and development through prayer, witness and service.
Praise

THE LAUSANNE CONGRESS

By Wendy Ryan

The Third Lausanne Congress on Evangelization held in Cape Town, South Africa, reaffirmed evangelization as “the whole church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world,” a definition that came from the first such meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974 called by Billy Graham.

The Cape Town Commitment issued at the conclusion of the October 16-25, 2010, meeting described as “unchanged realities” the fact that “human beings are lost, the gospel is good news and the church’s mission goes on.” Africa was chosen to host the congress because it is a continent “where the church of Jesus Christ is vibrant and growing.”

Lausanne brought together 4,000 participants from 198 countries in what was called, “a working meeting.” Thousands more were linked via Internet on global conversation sites. Observers from other Christian traditions including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and the World Council of Churches attended.

Evangelism and mission are close to the heart of Baptists around the world and this congress saw more than 53 Baptist church and lay persons in attendance. They came from 24 countries that included Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Japan, Wales, Belize, Serbia, Azerbaijan, North East India, Canada, the United States, and from many countries on the African continent.

Among them were four Baptist World Alliance vice presidents: Regina Claas, general secretary of the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany; Ross Clifford, principal of Morling Baptist Theological College, Sydney, Australia; Paul Mziza, general secretary of the Baptist Convention of South Africa; and Nabil Costa, executive director of the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development. European Baptist Federation General Secretary Tony Peck was also a participant as was Ruth Clark, president of the Board of International Ministries of the American Baptist Churches USA, and Sam Chase, General Secretary of Canadian Baptist Ministries.

Latin American Baptist theologian, Ruth Padilla de Borst of Costa Rica, was one of the major presenters. Speaking on Reconciliation, de Borst, general secretary of the Latin American Theological Fellowship and a member of the Lausanne Theology Working Group, called for the church to be “welcoming communities that tear down walls of self defense, security and prosperity that our greed, pride and prejudice have built.” She described this community as “Pax Christi,” “brought together by God’s reconciling will in Christ and sent into the world by the power of God’s Spirit to incarnate God’s good purposes for the entire cosmos.”

De Borst followed in the footsteps of her esteemed father, Ecuadorian theologian, Rene Padilla, who gave a keynote address at the first Lausanne Congress which called evangelicals to holistic mission. Consequently, topics such as HIV and AIDS, poverty, global technologies, poverty and wealth and the environment were part of the discussions at the 2010 congress.

South African Baptist leader, Moss Ntlha, general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of South Africa, was honorary chair of the Cape Town Host Committee. He is concerned about Christianity in Africa. “There is a serious disconnect with the numbers and the way people practice their faith,” he said. “The great challenge is to go beyond proclamation and conversion to the serious need for discipleship and training in the context of society.”

Baptist leaders praised the congress and expressed concerns. Clifford said the “participatory nature of the congress with every delegate involved in roundtable Bible study discussions on the book

“God in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself”
— 2 Corinthians 5:19
of Ephesians as well as on significant mission issues was a real strength.” He believes the congress “confirmed its commitment to evangelism and social justice” and “to reach the world’s unreached people groups.” He wonders whether it “fostered creative and great ideas for the future.”

“It was good for us Baptists to be in the wider context of this world gathering of Evangelicals, many of whom are very close to us in theology and their way of being the church and whose passion for mission and evangelism we share,” said Peck. He appreciated the “voices from the global South, often articulating a missiology which more naturally integrates evangelism, social action and prophetic witness to society than we do in the global north.” He was pleased at the “strong commitment to the partnership of women and men in leadership and mission.” A church musician, Peck praised “the excellent global team which led the congress in global worship.”

Regina Claas, who was the official BWA representative at the congress, was “grateful for the privilege to participate in this extraordinary event.” The discussions had “depth and quality” and she valued “the exchange of practical ideas in the areas of sharing the Gospel to the unreached, living a Christian life and giving testimony where believers are in the minority and even suffer oppression.” She was disappointed that the congress did not speak “to the context of South Africa and in particular, the struggle against apartheid and its continuing effects on the host nation.” She sees the involvement of youth as part of a “transformation” in Lausanne. Youth were “beautifully present and engaged in this process of renewal in Lausanne with great creative ideas.” She believes, “If the Lausanne movement is able to catch this opportunity of transformation, it will remain relevant and effective for years to come.”

Testimony Omifade from Nigeria was going home, excited and ready to use the information he received. “It was a wonderful program,” he said, “the messages sharp, straight and strong. I can hear the Spirit.”

“I am bubbling over” said Lloyd Sanford from Belize. “This meeting is very powerful and I can’t wait to get their materials and take them back home!”

Wendy Ryan, former director of Communications for the BWA, directs Evangeline Ministries, a ministry for women with HIV and AIDS in Cape Town, South Africa.
In Memoriam

A memorial service was held at the Tiburon Baptist Church in Tiburon, California, on November 28.
He is survived by Ernestine, his wife of 62 years, and sons, W. Morgan II and Jay.

W. Morgan Patterson, former president of Georgetown College in the state of Kentucky in the United States, died on November 19 in Novato, California. He was 85 years old.

Before joining Georgetown, where he was president from 1984-1991, Patterson taught church history at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisiana from 1956 to 1959; taught church history and was director of graduate studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, from 1959-1976, where he was instrumental in designing the seminary’s doctoral degree in 1974; and was named dean of academic affairs at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, California, in 1976.

He also served as a church pastor in six different states.

Patterson is a past member of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Baptist Heritage and Identity and the Promotion and Development Committee. He was a contributor to the BWA Centennial volume, Baptists Together in Christ 1905-2005, published in 2005. He wrote the book, Baptist Successionism: A Critical View.

After retirement, Patterson continued teaching at several seminaries and universities, including Louisiana Baptist College, the Baptist College of Florida, Oklahoma Baptist University, and Campbellsville University in Kentucky.

He earned degrees and diplomas from Stetson University in Florida, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Oxford University in England.

Warren Hultgren, a former vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention and president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, died on November 14 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the United States. He was 89 years old.

Hultgren was senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Tulsa for 35 years, from 1957-1992. Upon his retirement, he was named pastor emeritus, a position he held until the time of his death. He previously served as pastor in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and Corpus Christi, Texas.

The Oklahoma Baptist leader is a former member of the Baptist World Alliance General Council and the Relief and Development Committee. Actively involved in his community, he was elected president of the Tulsa chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and helped to form an interdenominational fellowship for clergy in Tulsa. He became known for offering to officiate at funerals for those who had no church home, and conducted more than 3,500 funeral services.

Born in the state of Minnesota, Hultgren graduated with degrees from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Forth Worth, Texas, as well as the California Graduate School of Theology in La Habra, California.

Funeral services were held at First Baptist Church in Tulsa on November 20.
He is survived by Wanda, his wife for 64 years, two sons, and one daughter.

Zoltán Vékás, past vice president of the Hungarian Baptist Convention (HBC) of Romania, died from colon cancer, on November 24, in Satu Mare, Romania. He was 61 years old.

Vékás represented the HBC at several Baptist World Alliance and European Baptist Federation events. For 12 years, he was editor in chief of Szeretet (Love), the monthly periodical of the HBC. He became pastor of the Baptist church in Satu Mare in 1990, and previously served as pastor of churches in Hunedoara and Lupeni, both in Romania.

Ordained during the communist era on November 24, 1978 – exactly 32 years before his death – Vékás was at times called in and questioned by the police on account of his faith, but “he remained faithful to the Lord and didn’t give in either to pressure or to promises,” his obituary read.

A Romanian of Hungarian descent, he did theological studies with the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, (since relocated to Prague, Czech Republic), and the Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Plymouth, Minnesota, in the United States.

A memorial service was held on November 26 at the Hungarian Baptist
Julia Gero, president of the European Baptist Women’s Union (EBWU) from 1987-1992 and a former vice president of the Baptist World Alliance Women's Department, died in October in Hungary. She was 83 years old.

After marrying Sandor Gero, a Baptist pastor, in 1950, Gero became actively involved in, and eventually leader of, the Baptist women’s movement in Hungary, attending various meetings and conferences in Europe. She was appointed Hungarian representative to the EBWU in 1982, and became its first president from the communist bloc of nations when she was elected in 1987.

During her EBWU presidency, Gero was instrumental in helping to organize women’s unions in the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and among Hungarian women in Transylvania, Romania.

She was predeceased by her husband in 1981, and is survived by daughter, Dorothy.


He previously served as pastor of churches in the English towns of Berwick and Oxford as well as Acton in metropolitan London. Prior to becoming general secretary of the BUGB, Russell was co-principal of Northern Baptist College in Manchester, England, which was formed in 1963 when the Baptist colleges at Rawdon and Manchester amalgamated. Russell was principal of the Rawdon School before the merger.

He served the BUGB as president for two years after his retirement as general secretary.

Russell is a former member of the Baptist World Alliance General Council and Executive Committee, as well as of the BWA Commission on Doctrine and Interchurch Cooperation and the Academic and Theological Education Workgroup.

The British Baptist leader was instrumental in helping Baptists in Eastern Europe during communist rule. Among other things, he helped to secure funding for the translation of William Barclay’s New Testament commentaries into Russian, which became widely used by pastors in Russian-speaking countries.

“David Russell understood Baptist principles and was not ashamed of being a Baptist,” said former BWA General Secretary Denton Lotz, who prepared a statement at the request of BWA General Secretary Neville Callam.

“It was my privilege to work with Russell on commissions and committees within the European Baptist Federation and the Baptist World Alliance,” Lotz stated. “He was way ahead of his time and this quality made him a perfect leader for the Baptist World Alliance, whether giving devotions at a General Council Meeting, or leading a commission.”

A thanksgiving service for Russell was held on November 18 at Westbury on Trym Baptist Church in Bristol.

He leaves wife, Marion, son, Douglas, and daughter, Helen.

Leon Lawton, former treasurer of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation, died on July 18, 2010. He was 86 years old.

Lawton served as a missionary to Jamaica from 1950 until 1964, serving as supervisor and corresponding secretary of the Jamaica Mission Field; was director of Evangelism on the Home Field for the USA Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society between 1964 and 1969; and was executive vice president of the missionary society from 1970-1991. He served as treasurer of the world federation for 21 years.

Lawton was a member of the General Council of the Baptist World Alliance from 1990-1999, and was also a member of the BWA’s Baptist World Aid Committee.

A memorial service was held at the Pawcatuck Seventh Day Baptist Church in Westerly, Rhode Island. He leaves wife, Dorothy.
In five chapters, Mark Wilson offers an artful and accessible account of the contribution of an outstanding Southern Baptist leader and scholar who sought to lead his students and peers to find ways to engage with the modern world. Wilson’s book illustrates brilliantly how costly errors made by church leaders can mar the witness they sincerely desire to bear in the name of Christ. Among the interesting insights illustrated from Carver’s witness is his claim that, although some say that interdenominational unity may not be the way for Baptists, neither denominational isolationism nor sectarian exclusivism is an option for Baptists in the contemporary age. Fellowship is better than sectarianism.

Women are taking up positions of leadership in many churches, notwithstanding the controversies attached to this development. How may women flourish in their roles? From careful observation and incisive analysis of the experiences of women in leadership, Coleman concludes that there are certain self-defeating patterns of behavior that must be overcome. She identifies these and offers ways to overcome them. Although Coleman’s book was written with women in mind, men in leadership, together with all church members, will do well to benefit from the insights found in this valuable book.
The first few months of being president of the BWA have been rich with many new experiences and with the making of many new friends. To mention a few, I have had the opportunity to represent the BWA in meetings with the four member bodies of the BWA in South Africa. It was also a joy to join the leadership of the North American Baptist Fellowship in a meeting with former United States President Jimmy Carter. Former president of the BWA, Billy Kim, has arranged a meeting with the General-Secretary of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon. Of course, as I have traveled, what becomes so apparent is the wide diversity that characterizes the family of God.

You can see this diversity in any sanctuary in which you worship no matter where you are in the world. We aren’t much different than the 12 Jesus chose. Jesus chose a hodgepodge bunch of educated and illiterate, poor and moneyed, a sell out to the empire and a patriot sworn to fight the empire. With him were women and Samaritans. He gathered to him children and the old and Pharisees and prostitutes. According to Luke, on the day the church was born, there were Africans, Asians, Arabs, Europeans, Judeans, and many others all joining together. The body of Christ is diverse or it isn’t the church.

Yet, there is a difference between diversity and the absence of unity. It is one thing to differ on much; it is another thing to be adrift because nothing essential binds us together. I’m constantly reminded how easy it is for the people of God to be divided. Paul addressed this frequently and the differences were bizarre. In his day, as in ours, people split into groups because they loved different leaders. “We belong to Paul,” says one group. “We belong to Apollos,” says another. “We belong to Peter,” say still others. Is this about personality? Is it about style? Or is this something theological? Maybe to say, “I believe in Paul,” is to say, “I believe in freedom and grace.” And maybe to say, “I believe in Apollos,” is to say, “Reason and eloquent persuasion is what matters most.” Maybe what it means to say, “I love Peter,” is, “We can’t forget the mother church and the Torah and the real apostles.” And there were others in the church who, hearing all of that, were just so above it all that they said, “We just belong to Christ and we walk with him and talk with him, so there.”

It is interesting how we differ. Some want the rational and cerebral while others prefer the stirring of the heart. Some are quite conservative while others are very moderate. Then some are very concerned with social justice and others are mostly concerned with orthodox evangelical belief. Still others desire the majesty and mystery of worship and others are moved by human relationships for their own deeply personal spiritual help.

The truth is none of these needs to be the cause of substantial or harmful division. Yet, you and I know that they can be unless we all look to Christ, clinging to Christ in faith, seeking to live in service of Christ and seeing each other and the world through the eyes of Christ. If our differences are all gathered into Christ as our source, our center, our goal, then our differences are a many colored, beautiful unity. But if not, our differences become divisions. Divisions that judge and endanger and do much harm.

We do not dream of a perfect unity. There is no such thing. But we do know that our differences will empty us out unless they are given in faith to live and serve together in Christ. Loving our diversity will not be the thing that holds us together. Loving our fellowships will not be able to hold us together. It will only be Christ.

While in the Durban area in South Africa, I worshiped with a church that had a beautiful cross behind the pulpit. It was simple yet majestic. I recalled Paul’s words when he addressed the Corinthian Christians struggling with their diversity. He pointed them to the cross. He said it looks pretty foolish, doesn’t it? It looks like weakness, looks like folly. But, look at it together; it is what gathers us onto the same ground. It confronts us with the same truth. It offers the same mercy and embraces us and sends us to love and serve in hopeful obedience together. Christ died for us all. Christ lives for us all. To trust this and to serve together, however madly, wondrously different from each other we may be, is to become the body of Christ.

These are just some initial thoughts on the journey with you.
Baptist World Alliance Day
April 30 – May 1, 2010

“Hear the Spirit – Proclamation”

Be a part of Baptists around the world celebrating and praying for the global Baptist family!
Join the Baptist family in worship together.
Resources for worship will be on our website, in many languages,
For more information visit www.bwanet.org or email us—bwa@bwanet.org