BAPTISTS Meet in Malaysia
Callam Receives Caribbean Awards

Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Neville Callam is the recipient of two Caribbean awards.

Callam, a Jamaican who was named BWA general secretary in 2007, was conferred with an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology (CGST) based in Kingston, Jamaica, at a special convocation on September 5.

“Caribbean Graduate School of Theology recognizes the outstanding contribution of Rev. Neville Callam to the Church in Jamaica and to the worldwide Baptist community,” the citation reads. “As winds of change blow across our world, it is refreshing to see a son of Jamaica being blown by the Spirit to new heights of service to the world.”

“This is not the first time that I have received such an award,” Callam said at the presentation ceremony. “However, that this award originates in my own homeland gives me great joy.”

The theological institution also established the Neville Callam Archive within the school’s Zenas Gerig Library.

This is the third honorary doctorate conferred upon the BWA leader in recent times, following on those from Dallas Baptist University in Texas and Judson University in Illinois, both in the USA.

Callam is one of six recipients of the 2011 Caribbean American Heritage Award (CARAH) to be presented in November by the Institute of Caribbean Studies.

The CARAH Awards are presented to Caribbean immigrants in the United States who have made a significant contribution in literature, science and technology, community service and corporate leadership, as well as to “Friends of the Caribbean” whose work contributes to the wellbeing and welfare of Caribbean peoples.

Other 2011 award recipients are novelist Maryse Conde of Guadeloupe; choreographer Garth Fagan who received the 1998 Tony Award for The Lion King; Arlie Petters, the first person to develop the mathematical theory of gravitational lensing and whose research in physics and mathematics revolutionized the field of astronomy; Larry Quinlan, partner and global chief information officer for Deloitte & Touche; and Janet Rollé, executive vice president and chief marketing officer for CNN Worldwide.

Previous CARAH awardees include Susan Taylor, former editor-in-chief of Essence magazine; Rita Marley, reggae artiste, philanthropist and widow of Bob Marley; Earl Graves Sr., publisher of Black Enterprise magazine and US Attorney General Eric Holder, who are both of Barbadian heritage; and actress Cicely Tyson, who is of Nevisian heritage.

The presentations will be made during the 18th Annual CARAH Gala at the Renaissance Marriot on November 11 in Washington, DC.
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BWAid calls for prayer and assistance for the storm ravaged Caribbean and US East Coast.

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COVER PHOTO
An indigenous Baptist Christian performs a folk dance during the welcome dinner at the BWA Annual Gathering in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Unless otherwise noted, photos in the issue are by BWA staff.

BWA OFFICERS
John Upton .................................. President
Neville Callam .................................. General Secretary

BWA EXECUTIVE STAFF
Raimundo Barreto ......................... Freedom and Justice
Patsy Davis ................................. Women
Emmett Dunn ................................. Youth and Congress
Eron Henry ................................. Communications
Julie Justus ................................. Member Services
Paul Montacute ...................... BWAid
Meg Pearson ............................... Finance/Administration
Kathe Traynham ............................. Promotion and Development
Fausto Vasconcelos .................. Evangelism/Research

BWA REGIONAL SECRETARIES
Harrison Olan’g ....................... All Africa Baptist Fellowship
Tony Peck ............................... European Baptist Federation
Eerton Jackson ....................... Caribbean Baptist Fellowship
Alberto Prokopchuk ............... Union of Baptists in Latin America
P. Bonny Resu ....................... Asia Pacific Baptist Federation
George Bullard ...................... North American Baptist Fellowship
Faithful reading of the sacred scriptures of the church is an important prerequisite for the faithful proclamation of the Good News of Christ. Beginning in the early 1800s, Bible Societies have focused on making the church’s sacred book available to all who would feast on its riches. We are indebted to these societies that have aided greater familiarity with the message of the God who liberates and sustains us. Are we devoting enough time to reading the scriptures in the public worship of the church today?

From the beginning, Christians have understood the importance of gathering to read and reflect on the text of scripture. Not surprisingly, in the early second century, Nablus-born Christian apologist, Justin Martyr, characterized the Christians’ day of worship as the time when “all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.”

Following the example of the early church, Baptists have traditionally regarded the reading of the sacred scriptures as an important part of their corporate worship. Whatever one makes of John Smyth’s views on the legitimacy of the public reading of the Bible in English, two members of Smyth’s congregation, Hugh and Anne Bromhead, reported that congregational worship in the early seventeenth century was marked by serious engagement with the Bible. According to the Bromheads, worshippers read “some one or two chapters of the Bible.” Following this, presenters would “give the sense thereof and confer upon the same; that done, we lay aside our books, and after a solemn prayer by the first speaker, he propounds some text out of the Scripture, and prophesies out of the same by the space of one or three quarters of an hour.” And each service provided opportunity for worshippers to hear more than one preacher!

What place do Baptists assign to the reading of scripture in corporate worship today?

It seems, sometimes, that zeal to satisfy the demand to confine worship within the limits of a specific time frame has led to severe reduction of time for the reading of scripture. Too often, the diet of publicly read scripture in church has been reduced to a few verses which are sometimes chosen as a pointer to the message the preacher desires to convey. Thankfully, in some churches, the limited time allowed for corporate worship is organized in such a way as to ensure that Bible reading is not severely minimized among Christians who fancy themselves to be “people of the book.”

Another threat to serious Bible reading in our gathered assemblies is the penchant for much singing when we meet. All but the unwise will affirm the important place and value of music and singing in corporate worship. And sometimes the songs used are firmly based on words of scripture. Yet, it seems that so much of the time set aside for corporate worship is given over to singing that precious little time remains for the reading of scripture. Often, it is only after we have exhausted ourselves with singing that we slump into our seats to make a gallant effort to listen to a few verses read from the Bible and a sermon that sometimes is totally unrelated to the scripture that has been read. What a pity!

Baptists today may not need to spend the hours that John Smyth and his congregation devoted to corporate worship, but they can learn much from worship in the early Christian community and among Baptists in the seventeenth century about the importance of Bible reading in worship. Whether we are alone or together with other Christians, we should never neglect the reading of the sacred book.
The BWA Men’s Department, in association with the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF), held its 6th World Men’s Conference on July 1-2, 2011, after some two decades. The last was held in Seoul, South Korea, in 1990. BWA President John Upton and host pastor, John Kok, brought greetings and encouragement on the first day, which set the tone for an inspiring conference.

Under the theme “Shining for Jesus,” drawn from Philippians 2:15-16, the focus was on training and motivating men to be better disciples and fathers.

President Owen Crooks told the gathering that the BWA Men’s Department is charting a course that is inclusive and relevant in today’s world, providing leadership, support and encouragement. The aim is to enable men to demonstrate vision in carrying out the mission irrespective of country, custom or culture.

Crooks stated that to truly advance the mission of reaching others for Christ, there must be unity of purpose and tolerance of differences. He called for ongoing re-examination and redefining of purpose in structuring programs to shape the lives of men into the likeness of Christ. There is need, he explained, to question where the BWA men’s movement has fallen short in responding to changes, the implications of not responding, and how this impacts the faith, commitment and perception of men.

Tan Beng Teong gave a presentation on “Integrity in the Workplace.” He stated that integrity is a test of the heart, and “wrong is still wrong even if everyone is doing it and right is still right even when no one does it.” Drawing from Psalm 15, he summed up with a quote from John Maxwell, “There is no such thing as business ethics, just ethics.”

Main presenter, Wayne Shuffield, director of Mission/Evangelism for Texas Baptists in the United States, conducted the evangelism workshop, “Operation Multiplication.” Through examples and Bible references, Shuffield demonstrated steps to grow and mentor new disciples to maturity through the principles of spiritual multiplication.

The final session on “Leadership in the Home” was conducted by Keviyiekili Linyii of the Angami Baptist Church Council in Nagaland, India, who gave an insightful and thought-provoking challenge, using his own experience in providing leadership in his home.

I had the privilege of visiting Sabah, the eastern-most state of Malaysia, and accompanying a two-member team of Texas Baptists to meet with participants in the Silo Project supported by Baptist World Aid (BWAd).

The Silo Project was initiated to help the Dusun farmers at Tagaroh to store their grain safely and avoid middlemen in repurchase of rice and paddy seed. BWAd took up the project on the recommendation of Asia Pacific Baptist Aid (APBAid), and a total of US$18,900 was granted to Strait Baptist Church, Maleka, to partner with the local Dusun Word of Life Church, Kota Marudu.

We observed that 85 percent of the project plan was completed and the storage system awaited power connection by the local authority. Talking to the pastor of the Word of Life Church, Peter Sugara, we noticed all round cooperation and involvement of the community, and they waited enthusiastically for the harvest so they would start to use the storage system. They showed a new sense of unity through the project and would like to start a kindergarten school once the project is completed.

A total of 29 households with 179 family members will benefit from this project. Capacity of 35 metric tons from the three silos will provide safe dry storage of paddy products from 20 acres of land. It is anticipated that half of their products will be sold and the other half will be stored as reserve for consumption and seed.

Kabi Gangmei is director of Asia Pacific Baptist Aid.
The Baptist World Alliance Women’s Department organized a five-day mission trip into Northern Thailand, which included a visit to the Mae La refugee camp on the Thai-Myanmar border, from June 25-29.

The delegation, which included BWA President John Upton, met with several Karen organizations that are based in Mae Sot, a town in western Thailand that shares a border with Myanmar. The Karen are one of eight major ethnic groups in Myanmar. They are mainly from the mountainous eastern region and central delta area of the Southeast Asian country.

Karen people, a significant number of whom are Baptists, have had a history of struggle for self determination and democracy in Myanmar. Repressive government actions have led tens of thousands of Karen and other ethnic groups, such as the Chin and Kachin, to becoming refugees in other countries such as Thailand, India, Bangladesh, and China. There are seven refugee camps on the border with Thailand alone housing just over 138,000 refugees. Mae La is the largest with 47,000 persons. Thousands more are unable to cross the borders and have become internally displaced persons (IDPs) inside Myanmar.

The BWA delegation traveled to the offices of the Karen Refugee Committee (KRC) where the KRC updated the BWA team on its work in the seven refugee camps on the Thai border with Myanmar. The committee issues a monthly report and newsletter on activities within the camps, including reports on camp populations, new arrivals, and the work of NGOs. It also offers training, education and resettlement opportunities for refugees.

BWA team members, which included director of the BWA Women’s Department, Patsy Davis, visited the offices of the Karen Women’s Organization (KWO), also in Mae Sot. The KWO formed in 1949 and now has a membership of more than 49,000 women. The organization is involved in education and training, community care and relief, income generation, networking, and documentation and information. It has branches in all seven refugee camps in Thailand. Two notable publications of the KWO are *State of Terror*, released in 2007, and *Walking Amongst Sharp Knives*, published in 2010. Both reports provide exhaustive data on the abuses experienced and the effects of these abuses on Karen women and children by Myanmar government forces. The BWA team met several women who coordinate and facilitate a range of educational, social welfare, and health projects, and visited a KWO income generating store.

A meeting was also held with Naw Zipporah Sein, general secretary of the Karen National Union, a major Karen political organization.

Heavy monsoon rain occurred during
the trip to the Mae La camp where the BWA team participated in worship, fellowship and briefing meetings. Saw Simon, the recipient of the BWA Human Rights Award at the 18th Baptist World Congress in Melbourne, Australia, in 2000, gave a history of the camp over the past 20 years. Simon, a founder and principal of the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College in the Mae La camp, told the BWA team that there are now 20 Baptist churches in the camp. He also shared with them about the refugee resettlement program currently underway in countries such as the United States.

Leaders of the Thoo Lei Karen Baptist Women’s Organization shared with the BWA team the income generation projects that have helped refugees to survive in the Mae La camp.

Upton was particularly impressed by the dedication of Baptists in the camp and the resilience of the refugees. But despite the dedication and strength he saw, Upton said the eyes of the refugees, particularly those of youth and children, betrayed loss and sadness. The BWA head said what worries refugees the most is that they will be forgotten. He urged the BWA General Council, which met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, a few days after the trip to Thailand, not to forget the refugees from Myanmar.

International organizations, like the Institute for Global Engagement, have been engaging the Vietnamese government to promote more discussion and mutual understanding on religious freedom. Likewise, Barreto visited with a representative of the Ho Chi Minh City’s Committee on Religious Affairs, seeking to continue this development of mutual understanding and dialogue, and to encourage further steps in broadening the understanding of freedom.

More than half of the Vietnamese people identify themselves as part of some faction of Buddhism, although many are only nominally Buddhists. Roman Catholics make up seven to eight percent of the almost 90 million Vietnamese, and Protestants are not more than two percent. This year, Vietnam churches are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Christian Missionary Alliance, which introduced the Protestant faith to the country. In the spring of 2011 they were able to hold massive meetings in Ho Chi Minh City as part of the centennial celebration, and in the summer, a Protestant roundtable was held in the country. As the guest preacher of the conference’s closing session, Barreto greeted Vietnamese Baptist pastors and leaders on behalf of the worldwide Baptist family, bringing words of encouragement to the ministry they are doing in different parts of the country.

Vietnamese Baptists are not disconnected from the rest of the world. One pastor, while offering the financial report for the churches of his province in the past six months, mentioned an offering those churches collected to send to Japan after the earthquake. Regardless of the monetary significance of that gift, it can be seen as a lesson of solidarity with those who suffer, regardless of where they are, and in spite of one’s own needs. BCV churches are growing and spreading to more places. They are also looking for greater partnership involving Baptists from other parts of the world.

From July 9-13, Raimundo Barreto, director of the Baptist World Alliance Division of Freedom and Justice, visited Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. A metropolis of nine million people, Ho Chi Minh City is the industrial and cultural heart of Vietnam, with one of the fastest growing economies in Southeast Asia. In the past decade, Vietnam has made important moves toward a greater integration in the world economy and with hope for a greater engagement of global civil society.

As to the status of religion in the country, there is a formal provision for religious freedom in the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. However, this freedom of religious expression remains under threat. Signs of suppression and pressure on dissidents are still present. Religious groups must register with the government in order to formally exist. Since there are religious affairs offices in each province, the relationship between local government agents and religious groups vary from one place to another. The 2004 Ordinance on Religion and Belief, a government decree intended to offer guidance to the local process, led to an increase in the number of registered religious groups.

The first Baptist missionaries arrived in 1959. Now there are at least six different Baptist groups in Vietnam. Only two of them are registered. The two largest groups, Baptist Churches of Vietnam (BCV), a member body of the BWA, and the Vietnam Baptist Convention, have approximately 40,000 members each. Most churches in Vietnam are house churches.

Barreto preached in two BCV churches and participated in the two-day BCV Annual Conference for Pastors and Leaders, which was attended by 200 Baptist pastors coming from 54 different provinces in the country. As the guest preacher of the conference’s closing session, Barreto greeted Vietnamese Baptist pastors and leaders on behalf of the worldwide Baptist family, bringing words of encouragement to the ministry they are doing in different parts of the country.
A Thriving Church

Baptist witness in Cambodia is growing at a fast pace. Since the first church was planted in 1995, there are now 304 churches affiliated with the Cambodia Baptist Union (CBU).

Church planting is at the heart of the mission of CBU. The union aims to have at least one church in each of the 1,621 communes by constructing at least five churches and founding five additional house churches each year. Communes comprise five to 13 villages and will have at least one evangelist each. All 24 provinces in the Southeast Asian country will have five trained church planters each. Sixty-two new church planters were selected in 2011, and six missionary families were sent to six specially targeted provinces.

The current church planting thrust follows on earlier initiatives, including a previous church planting program between 1995 and 2000, a church building program from 2003-2008, and another church planting program beginning in 2009 which, among other things, commissioned 65 regional pastors as church planters. “CBU has a mission to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to all Cambodian people in its 24 provinces,” the union says. “CBU observes that the opportunity for effective evangelism is a church planting program.”

CBU has held extensive training programs for its pastors and church planters, one of which was attended by Fausto Vasconcelos, Baptist World Alliance Director of the Division of Mission, Evangelism and Theological Reflection, in July. Some 60 pastors from 17 provinces participated in the meeting. Every Saturday, the Bible Training Center for Pastors holds classes for pastors in Kompong Thom province. Twenty-five pastors, church leaders and university students from three provinces are currently enrolled in a discipleship training program to be completed in 13 sessions.

The union has undertaken several social ministry initiatives. The Rural Leadership Training Program ran from 1995-2000; the Orphan Feeding Program ran from 1996-1999; and a special Literacy Program ran from 1997-1999. A rice distribution program to combat spreading hunger, aimed at 1,650 families, is being undertaken. A food for work program for farmers in 10 villages along the Steung Sean River in the northern provinces of Preah Vihear and Kampong Thom has been sponsored by Baptist World Aid.

On his July 10-14 Cambodian trip, Vasconcelos preached at the Phnom Penh Kandal Baptist Church, pastored by CBU President Nhem Nivath, visited five new churches in several rural communities, and shared in a joint meeting between CBU board members and various ministries.

Top: Worshippers at a newly planted village church
Left middle: Pastors and leaders attending all day training by the CBU
Left bottom: Worship at another village church
Below: BWA METR Director Fausto Vasconcelos and translator speaking at the Phnom Pen Central Baptist Church
One hundred and thirty five delegates representing 13 Baptist conventions and unions in Northeast India attended an Asia Pacific Baptist Federation Mission Consultation in Kohima, Nagaland, from August 25-27. The event was co-sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance and was the first in a series of “Bread of Life” initiatives by its Division of Mission, Evangelism and Theological Reflection (METR).

“Northeast India represents 1.3 million Baptists… collectively sending close to 1,000 cross-cultural missionaries to India and several countries around the world,” said Bonny Resu, BWA regional secretary for Asia and general secretary of the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF).

Delegates explored historical models of mission, two models from Baptists in the Northeast Indian states of Mizoram and Nagaland, as well as a South Korea missionary model. The recruitment, training and care of missionaries; identifying key areas of partnerships; and the strengthening of churches in the mission field were also studied.

“Much of the mission work has been zeal based rather than knowledge [based] and yet God has used them to plant perhaps thousands of churches,” Resu said of missionaries from the region. “Leaders in attendance were serious as they openly confessed their shortcomings both as senders and recipients; but there was also gratitude and an expression of willingness to see greater partnership amongst various Baptist groups.”

The Kohima Declaration was released at the conclusion of the consultation. “We recognize the need for mobilizing mission as [a] people’s movement,” the declaration states. “Baptist churches of Northeast India have the capacity to bring about transformation and make significant contribution to world mission,” but “we also acknowledge the need for improving the manner in which we are doing mission, especially in respect to mobilization, recruitment and training of prospective missionaries.” Delegates pledged to share what was learned “with our churches, associations and conventions/assemblies for implementation.”

Presenters and speakers included Tim Lee, professor of mission at the Korean Baptist Theological University and Seminary in Daejon, South Korea; and chair of the APBF Mission Committee; Chris Barnden, director of ministries at Global Inter-Action of the Australia Baptist Union and a member of the APBF Mission Committee; T. C. Lalitlawmlova of the Baptist Church of Mizoram; Joshua Woo, mission leader from South Korea; Laiu Fachhai, director of Serving in Mission for Northeast India; Wati Longkumer, director of the Nagaland Missions Movement of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC); Anjo Keikung, general secretary of NBCC; Resu; and Fausto Vasconcelos, BWA METR director.

“We had a wonderful conference and I trust that as a result of this we will see greater effectiveness in mission...and partnership amongst the 13 Baptist conventions,” Resu said.
Leaders of the three main factions in the Northeast Indian state of Nagaland met on August 20 and 22 to “strengthen the reconciliation process” and to affirm the peace accord that was signed in 2009 and confirmed in September 2010.

According to an email received by the Baptist World Alliance, leaders at the meetings expressed remorse “for all the wrongs they have committed to each other and to the Naga people,” that “the past is the past,” and that they “are prepared to understand each other to work towards building a shared future.”

The longstanding disputes date back more than 50 years. Between 1992 and 2009, more than 2,330 insurgency related fatalities have been recorded in Nagaland.

The meetings were convened in Dimapur, the commercial capital of Nagaland, by the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), which issued a statement after the meetings were concluded. “Nagas have longed for genuine reconciliation among us,” the statement reads. “The path to Naga reconciliation remained arduous due to decades of conflicts fortified between us” and we “collectively express our sincere apology to the Naga people for all the wrongs we have committed in the course of the Naga struggle.”

A resolution passed by the General Council of the BWA in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in July, commends “the continuing reconciliation process between the conflicting Naga groups in Northeast India and Myanmar,” and thanks “God for the persistent and courageous witness for peace by the Forum for Naga Reconciliation.” The resolution further encourages those parties who signed the Covenant of Reconciliation “to fulfill its promise,” and “honors those within the world Baptist community and the larger Christian church who, through prayer and action, assisted the ministry of reconciliation among the Nagas.”

A group of concerned persons, including BWA General Secretary Neville Callam and Director of Freedom and Justice Raimundo Barreto, sent a letter in early August to the FNR urging all parties “to make the pledge to Naga Reconciliation a fulfilled reality. . . . For this to materialize, Naga political leaders must sit down together and agree to forge a new understanding and chart a new destiny of respect and freedom,” the letter reads.

“We the undersigned implore you, as a signatory of the Covenant of Reconciliation to participate in the reconciliation meeting of the Naga leaders facilitated by the Forum for Naga Reconciliation as early as possible. We believe your participation in the meeting is central in reaching a sustainable reconciliation agreement among the Naga groups,” the concerned persons said.

Wati Aier, principal of the Oriental Theological Seminary in Dimapur and convener of FNR, was presented with the 2011 BWA Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award at the BWA meetings in Kuala Lumpur in July. Aier was recognized for helping to broker peace between the three nationalist groups in Nagaland.

By Michael Kißkalt

Thirty-five Baptists from most regions of the European Baptist Federation (EBF) participated in the mission conference, “Baptist-Muslim Encounters,” held June 7-10, 2011 in Elstal, Germany. They shared their experiences of encounters with Muslims, joined together in worship and prayer for each other and discussed their understandings of mission and dialogue. Studies about interreligious encounters in the Bible enriched the program.

Within the EBF family are found various experiences of encounters with Muslims. In many Muslim societies, Baptist Christians form minorities within the Christian minorities. They suffer from the emigration of many church members who immigrate to Western countries. The remaining churches do not hide but engage in their societies as positively as possible. In most Muslim countries, Christians can live out their faith with a measure of religious freedom. State authorities give support and protection to Christian churches when they are attacked by extremist Muslims who fight for a society governed by Shar’ia law.

The Egyptian participant at the conference called for prayer that the uncertain situation in his country might lead to democracy, not allowing the conservative Muslim Brotherhood to come into power. Arab Christian churches in Israel and in the West Bank are grateful for developments in their
By Daniel Trusiewicz

The population of Romania is 21.5 million people, of which 90 percent are Romanians and the remaining 10 percent are ethnic minorities, including Hungarians and Gypsies. The dominant religion is Orthodox, comprising 90 percent, and Protestantism with five percent.

Romanian Baptists used to be harshly persecuted by past communist regimes. It is only since the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century that Baptists have experienced unprecedented freedom. According to recent estimates, evangelical believers in Romania comprise five percent of the population. At least seven million Romanians have no access to an evangelical church and some ethnic groups, such as Gypsies and Turks, are still not reached.

The Baptist denomination is a mass movement in Romania with several mega churches affiliated with the Baptist Union of Romania. The largest, with more than 3,000 members, is located in Oradea, with several other large congregations comprising more than 1,000 members. Besides excellent preaching, they also feature wonderful choirs, music ensembles and large buildings.

New projects have emerged, such as “Ruth,” for educating Gypsy children, and “Esther,” an adoption program for children from Asia.

The president of the Baptist union, Otniel Bunaciu, describes Romanian Baptists as “Bible-believing people who have the goal of bringing the Gospel to a needy world.” The union strives to mobilize every member in mission work.

An initiative called “Mission Torch Europe” plants new churches by Romanians who emigrated to the United Kingdom, Iberia, Scandinavia, and other countries. Approximately 200 missionaries have been sent from Romania to do mission work abroad.

The Baptist Union of Romania is the third largest Baptist body in Europe, with 1,722 churches and about 100,000 members. The Convention of the Hungarian Baptist Churches in Romania comprises 247 churches and nearly 9,000 members.

Hundreds of new church plants have been started since independence in 1990. Daniel Maris, president of the Bucharest Baptist Association, explains that indigenous church planters receive regular guidance and encouragement from experienced pastors. He says, “We meet a few times a year with the church planters in their places of ministry to understand better the context of their work and provide them the support they may need. In addition, courses on mission and church planting are offered thanks to good cooperation with the Baptist Theological Seminary.”

Maris states that the prevailing model of church planting is the “Traditional Church Extension Model” (also called “cloning”). A new church is planted by an existing church located nearby, the new plant being a satellite to the mother church. The mother church supervises the leaders of the satellite congregation, until the new church plant becomes autonomous (independent) from the mother church, though they still maintain a relationship.

Daniel Trusiewicz is the Mission Coordinator for the European Baptist Federation
The Baptist World Alliance attracted more than 300 Baptist leaders and delegates from more than 60 countries to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from July 4-9, for its Annual Gathering.

The yearly meetings involve a number of BWA groups, including the General Council and the Executive Committee; executive sub-committees and divisional advisory committees; women’s, men’s, and youth departments; regional groupings; and commissions of the divisions of Freedom & Justice, Mission, Evangelism & Theological Reflection, and others.

Highlights included the Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award, which was presented to Wati Aier, principal of the Oriental Theological Seminary in Dimapur in the Northeast Indian state of Nagaland. Aier, convener of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation, formed in 2008, was recognized for helping to broker peace between three nationalist groups in Nagaland.

The BWA accepted four new member bodies from Africa, two from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – the Association of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Congo, an association of 3,021 members in 36 churches, and the Baptist Churches Union Community of Congo, comprising 46,321 members in 372 churches. These groups bring to 10 the number of member bodies in the DRC, one of the largest countries in Africa.

Others accepted were the Baptist Convention of Sudan which includes 18 churches and another 32 that are in the process of being established, and the Free Evangelical Baptist Church of the Central African Republic which has 57,000 members in 250 churches. There are now two BWA member bodies in Sudan and four in the Central African Republic.
The total number of BWA member bodies now stands at 222 in 120 countries. The growth in BWA membership is one of the stated goals of the 2010-2015 five-year BWA in Ministry plan, which was presented to the General Council by General Secretary Neville Callam. The plan calls for an “increase [in] the number of Baptist groups associated with the BWA” over the period.

**Council and Executive Decisions**

Both the General Council and the Executive Committee were informed that preliminary talks are to be held to explore the possibility of engaging in theological dialogues with the Orthodox Church and with Pentecostals. A BWA delegation will meet with representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in Crete later this year, and another BWA team will meet with Pentecostal representatives in the city of Birmingham, Alabama, in the United States, from December 13-15.

A significant development was the change in status of the special commission on Baptist-Muslim relations, previously attached to the general secretary’s office, to that of a standing commission within the Division of Freedom and Justice. The commission seeks to engage with contemporary Islam on the basis of a mutual acknowledgement of the twin commands to love God and neighbor in order to develop mutual respect, and to promote security, peace and the common welfare. In addition, the commission will explore and encourage expression of authentic Christian witness among Muslim neighbors, raise awareness, and provide tools and resources so that Baptists around the world can relate positively to their Muslim neighbors.

The Executive Committee adopted a new fiscal policy manual. The fiscal policy manual sets the rules and provides guidance on the use and management of funds received by the BWA, and speaks to issues of conflicts of interest, confidentiality, and certain laws governing the fiscal responsibilities of the BWA.

A key section of the document covers the ethical guidelines that govern the investment decisions of the BWA, including a provision that none of its investments be placed “in any company engaged in production or sale of tobacco, consumable alcohol, for-profit gambling services, lethal military equipment, pornography and pornographic publishing.” Another provision is that companies in which the BWA invests “shall support and respect protection of internationally proclaimed human rights” and that these companies “are not complicit in human rights abuses.” In terms of labor standards, the BWA wishes to choose firms that “uphold the freedom of association” and that these enterprises “not be involved in any form of punitive forced labor and child labor.”

**Resolutions**

A number of resolutions were passed by the General Council that dealt with pressing theological, social, ethical and international issues. One resolution condemns the violence that has taken place in sections of the Middle East. Baptists are encouraged to be engaged in “informed and persistent prayer for the whole region,” and to be involved in “active solidarity with all” (Continued on next page)
the Baptist communities there.” The resolution commends the faithfulness of Middle Eastern Baptists, such as those in Lebanon and Gaza, “who are reaching out with humanitarian aid to meet the needs of their communities, including refugees,” and appeals to “the worldwide Baptist family to support them in their endeavors.”

One resolution expresses concern about conflicts in the eastern part of the DRC due to “the struggle for access to and control of the region’s vast mineral resources.” The resolution notes that the DRC supplies 70 percent of the minerals used to make cell phones, laptops, and other popular electronic devices, and that in the last 15 years, an estimated 5.4 million people have died as a result of wars in the eastern region. Women and young girls are at special risk, according to the resolution, with Eastern Congo described as “the most dangerous place in the world to be a woman or a girl” due to widespread rape and other forms of violent assaults. There is need, the BWA says, for “companies and individuals trading in minerals from Eastern Congo to work for peace and promote justice in the region” and for Baptists to advocate with companies “to create conflict-free supply chains and a conflict-free mining sector in Congo.”

One resolution endorses the “just peacemaking” formula developed by scholars led by Glen Stassen, a Baptist and professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, in the United States. The peace plan includes support for nonviolent action; cooperative conflict resolution; the promotion of human rights, religious liberty and democracy; economic development that is just and sustainable; a reduction in offensive weapons and weapons trade; the support of grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations; and the strengthening of the United Nations and other international organizations. The BWA is encouraging its member conventions and unions, churches and Baptist individuals to learn the 10 practices and “to incorporate them . . . in our congregations and institutions.”

Upton and Callam

BWA President John Upton, in reviewing his first year in office, described it as a sacred journey. Addressing the General Council, Upton said that, “after spending time with some of our courageous leaders in Baptist life and hearing world leaders express their appreciation of the BWA, it makes one want to remind Baptists there is much for which to be thankful.”

Upton warned the General Council to guard against distraction. “We are distracted from seeing clearly the bigger mission,” he said. “Less worthy agenda can capture our attention and drain passion and resources. It is essential that the main things remain the first things and that we give our best to those matters rather than the small and distracting.”

Callam encouraged members of the General Council to celebrate multiculturalism within the worldwide Baptist family. He said the BWA needs to blend elements in its cultural heritage so as not to privilege some elements over against others. He called on the BWA to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of its members as a gift, rather than engaging in what he termed a “display of comparative riches.” He expressed hope that the values that inform the BWA’s efforts will be reflected both in its vision and ministry.

Baptist leaders and delegates were cordially welcomed by Malaysian Baptists, who hosted a welcome dinner at which Isaac Yim, chairman of the Malaysia Baptist Convention (MBC), said, “Your presence here will strengthen Baptists in Malaysia in particular, and Christians in general.” Callam extended gratitude to Malaysian Baptists, and particularly to John Kok, a BWA vice president and former chairman of the MBC, for the warmth, welcome and organizational help that Baptists in the Southeast Asian country offered in hosting the BWA.
A New Nation Is Born

By Eron Henry

Baptists and other Christians in South Sudan are among those rejoicing at the founding of the world’s newest country. The Republic of South Sudan was officially formed on July 9 after its citizens voted overwhelmingly for independence in a referendum held in January of this year.

Independence was achieved after decades of war and bloodshed, costing some two million lives and dislocating approximately four million more.

Civil war broke out in Sudan in 1955 over political representation and regional autonomy. With the formation of the South Sudan Liberation Movement in 1971, separatist guerilla groups joined a unified command for the first time in the long lasting conflict. This led to the inauguration of the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region in 1972 under the Addis Ababa Agreement, which ended the First Sudanese Civil War.

The Second Sudanese Civil War started in 1983 after the president of Sudan abolished the Southern Sudan Autonomous Region and declared Sudan an Islamic state under Shari’a law, ending the Addis Ababa Agreement. This war lasted until 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and the government of Sudan, setting a timetable by which Southern Sudan would have a referendum on its independence. The referendum was held January 9-15, 2011, with 98.83 percent of the more than 3.8 million voters casting their vote in favor of independence.

Baptists, like other Christian traditions, have a strong presence in South Sudan. However, the Sudan Interior Church (SIC), a BWA member body with approximately 40,000 baptized members in 225 churches, straddles the north-south Sudan rift in a hotly contested area of Sudanese oilfields. When war erupted in 1983, members of the SIC scattered to refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya and to areas of displacement throughout Sudan, particularly in the north. As a pragmatic attempt to minister to a church divided by war, the SIC formed administrative centers in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan in the north, and in Nairobi, Kenya, known as SIC-North and SIC-South. Though divided, for the next two decades SIC Christians worked to maintain ministry amidst situations of war, displacement and extreme poverty.

With Baptist World Alliance funding, the Executive Committees of SIC-North and SIC-South met for the first time in April 2007 and agreed to pursue a course of reunification, constituting a united

(Continued on next page)
church and leadership at the SIC General Assembly in April 2008, the first joint assembly in 25 years.

Ramadan Chan, general secretary of both the SIC and the Sudan Council of Churches, described euphoric scenes in the country as citizens celebrated the country’s independence in July. “Cars are hooting their horns, people are dancing in their flats and their houses. The general mood is jubilation,” he said.

Chan indicated that Christians have a crucial peace-building role to play in South Sudan. Churches, he said, are focused on a major program of reconciliation in an attempt to help heal scars caused by the civil war. “People have been at war a long time. There is the issue of trauma, and the need for cohesion,” Chan said. “We know it’s going to be a long process and we don’t know when it will end, but that is what the churches want to do and they are committed to it.”

The SIC runs a relief and rehabilitation agency that addresses needs of communities and persons affected by war.

In the days leading up to the referendum in January, the BWA issued a call to its member organizations around the world to pray for Sudan so that the government of Sudan would respect the will of the people in the referendum, and that there would be a “broader and more robust implementation of peace and development.”

On July 9, the same day the country gained its independence, the BWA General Council, meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, passed a resolution giving official recognition to South Sudan, and shared the country’s “joy of achieving independence.” The BWA pledged to pray “for a peaceful transition,” and promised to “partner with Baptist bodies in the country in strengthening Christian witness in South Sudan.”

Also on July 9, the BWA accepted the Baptist Convention of Sudan (BCOS) as a new member body. BCOS started in refugee camps in Kakuma, Kenya, by persons displaced by the Second Sudanese Civil War. The BCOS has more than 13,500 members in 18 churches and 32 missions.

Of concern to Christian churches, including Baptists, is the status of Christians in what is now Sudan, the northern section of the country before the south seceded. Sudan is predominantly Muslim. The Sudan Council of Churches issued a statement after the referendum in January expressing “sincere gratitude to God for the overwhelming success of the South Sudan referendum.” But the umbrella church group also “affirm[s] our unity as the Church of Jesus Christ, both in the North and in the South. Being one body of Christ, we are one people and we are indivisible. We have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Our divine mandate exceeds geographical and political boundaries.”

The statement also calls for freedom of worship, movement, expression and residence in the two states and requests that the government of South Sudan ensure the security and the protection of the civil population caught in the crossfire between militias and government forces.

“We recommit ourselves to the ministry of justice, peace and reconciliation in our country,” the Council of Churches said. “As we engage in this noble task, we call upon our political leaders in the North and in the South to refrain from making provocative statements and instead preach peace, harmony and good neighborliness among all our people.”

A girl sings the South Sudan national anthem during a rehearsal of the Independence Day ceremony in Juba, July 5, 2011. (REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic, courtesy www.alertnet.org)
The Baptist World Alliance sent a letter of solidarity to Baptists in Norway following the mass killings in that country that claimed at least 76 civilian lives.

On July 22, a right wing extremist bombed a government building in Oslo, Norway’s capital, killing at least eight persons, and shot to death at least 68 young people at a summer camp on an island. Many others were injured in both attacks.

BWA General Secretary Neville Callam expressed sadness at “the senseless loss of life” in a country that has “provided a model of peaceful co-existence.” The BWA, he said, was shocked at the tragedy. The hearts of Baptists, Callam said, go out to those who mourn.

“We are grateful for your letter of solidarity, condolence and prayer for the Norwegian people,” Terje Aadne, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Norway, wrote to Callam. Aadne said the country had “experienced a most horrible attack on human life, on our government, and our nation,” and told Callam that “your greetings to us as fellow believers and to our nation warms our hearts and truly reflects God’s fellowship and love to us in a time such as this.”

“This has been an unbelievable tragedy for all of us,” wrote Billy Taranger, a Norwegian and former vice president of the BWA. He informed Callam that Utøya, the island where the youth camp shooting occurred, is located “close to the city and the government buildings are located one block away from our (Baptist union) offices in Oslo.”

Taranger’s nephew was at the youth summer camp. Taranger said the youth “was shot at while he was running away from the house and once more while he was swimming away, but he managed to get away unhurt.” Taranger, a former president of the European Baptist Federation, expressed thanks to Callam and the BWA. “Thank you for your comforting mail, thoughts and prayers. It is good to have friends who think about us. God bless you and your family and the BWA.”

“As a former general secretary of the Baptist Union in Norway I would like to thank you for your prayers and sympathy as the people of Norway mourn after the tragic incident on Friday, July 22,” wrote Per Midteide, who served on the Baptist World Aid Committee and the BWA 21st Century Committee. “Something like this has not happened in Norway since World War Two, and we are thankful to God that this tragic event seems to have brought people together like nothing before in recent history. People are gathering in great numbers, hugging each other and greeting people from other cultures with love and understanding.”

(Continued on next page)
Callam, in his letter, assured Baptists in the Scandinavian country that “Baptists around the world, together with other people of goodwill, are holding you all in our prayers,” particularly those who lost loved ones, who were physically injured, and those who were traumatized by the mass murder.

“We will continue to pray for those who are injured and for those who have lost their dear and near ones,” Bonny Resu, BWA regional secretary for Asia and general secretary of the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation, said in a letter to Aadne. “We also pray for you and Norwegian Baptists who, along with other believers and churches, and your government and civil organizations, seek to minister and console those who were most directly affected by this horrific tragedy.”

Callam expressed his hope that peace will reign in the face of such “terror of pointless violence,” and urged Norwegians to remain firm and strong “as a democratic, peace loving country.”

“The Baptist Community of the Congo River expressed solidarity and condolence and offered prayer “on behalf of the Norwegian people.”

“You are our courage, and our hope. It is you that will form what kind of Norway the future will bring. We cannot do without a single one of you, and yet we lost so many. The Norway we all want, we will allow no one to take away from us.”

“People are gathering in great numbers, hugging each other and greeting people from other cultures with love and understanding.”

By Roger Dahl

The Whole People of Norway Were Touched

On the evening of July 22, people started pouring into the streets and found their way to local churches in order to share their grief and despair following the terrorist attack. In the days and weeks that followed, memorial places appeared all across the country. Many brought flowers, lit candles and wrote down their thoughts and feelings.

We were all affected. Our government was attacked by the bombing of buildings, and our whole nation was attacked through the massacre at the youth camp at Utøya. Young people from all over the country were gathered for political training and work.

Norway is a small country, so everybody knows somebody who knows somebody that has been affected by this catastrophe.

Crown Prince Håkon started his appeal at the memorial where 200,000 people gathered at the city hall in Oslo. “Tonight our streets are filled with love. We have chosen to answer the gruesome with intimacy. We have decided to meet hate with fellowship. We have made a choice to show our values . . . Those at Utøya and the government building were the targets for the terror, but it hit all of us.

“We can never again allow ourselves to think that our opinions and attitudes are without importance. We must face every day, ready to defend the free and transparent society that we love. Beloved youth: You are our courage, and our hope. It is you that will form what kind of Norway the future will bring. We cannot do without a single one of you, and yet we lost so many. The Norway we all want, we will allow no one to take away from us.”

Memorials were arranged all over the country, some initiated by single people.

Multicultural Memorial Service

People in Norway often turn to the Norwegian Lutheran Church in times of grief. This is because of its history as the state church
Terror Attack Leads to Baptism

The terror attack on the government buildings and the youth camp for the Social Democratic Party in Norway on July 22 left many footprints. One footprint was left on the life of Mina Bakhtiar, who finally made a decision to be baptized on her confession of faith.

Mina, who came to Norway as a refugee from Iran about 10 years ago, worked in the cafeteria of the government building. After the explosion, the building was in total ruin. Mina was supposed to be there. On Friday, July 22, she went home early. That saved her. Her place of work was blown to pieces.

This triggered Mina’s plans to get baptized. She insisted on traveling to the north of Norway, where she was first introduced to her savior. Her pastor, Øystein Lode of Sortland Baptist Church, was asked to perform the baptism. He was filled with joy as he said yes.

It was a profound baptism where the congregation listened, with tears in their eyes, to her testimony. “It was at a Christian meeting on a traveling evangelist boat that I met Jesus,” said Mina. But somehow baptism did not happen.

Mina had moved to Oslo five years earlier and got the job as leader of the cafeteria in the government building.

— Roger Dahl

in our Scandinavian country. More than 80 percent of our citizens belong to the Lutheran Church.

This does not mean that Baptists have not been responding to the catastrophe. At Kvæfjord Baptist Church in the north of Norway, Pastor Magnus Lund participated in a multicultural memorial service. “The location was packed,” and there were “songs by immigrants from Africa and Burma and prayer for those directly touched by the tragedy,” Lund said. Local authorities and the Lutheran priest participated, and there was lighting of candles for all the victims of the terror attack on July 22.

The summer gathering at the Baptist Church in Andenes also became a memorial. “It became especially profound, as the grandchild of one of the ladies in the assembly was present at the shooting,” said the church’s pastor, Hermod Bakkevoll. “The grandchild was injured in the shooting and she shared the fear and anxiety experienced in the minutes before knowing that their boy was safely on his way to hospital in an ambulance.”

“It has warmed our hearts to see the engagement in the aftermath of July 22, not only from Norwegians, but also through greetings, condolences and prayers from the community of faith and Baptists all around the world,” said Terje Aadne, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Norway.

Roger Dahl is the head of information for the Baptist Union of Norway

“We have decided to meet hate with fellowship. We have made a choice to show our values”

— Crown Prince Håkon

Nothing was left of the cafeteria in the government building.

A rainy summer day 69 young people were brutally slain on this island.
Baptist World Aid (BWAid), the relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance, granted an initial sum of US$15,000 for refugee relief in East Africa.

More than 12 million people are struggling to survive the driest period in the Eastern Horn of Africa in 60 years. The drought is causing widespread crop failure, devastating livestock and causing substantial increases in food prices. In hard-hit Somalia alone, some 3.7 million people are facing a crisis and hundreds of thousands are pouring into other countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti.

Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti are also affected by the drought and food crisis, as well as Sudan, South Sudan and parts of Uganda.

The Ethiopian Addis Kidan Baptist Church is receiving an initial sum of US$5,000 in response to an appeal to the BWA by the organization’s general secretary, Kifle Shibre, to support efforts to assist Ethiopians and some of the many thousands of Somalis that are streaming into the country.

“Today I had a time with a concerned body of the Ethiopian Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau to deal with the famine situation in Ethiopia and the Somali refugees as well,” Shibre said in an email to the BWA at the end of July. “The Bureau is working to organize/coordinate the NGOs’ aid and support in order to avoid the redundancy of resources in one area.”

The Ethiopian Baptist leader indicated the need is urgent. “The number of affected people in Ethiopia is increasing from time to time and currently estimated at about 5.6 million.” Shibre said the main areas of need are food rations, including cereals, pulse, oil and blended food; health and nutrition products including drugs, medical supplies and equipment; “wash-related intervention” such as trucking of water and water purification chemicals; and agricultural needs which include animal health, livestock feeding and seed provision.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), a BWA member body in the United States, is receiving US$10,000 from BWAid for refugee relief in Kenya, where many thousands of Somalis have traveled to escape the effects of the famine. A CBF field officer was in Kenya conducting assessment of water needs at one of the refugee camps on the Ethiopian border.

CBF indicated that “CBF will support strategic but limited medical/feeding work that will focus on at-risk women and children in the Ethiopian camps in Dollo Ado… and on ambulance feeding centers.” Funds will also be spent “primarily among the Pokot people in Kenya and the Borana in Ethiopia.”

Euticauls Nzengu of Kenya, a member of the BWA Commission on Evangelism, told the BWA that “many of our Baptist churches are also hit by the famine and we are wondering what to do. Many of our people – Kenyan Baptists – are suffering in our country,” he said.

Other Baptist groups are responding to the East African famine, including the British mission agency, BMS World Mission, which channeled a grant through the Baptist Union of Uganda for 600 households in two communities in Uganda; American Baptist International Ministries which has provided an emergency relief grant; and the Baptist General Convention of Texas which gave donations to Ethiopian Aid Mission, a consortium of primarily Baptist congregations in East Texas that has been serving in Ethiopia for more than three years.

BWAid director, Paul Montacute, is encouraging Baptists to give generously to the BWA Hunger Fund for these and similar needs. “We have already received many inquiries from the worldwide Baptist fellowship,” Montacute said. “These initial gifts to the CBF and Addis Kidan will enable work to start, but more funds will be needed as we support long range programs.”

Donations may be made to www.bwanet.org or sent to:
Baptist World Aid
405 North Washington Street
Falls Church, VA 22046, USA

Above: A boy sits looking over the Seyidka settlement for the famine stricken, internally displaced people in Berkulan near Somalia’s capital Mogadishu.
REUTERS/Ismail Taxta, courtesy www.alertnet.org
A baby drinks water from his mother’s hand at the Hagadera reception center, at Kenya’s Dadaab refugee camp, situated in northeast Kenya.
REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst, courtesy www.alertnet.org
The world relief and development arm of the Baptist World Alliance has pledged an initial sum of US$10,000 to the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (CBF) for relief assistance to victims of Hurricane Irene.

The Atlantic storm, which reached the level of a category 3 hurricane, affected islands in the Caribbean including Hispaniola (Haiti and Dominican Republic), Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, and Turks and Caicos; and large sections of the eastern United States including the states of New Jersey, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

At least 55 persons have died as a result of the hurricane and damage has been estimated in the billions of dollars to businesses, homes, roads, bridges and other structures.

Everton Jackson, executive secretary/treasurer of the CBF, reported “some countries experienced greater levels of devastation than others.” The Turks and Caicos Islands “experienced more flooding than infrastructural damage” while “some Islands in the Bahamas were badly hit.” On Acklins Island in the Bahamas, 90 percent of structures have been damaged, and the local church was destroyed. “It is clear,” Jackson claimed, “that urgent help is needed for the affected areas and people . . . . Their immediate needs are for water, tarpaulins, food, and building materials, among other things.”

A number of Baptist churches served as shelters. Dozens of displaced persons took refuge in the Good Shepherd Baptist Church in Los Guananitos, including all of the 60 residents of Kilómetro 56, located northwest of Santo Domingo, the country’s capital. The village was fully evacuated due to the rising levels of the Guananito and Haina rivers caused by heavy rainfall and high winds.

Baptist World Aid, the BWA’s relief arm, is liaising with Baptist leaders in Baptist state conventions in Virginia, North Carolina and other affected areas in the US as these groups have local networks of churches in cities and towns.

The North American Baptist Fellowship, which along with the CBF is a regional fellowship of the BWA, activated its Disaster Response Network, sharing information on Baptist response and assisting in collaboration with several groups.

Baptists in the state of Virginia placed feeding, recovery, communications, crisis care, chaplaincy and other units on alert as the storm bore down on the US East Coast. Feeding units were opened in hard-hit communities in King and Queen County, which the American Red Cross used to distribute about 7,000 meals per day, and in the parking lot of the Virginia Baptist Resource Center in Richmond for distribution in several counties south of the city that were still without electricity. Several churches were used as response sites.

North Carolina Baptist Men deployed recovery units at four locations on or near the North Carolina coast in Greenville, Manteo, New Bern and Williamston, including the setting up of feeding units.

Texas Baptist Men received requests to provide disaster relief in North Carolina, and leaders were called on to serve in Vermont, which suffered its worst flooding since 1927, as a result of Irene.

“Let us remember to pray not only for our Caribbean neighbors who have been affected, but our brothers and sisters in the United States,” Jackson said. “Whatever assistance you can give will be highly appreciated.”
More than 5,500 Syrian refugees who fled to Lebanon received assistance over the past several months from Baptists, coordinated by the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD) and the Rahbe Baptist Church.

Syria has been hit by a series of protests against the government and violent crackdown by military and security forces since January of this year. Several thousand protesters were reportedly killed.

Almost US$100,000 was received and spent to assist the refugees, with funding coming from Baptist World Aid, German Baptist Aid, Canadian Baptist Ministries, BMS World Mission (United Kingdom), the Union of Baptist Churches in the Netherlands, and American Baptist Churches USA. Baptists were the first to offer aid to several families who said they had left Syria months earlier, though some refugees indicated they received aid from a Qatari NGO.

LSESD helped to provide food, hygiene kits, and medical supplies. “LSESD has decided to focus on a few issues that fill gaps being left by other organizations,” the Baptist group reported. “It is important to support those who are opening up their homes and using their already-scarce resources to help the refugees…. This will help decrease ‘host-fatigue’ and the need to move refugees to tented camps or communal living options.”

In total 615 refugee families and 248 Lebanese families received assistance.

There were no firm figures regarding the number of refugees entering Lebanon, which complicated efforts to assist. “Over the course of the response, refugees have continued to arrive at any given time, while others have returned to Syria.”

Many refugees live in tenuous situations. Five families lived in an unfurnished dwelling; two other families lived in another house that was yet to be furnished. One house had 36 refugees as occupants, some of whom decided to return to Syria. Several families lived in tents, with one of those families having three children with disabilities. Thirty two persons had been living inside a school for at least three months.

However, several Lebanese families offered shelters within their homes.

A number of displaced persons suffered from anemia, diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, high blood pressure and other ailments, and needed medical attention. Pregnant women were among those who traveled across the border into Lebanon.

Some Syrian families tell of their ordeal. A son was hospitalized in Lebanon after he was shot while protecting his mother and younger sister. One woman had not heard news of her husband since he was jailed. Others heard that their houses were broken into or destroyed, and believed they had nothing to return to in Syria.

Many refugees came from areas close to the Lebanese border or in western Syria, such as Heet, Hama and Homs, scenes of some of the largest protests, as well as Tel Kelakh.

Syrian refugees receive food and humanitarian aid at the northern Lebanese village of Wadi Khaled, near the Lebanon-Syrian border. Thousands of people demonstrated across Syria calling for freedom in defiance of a military crackdown that has killed hundreds, witnesses and activists said.

**SYRIAN BAPTISTS**

Baptists and other Christians in Syria have been adversely affected by public demonstrations and violent government crackdowns in the Middle Eastern country since January of this year. Several thousand protestors were reportedly killed.

“Many families, especially Christians, have left cities like Homos for the rural areas. Others have chosen to emigrate,” the BWA was informed. There has been “fear and tension among the children, especially those who are in areas that have witnessed daily shooting.”

Businesses owned by Christians “have been impacted and this has affected the livelihood of people.”

Baptists have remained engaged in the midst of the turmoil. “The Baptist church in Syria is actively pursuing its mission, visiting families, sharing the message of the Gospel, distributing scripture, as well as distributing relief packages and medications as needed,” the report, which came via Lebanon, said.

Syrian Baptists have requested prayer “that the Lord may bring peace and that He may preserve Syria from this trial that we’re currently going through” and that “a sense of responsibility may be awakened amongst believers that their lives may witness to the grace, peace and love that we have in Christ.”

Believers ask that prayer be offered for “ongoing meetings focused on resolving the issues in a nonviolent manner;” the strengthening of new believers; the provision for needs of the church and believers; protection; and for “ministries of compassion that are currently underway.”

“We place our lives and families in the Hands of God,” Syrian Baptists told the BWA.
The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and the European Baptist Federation (EBF) conducted a joint human rights visit to Uzbekistan from September 8-12 to promote religious freedom in Uzbekistan and to strengthen the relationship between the Baptist Union of Uzbekistan and the larger Baptist family.

The Central Asian country, a republic of the former Soviet Union, has had a checkered human rights record despite being a signatory to several United Nations treaties and charters, including the International Convention of Cultural and Political Rights, a multilateral treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly. Signers of the treaty agree to respect the civil and political rights of individuals, including the right to life, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, electoral rights, and rights to due process and a fair trial.

Religious freedom concerns in Uzbekistan include a law against proselytism, tough conditions and the long process required for churches to be registered, and actions against congregations and individual Christians by state authorities.

A special meeting with Baptist pastors in the capital Tashkent, during the BWA/EBF human rights visit to Uzbekistan.

**BAPTISTS IN TEXAS**

Affected by Wildfires

Baptists in Texas in the United States were among those affected by the severe drought and wildfires that have had an impact on the state.

The drought, in addition to strong winds, unseasonably warm temperatures, and low humidity, helped to spark wildfires in parts of the state. The fires first peaked in April and May. Strong winds occasioned by Tropical Storm Lee reignited a series of fires over the Labor Day weekend in early September. More than 3.5 million acres have been burned, and flames destroyed more than 1,000 homes in Central Texas alone.

Several members of Calvary Baptist Church in Bastrop County, one of the worst affected areas where more than 34,000 acres were destroyed, lost their homes. Primera Iglesia Bautista, also in Bastrop, which is about 30 miles southeast of the state capital of Austin, housed 10-12 families and served as a supply distribution center for those affected by the fires. Colorado River Baptist Church in Smithville in Bastrop County ran a kitchen to aid first responders and evacuees, and an arena for livestock displaced by the flames.

A number of other Baptist churches have been used as shelters for evacuees by the American Red Cross, including First Baptist Church of Possum Kingdom, where at least three dozen homes were burned in the area. The church sanctuary was burned in previous wildfires in April. While worship services were still being held in the gym at the church, many were absent as approximately half its regular attendees had to either deal with fire damage or were unable to go home.

Baptists in the communities of Hogg Bend, Sportsman’s World and Gaines Bend have also suffered from the fires.

Texas Baptist Men operated a feeding unit for approximately 1,000 persons, providing three meals per day. The group opened a distribution center in Central Texas offering items such as clothing, diapers, baby food, water, toiletries and other basic necessities.

“Texas Baptists churches are attempting to reach out to those affected by the fires and help however possible,” the Baptist General Convention of Texas stated.

A US forestry worker conducts a controlled burn to seal off a wildfire’s path as it approaches a house near Bastrop.
Approximately 5,000 delegates attended the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC) 50th Annual Session in Washington, DC, from August 7-12, under the theme, “Securing our Future.”

The convention started in 1961 in the United States by persons who were deeply involved in the Civil Rights movement and who were dissatisfied with the lack of support from the National Baptist Convention USA, a historically African American church body. Early members and supporters of PNBC included Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights leaders such as Gardner Taylor, the second PNBC president.

“It is both accurate and safe to say that most of our energy in this last year has been spent preparing for this momentous event – the celebration of our 50th anniversary,” wrote Walter Parrish III, PNBC general secretary. “I remain committed to the principles which have guided our being together for 50 years.”

In resolutions during the 50th “Anniversary/Jubilee,” PNBC recommitted to the ideals on which the convention was organized by strengthening its resolve toward preaching a social justice gospel, continuing the legacy and spirit of challenging social ills, and advocating “for justice and righteousness for the poor, the lost, those vulnerable to oppression, discrimination and exploitation.”

Progressive Baptists resolved “to start revolutions of dignity, civility and social justice in our own backyards to improve education, health care and the well-being of all people;” to increase literacy through a commitment to reading in home, church and school; and to support HIV/AIDS programs which address a disease that “has hit African Americans the hardest.”

In national affairs, Progressive Baptists offered support to the leadership of US President Barack Obama; urged the US government to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and to “apply resources saved from the draw-down of US troops to domestic needs including the eradication of poverty, the rebuilding of our urban centers and education.” The group gave support to Comprehensive Immigration Reform, to “amending the US Constitution to restore the people’s power to limit corporate spending in elections,” for the Affordable Health Care Act, and for climate change legislation as “climate change disproportionately impacts communities of color.”

Full endorsement and support was also given to the erection of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial at the National Mall in Washington, DC, which was to be dedicated on August 28, a few weeks after the convention met, but was postponed due to the passage of Hurricane Irene on the US East Coast. The PNBC urged its members to “join with our national political and civil rights leaders to commemorate Dr. King’s legacy in Washington, DC, and in their respective communities,” and to “re-dedicate themselves to the study of Black History, nonviolent protest, and advocacy on behalf of the least of our citizens.”

The predominantly African American group denounced what it termed “disrespect of President Barack Obama” through “numerous ethnical/racial slurs and remarks… by elected officials and the media;” heated rhetoric of hatred in the national dialogue; voter suppression tactics; and politicians “placing their narrow self-interests over compromise and shared sacrifice.”

The organization noted “Dr. King’s model of nonviolent social protest has been employed in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.” The recent protests in Egypt that led to the end of the 30-year reign of President Hosni Mubarak were “a direct result of peaceful nonviolent protest from the Egyptian people and the Egyptian protest movement modeled after the US Civil Rights movement,” one resolution states.

Speakers at the Annual Session included Arne Duncan, the US Secretary of Education, who described inequalities in American public education as a “dividing line” that still separates the have‑nots. “I absolutely see this as a civil rights issue of our generation. If you can’t read and you can’t get a good job, you still are not truly free,” Duncan told the gathering.

Gardner Taylor, now 93 years old, was honored for his role in the Civil Rights movement and the founding of PNBC. The elder church statesman and highly regarded preacher recalled the early years of the PNBC and its role in the struggle for civil rights and freedom. “You are of noble heritage. Many people paid a great price,” Taylor told the gathering.

Greetings on behalf of the Baptist World Alliance were brought by Associate Director of Communications Eron Henry who told the gathering the PNBC has “a proud legacy worthy of emulation by other Baptist groups and organizations around the world. Certainly, in the struggle for freedom, justice and equality, you run second to no other.” Henry further urged Progressive Baptists “to stand on your legacy of fighting for human rights and justice with the BWA.”

PNBC, a BWA member body, comprises 2.5 million members in 1,200 affiliated churches.

Gardner Taylor, 93, who was honored for his role in the Civil Rights movement and the founding of PNBC at the 50th Annual Session of PNBC
The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), formed by moderate Baptists at the culmination of more than 10 years of public controversy between conservative and moderate members of the Southern Baptist Convention, celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2011. The CBF was incorporated in 1991 and held its inaugural General Assembly that year in Atlanta, Georgia.

The 20th anniversary was marked by a number of events during the CBF General Assembly in Tampa, Florida, from June 22-24, including a banquet attended by more than 1,000 persons. Molly Marshall, keynote speaker and president of Central Seminary in Shawnee in the state of Kansas, said the CBF has provided a “place of healing, a new Baptist narrative and a movement of the Spirit.” What we were given, said Marshall, “was the opportunity to craft a new narrative—a deepened but broadened narrative. We were given the opportunity to find a larger, deeper stream of Baptist identity that plunges us into the larger ecumenical stream of Christianity.”

As part of its celebration, the CBF commissioned 14 individuals to mission work. “These field personnel...are being called out of networks focused on particular ministry in particular parts of the world as much as they are being called by CBF,” declared CBF Global Missions Coordinator Rob Nash. “It truly is something to celebrate...this passion...this energy that drives them and the rest of us together and then sends us into the world. I’m convinced that we are seeing here a picture of the global mission future.”

CBF Executive Coordinator Daniel Vestal, said, “One of the convictions that has sustained me during my time at CBF has been the conviction that this is about something a lot bigger than we are. We are a part of something a lot bigger in the Baptist family, the Christian community and the human community.”

Vestal was presented with the Whitsitt Baptist Heritage Society’s Courage Award, given annually to an individual who has made a lasting contribution to Baptist life, particularly in the face of strong opposition.

Approximately 1,800 churches, 15 theological schools, and 18 state and regional bodies are affiliated with CBF.

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The Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention (Lott Carey) held its 114th Annual Convention from August 15-19 at the Memphis-Cook Convention Center in Memphis, Tennessee, in the United States.

The Lott Carey movement was founded in 1897 by African American Baptists who were committed to a substantial foreign mission thrust, especially on the African continent, and is named after Lott Carey, one of the first American and Baptist missionaries to West Africa.

Its core ministries include the alleviation of poverty, the empowerment of women and the building of civil societies through education; the offering of preventive, restorative and reproductive healthcare; and ministry programs such as evangelism and discipleship, and the development of indigenous church leadership.

Lott Carey runs a Pastoral Excellence Program designed for the building of networks, broadening of visions, and the enhancement of African American pastoral ministry, and includes “multiple ministry immersions in African and African Diaspora contexts.”

(Continued on next page)
There is an Annual Youth Seminar, the most recent of which was held June 25-30 at Norfolk State University in the state of Virginia where approximately 400 youth between 14 and 20 years old attended. The organization inaugurated the Calling Congregations Project that helps churches “to notice, name, and nurture adolescents who may be open to ministry as vocation.”

Lott Carey is the major funder of the Lott Carey Mission School in Liberia in West Africa, and provides significant support to Rick’s Institute, also in Liberia.

Lott Carey provides significant support in disaster relief in North America and elsewhere.

It helps churches extend Christian witness around the world, providing prayer partnerships, technical and financial support, and works alongside partner nations on most continents. Partners from Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Liberia, Nigeria, and South Africa attended this year’s conference.

The approximately 2,000 delegates attending the meetings in Memphis in August were informed and inspired to invest in Christian mission. The work of the convention is to “extend the work of the church thereby allowing us to extend beyond the neighborhood of the church,” said Alyn E. Waller, senior pastor of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church and second vice president at Lott Carey, “By doing mission work we become better Christians,” he stated.

The meetings began with a prayer breakfast hosted by the Women’s Auxiliary, followed by “Memphis Mission Blitz” when hundreds of volunteers, young and old, branched out all across Memphis, conducting more than 1,000 hours of community service projects in support of those in need. Projects included administrative support to feeding the elderly to cleaning and beautifying the community.

Each day began with sunrise prayer and praise. Delegates also attended informative presentations from partner nations. Mission partners raised awareness and garnered support for educational programs and disaster relief, and discussed difficult challenges in the fight to combat HIV/AIDS, gang violence, and human trafficking. Mission education classes trained delegates on the roles and functions of mission, and equipped them to train others.

As the adults attended seminars and presentations, the youth were provided a unique opportunity to serve. Hope Missionaries (ages 5-12) and Youth Missionaries (ages 13-18) were immersed in the missionary experience. Trevor Beauford of Friendship Missionary Baptist Church and Team Leader for International Youth Development said the goal was to nurture the next generation of missionary leaders. Youth were provided hands on opportunities to do mission work, and opportunities to fellowship and connect with other young missioners. The youth conducted community service projects each day, led a worship service, and assembled a dynamic choir.

Another highlight of the convention was the Community Feast. It provided an opportunity for local guests to dine and fellowship with delegates. The honored guests for the event were from the Friends for Life Corporation, which cares for those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. “I have never experienced anything like this before in my life,” one guest stated.

The feast was followed by a musical concert.

At the conclusion of the 114th Session of Lott Carey, Robert Murray, president of the convention, offered reflections. Located in a historic city, the convention site overlooked the bridge that connects Tennessee and Arkansas. The symbolism of the bridge was not lost on Murray. “This meeting, in this city, with this host has been a ‘bridge’ meeting,” he observed.

This was the first meeting hosted by a female host pastor, the first time the convention has been held so far west, and it had the largest number of adults in their 20s and 30s. The session exposed the togetherness that a bridge brings. “We have come so far and have a long way to go with empowering people and global partners. This is a global community and we are venturing into innovative options and opportunities that will provide other means to fund mission work,” declared Murray.

As Lott Carey crosses the bridge into new territory, the future will bring new challenges and new opportunities to continue God’s work.

Donna Scott, a Lott Carey volunteer and member of Alfred Street Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia, contributed to this report.

Participants in the Lott Carey pastoral excellence program in Guyana, South America, in 2010
Photos courtesy of Lott Carey

Drawing of Lott Carey, one of the first American and Baptist missionaries to West Africa
Christian unity is both a gift given by God and a demand placed upon the church, declared Baptist World Alliance General Secretary Neville Callam.

Callam made these claims while delivering the keynote address at a Christian Unity Dinner during the American Baptist Churches (ABC) USA Biennial meetings in Puerto Rico in June. “It is Christ’s efforts at unity in Singapore and a desire for spiritual awakening among Baptists in the Southeast Asian nation; attempts at balancing a respect for the autonomy of the local church and the local church’s acceptance of the need for voluntary accountability in the Caribbean island of Jamaica; the faithful witness of Bulgarian Baptists, who recently celebrated 130 years of Baptist witness in the Eastern European country despite persecution and hardships; an increased appreciation for holistic ministry among Latin American Baptists, as evidenced in Chile after the devastating February 2010 earthquake; and the generous spirit of Baptists in the United States for those in need.

At the Christian Unity Dinner in Puerto Rico, J. George Reed, executive director of the North Carolina Council of Churches, received the Luke Mowbray Award for outstanding contribution to the cause of advancing ecumenism, and Yosh Nakagawa, staff member of the Asian American Caucus and Ministries for the Evergreen Baptist Association of ABC USA, was awarded the Sparrowk President’s Award for exceptional and outstanding contribution to the church.

The ABC USA Biennial was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, from June 24-26. ABC USA, which has a tradition going back to the 17th century, comprises approximately 1.3 million members in 5,500 churches in the United States and Puerto Rico.
Left with Only a Big Mouth

By Bob Terry

American historian George Marsden calls it the “Great Reversal.” Rick Warren says the result of it is that the church is left with only “a big mouth.” Both refer to evangelical Christians’ movement away from involvement in ministry to human needs and toward a focus on privatized expressions of Christianity through personal piety.

Marsden, who has written extensively about the interaction of Christianity and American culture and American evangelicalism, points to the early years of the 20th century (1900-1930) as a time of dramatic change in evangelical Christians’ role in the United States. He argues that fear of equating all humanitarian efforts with bringing in the kingdom of God caused conservative Christians to distance themselves from efforts to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the poor.

What some people call the “social gospel” became identified with theological liberalism — something conservative, Bible-believing folk like Southern Baptists would have no part of. Instead they retreated from the front lines of ministry to human hurts. (See Fundamentalism and American Culture published by Oxford Press in 2006.)

Evangelicals, Marsden contends, built a wall around core theological positions to defend them from the theological left, which began to question the Christian consensus of beliefs that had dominated society in the 1800s. Rather than continue to help the poor, feed the hungry, protect the weak and heal the sick as they had in the 19th century, evangelicals rallied around right belief based on a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ and expressions of that commitment through personal piety.

Warren, pastor of the 100,000-plus-member Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, California, and author of The Purpose Driven Life, The Purpose Driven Church and other books, is not as analytical as Marsden. He concludes today’s evangelical church has “cut off [its] hands and feet, and all that is left is a big mouth.” That is one reason many people in the 21st century refuse to listen to the church, he says. The church is all talk and no do. Such reasoning is behind Warren’s PEACE Plan, which he describes as “doing what Jesus did.” PEACE stands for Promoting reconciliation with God, Equipping servant leaders, Assisting the poor, Caring for the sick and Educating the next generation.

Warren says assisting the poor, caring for the sick and educating the next generation have earned him and the network of churches he leads an opportunity to plant churches and equip servant leaders in nations around the world. Proclaiming the kingdom of God through both word and deed, as Warren suggests, is a pattern used by Jesus. In Luke 9:2, Jesus sent out the 12 disciples with the command to preach the Kingdom and heal the sick. In Luke 10:9, Jesus instructed the 72 whom He sent before Him to “heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The Kingdom of God is near you.’”

Word and Deed

Jesus described His ministry with the words of Isaiah the prophet. Luke 4:16-21 describe Jesus announcing that He was sent to “preach good news to the poor . . . to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Again word and deed go together. Of these verses, the commentator in the Disciple’s Study Bible, published by LifeWay Christian Resources, wrote, “Jesus’ ministry, anticipated in Isaiah 61:1-2, was addressed to the needs of suffering humanity. He demonstrated what God’s kingdom is. The Kingdom is not pride in prosperity and power. It is helping the needy enjoy life’s necessities. It is not greater wealth for the rich but deserved rewards for the faithful.”

When John the Baptist began to doubt that Jesus was the true Messiah and sent a messenger to question Him, our Lord’s response was “go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the good news is preached to the poor” (Luke 7:22). Jesus’ answer was in the evidences of the nearness of the Kingdom as seen in ministry to human hurts.

The New Testament church understood that when people look at the church, they should see the very embodiment of Jesus. That is why the New Testament church evidenced care for the poor as a central concern. Baptists often turn to Acts 6:1-7 as the time of the first deacons. Often overlooked is the concern that prompted the selection of deacons — how to effectively care for the poor. In Galatians 2:1-10, the apostle Paul successfully defended his ministry. The passage concludes with the sentence “All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.”

James, the half brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church, wrote, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27).

Late in life, John, the beloved disciple, wrote, “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:17-18).

Words and deeds – they go together in proclaiming the gospel. Together they help show the embodiment of Jesus. If Marsden is right and evangelicals retreated from ministering to human needs because of fear of theological liberals, then it is time to confess our sin of timidity and reclaim the biblical pattern of demonstrating God’s love in ministry to human hurts as we share the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus.

Bob Terry, editor of The Alabama Baptist, the state newspaper for the Alabama Baptist State Convention in the United States, is a member and former chair of the Baptist World Alliance Communications Committee. This article is reprinted with the kind permission of The Alabama Baptist.
In Memoriam

Beverly Dunston Scott, a past vice president of the Baptist World Alliance Women’s Department, died on July 11, 2011, in Windham, Vermont, in the United States, at 80 years old.

Scott was president of the North American Baptist Women’s Union from 1997-2002, president of the Lott Carey’s Women’s Auxiliary between 2001 and 2004, and a vice president of American Baptist Churches (ABC) USA from 1982-1983.

She held membership on various BWA bodies, including on its General Council, the Commission on Doctrine and Interchurch Cooperation, the Commission on Freedom and Justice, and the Christian Education and Literature Workgroup.

She was part of the team that participated in the BWA dialogues with the Mennonite World Conference from 1989-1992, and was a member of the search committee that resulted in the appointment of the current director of the BWA Women’s Department, Patsy Davis.

Scott was a trustee for Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, from where she graduated in 1952.

She earned a master’s degree in nursing from Yale University, a Master of City and Regional Planning degree from Rutgers University in New Jersey, and a doctorate in education from New York University. She served 23 years as a professor of urban planning at Rutgers University and was Professor Emeritus at Rutgers after her retirement.

Her husband, James Scott, former senior pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in Newark, New Jersey, was president of the Lott Carey Convention from 1982-1985 and of ABC USA from 1992-1993. He currently sits on the BWA Commission on Ministry, and chaired the BWA Congress Program Committee from 1995-2000, which helped to plan the 2000 Baptist World Congress in Melbourne, Australia. He is a former member of the BWA General Council, the Commission on Baptist Worship, the Commission on Baptist Heritage and Identify, the Human Rights Award Committee, and the World Evangelization Strategy Workgroup.

In addition to her husband, James, she leaves daughters, Lindal and Kimberly.

Funeral services were held at Bethany Baptist Church on July 16.

Charles Walker, pastor, musician, composer, professor and author, died August 21 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the United States. He was 76 years old.

Walker, a relative of gospel music great Mahalia Jackson, was pastor of Philadelphia’s Nineteenth Street Baptist Church for more than 30 years, retiring in October 2010.

He served as recording secretary, chairman and later as executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, USA, where he led several food and humanitarian aid missions to Ethiopia and coordinated the construction of schools, libraries and hospitals in various locations in Africa.

He composed Requiem for Brother Martin, a work for chorus and orchestra in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., several other musical compositions, and chronicled the life of gospel songwriter Lucie Campbell in the biography, Miss Lucie.

He is a former member of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Baptist Worship and the Baptist World Aid Committee.

Walker is noted for his role in helping to found a black student caucus and for leading an 18-day student protest in 1969 that resulted in the addition of more black faculty members at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in New York state.

Walker graduated from DePaul University with both a bachelor and master’s degree in music, continued his studies in piano in Paris, France, and participated in several international piano competitions throughout Europe.

He accepted his call to ministry while teaching at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and left to attend the Colgate Rochester School of Divinity where he earned his Master of Divinity degree. He held several honorary doctorate degrees from various educational institutions and was the recipient of a number of awards.

He is survived by wife, Barbara, and sons, Jason and Pierre.

Funeral services were held August 29 at Triumph Baptist Church in Philadelphia.

The explosive growth in communication technology has placed North American churches ever closer to accessing a truly global fellowship of believers. This globalization has positioned even the most modest missional church nearer to acquiring missionary experiences for its members. Responding to this desire for local churches to experience global mission, various Canadian and United States church groups have promulgated standards for short term mission programs, but without the full theological explanation. This explanation was provided by Canadians Gary Nelson, Gordon King and Terry Smith.

In *Going Global: A Congregation’s Introduction to Mission Beyond our Borders*, the three authors explore the typical pitfalls churches face when entering the global ministry arena without sound theological and cultural preparations. Their experiences in these matters range from missionary, church planter, fund-raiser, professor, refugee board member, to urban pastor.

It is no longer enough to respond emotionally to dramatic need, believing it is better to do something than nothing, the authors warn. It is not only possible but likely to do all the wrong things for the right reasons and therefore produce the opposite result of what church leaders intend.

Churches in North America should recognize that those on the receiving end of mission efforts form a critical but typically missing piece in preparation, planning, execution, and evaluation of a mission program’s success. Common principles and practices are suggested to ensure churches design mission experiences as a two-way street, where those going and those hosting share as equal partners and as co-workers in mission.

Missional churches are to be aware of disparity in wealth among various populations: “... More than a billion people think nothing of spending $1.50 for a cup of coffee, while the bottom billion would like to see their income rise to $1.50 a day.” The disparity, the authors said, does not automatically mean that required expertise exists among those with wealth.

“The center of Christianity has moved to the Southern” part of the world, the authors remind us. Latin America, Africa, and Asia are experiencing tremendous growth in Christian life, while the Northern hemisphere experiences measurable decline. When this awareness informs the choices made regarding mission efforts, the authors believe it will have an appropriate impact on how North Americans shape their interactions with the rest of the world, and lead to true partnership in transformational mission programs.

“Certainly in any partnership, one should ask, ‘How have we been changed as a result of our relationship with each other?’”

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**Books Received by the BWA**


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**CIRCULATION STATEMENT**

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Eron Henry, Editor

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**BOOK NOTES**


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**GOING GLOBAL**

A Congregation’s Introduction to Mission Beyond our Borders

Gary V. Nelson
Gordon W. King
Terry G. Smith

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**Distinctly Baptist**

Proclaiming Identity in a New Generation

Brian C. Brewer, Editor, Judson Press, 2011

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**Baptist Confessions of Faith**

Second Revised Edition


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**DISTINCTLY BAPTIST**

In my travels for the BWA, I have learned of many epic tales of local cultures. There are countless examples of epic quests, of mythical human heroes on a long journey of discovery. You have Homer’s Odyssey, King Arthur’s knights questing for the Holy Grail, Sinbad’s voyages, Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, Dorothy’s Yellow Brick Road, Frodo’s journey for the ring. On and on they go, these stories of journeys of discovery.

Why do we keep creating these stories and loving these stories? The deepest reason I can think of is that they tell us about ourselves. They tell us about what our lives are or had better be. Living is a journey. It’s always a leaving and a moving on, all along encountering and learning. It is about being changed. Our continuing mission is to explore, to seek out, to boldly go – and if not boldly, at least to go.

This theme is all throughout scripture. The Bible teems with journeys. Liberated slaves trekking 40 years through the wilderness. Exiles in Babylon aching for the journey back home. Disciples sent throughout all the world. The Apostle Paul journeying all over the place. And Jesus, not only itinerate from village to village to village, not only on the long grim journey to his cross, but constantly saying to people with a great gleam in his eye, “Follow me!” And, so many of them actually did follow.

You might think it would be otherwise. Most people out there think religion is otherwise. They think religion is about stability, security, permanence, safe-haven. But, authentic faith is an open ended journey. It’s about changing, growing, dynamic movement, tremendous vulnerability, and good discoveries in the company of fine, adventurous companions on the way.

My travels and conversations with Baptist leaders around the world have made it clear that many are uniquely discouraged right now, the morale is low, and confidence is waning. There are exceptions of course. I think I hear that despair most in my part of the world, in North America. Yet, I hear it too, all over the world. It seems for many that we don’t have viable choices. We are facing a future we hadn’t counted on, uncertainties everywhere and not much comfort in the near future to see things through. This is certainly one way at looking at current situations.

But there is another way of looking at our situations. And that is: sometimes life presents us with more of a choice than all that. A door opens before us to do something we probably ought to do, to undertake some new difficult endeavor, to take some kind of stand, to say some words we probably should say, to risk something big, to give something big, but we are anxious about it because we can’t see what’s going to happen when we’ve done it. It comes down then to the not knowing, and in the not knowing, to trust the one who said, “I will show you, I will await you, I am with you every step of the way.”

When we feel lost, have no sense of clarity, suffer much ambiguity, experience too little comfort, we just keep living, just keep moving, and loving and waiting in that long uncertain season. This is what it means to be a child of God. All I know is that we are never too old or never too young or in-between to embrace some marvelous new insecurity and to embrace new steps of risk called faith. I don’t think the journey ever ends until finally we come to our rest.

May our life and our faith never cease to be pilgrimage, never get finished taking new steps of risking faith. Let’s not be afraid of the future that God inhabits. Uncertain as all our tomorrows may be, may we lift up our hearts on this good, great journey that is taking us home.
Recent Books from the BWA

Baptist Faith & Witness: Papers of the Study & Research Division of the BWA 2005-2010
Edited by Fausto A. Vasconcelos

Hear the Spirit: The Official Report of the Twentieth Baptist World Congress, Baptist World Alliance
Edited by Neville Callam

A Celebration of Christian Service: Reflections from the BWA Staff
Edited by Eron Henry
Contains reflections on aspects of the ministry of the BWA

Baptists Against Racism: Reflections at the End of a Decade
Edited by Neville Callam and Julie Justus
A compendium of statements against racism issued by the BWA over the years, published to mark the end of the Decade Against Racism and Ethnic Conflict

Reporting the Baptist News: Selected Articles from Baptist World Magazine
Edited by Eron Henry
Essential stories and reflections published in Baptist World during the current quinquennium

Pursuing Unity and Defending Rights in the Baptist World Alliance
Neville Callam
Reflections from the General Secretary

Coming Together: A History of the BWA Women’s Department
Esther Barnes

I’m a Woman . . . Created in the Image of God
Joyce Cope Wyatt

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