BWA Launches Interactive Website

The Baptist World Alliance® has launched its second website within a month. Bwalive.org is an interactive website where the public determines much of the content. According to the welcome page, “All persons... are encouraged to share your news, views, comments and opinions, as well as appropriate videos and photographs.”

Included on the site are areas for video sharing, as well as a blog where persons may post their own views, comments and concerns.

Visitors to the site will learn about certain initiatives of the BWA, or causes or ministries supported by the BWA. Viewers will also be asked to show their support for these initiatives or ministries through various means, whether through giving, petition signing, representation to their government or other relevant actors, or through other means.

Visitors to the site may also propose initiatives that they would like the wider Baptist constituency to be aware of and support.

The BWA launched its newly redesigned and reconfigured main website in the month of May (www.bwanet.org) with a new interface and added features. The international Baptist organization also launched a mobile app that persons may download on to their Apple or Android devices.

The new interactive website can be seen at www.bwalive.org or linked directly from the main BWA website by clicking the “In Step with the Spirit” tab.

COVER PHOTO

BWA General Secretary Neville Callam made presentations to Gardner Taylor and wife, Phillis, as the BWA honored Taylor for a lifetime of holistic ministry. 

Unless otherwise noted, photos in the issue are by BWA staff.
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Diversity, Chinua Achebe once said, is “the engine of the evolution of living things, including living civilizations.” What is more beautiful than the reflection of this diversity in a corporate worship experience? This is what happened in Shiloh Baptist Church in Plainfield, New Jersey, USA, one Sunday morning in August.

Shiloh Baptist is a congregation that comprises people from multiple cultures. Many church members have roots that are deeply imbedded in the African Diaspora both in and outside of the United States. The congregation treats this cultural diversity as a resource to be celebrated and not a challenge to be overcome.

Recently, when two countries in the Caribbean – Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago – marked the 50th anniversary of their attainment of nationhood, Gerald Thomas and his congregation in Plainfield decided it was appropriate to take note of this and mark it in their corporate worship life. Rather than focusing alone on the two countries, the church decided to broaden the focus of its celebration to include the entire Caribbean, and through this to express appreciation for its members that originate from that area.

When the congregation assembled on Sunday, August 12, 2012, in the aftermath of the 30th Olympiad in which participating Caribbean nations performed creditably, some of its members from the Caribbean were appropriately dressed in their nations’ colors. A specially assembled Caribbean choir drawn from the membership and featuring both people from the region and fellow Christians from their new home in the USA led the congregation in song. The more than two hours spent in worship were made to feel much shorter partly because of the music. Melodious music emanating from well-tuned steel drums gave the service the flavor of Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, pulsating reggae rhythms from Jamaica and the artistry of singers from Haiti, using both Haitian Creole and English, gave the worship service an air of authenticity as a celebration worthy of the Caribbean. It was a Caribbean “lyme” of the faithful!

The worship planners managed to blend the special elements drawn from the culture of the Caribbean into a worship experience in which, again and again, mention was made of the gift of oneness in Christ Jesus that members of the congregation enjoy. Worship leaders kept reminding the gathering of the oneness of the people of God, whatever their ethnicity and culture, and they affirmed that Christian unity is dynamic enough to accommodate cultural diversity. The congregation illustrated what the 1996 international consultation Worship and Culture team of the Lutheran World Federation meant when it pointed to the need for worship to be transcultural, contextual, countercultural and cross-cultural.

In his book, Gather into One: Praying and Singing Globally, C. Michael Hawn said that in the midst of the “ethnic, socioeconomic, and generational diversity in every corner of North American society… sung prayer [may bring about] a unity that revels in the diversity of God’s creation. [P]rayerful song fuses the diverse themes of each community represented in the gathered body into a single melodic community of believers.”

One Sunday morning in August, the Shiloh Baptist Church in Plainfield, New Jersey, USA, provided more than ample evidence of the possibility of forming this melodic community when we value and celebrate one another. Gatherings of Christians who affirm the dignity of each person created by God and show due regard for the richness of cultural diversity will often feature, and delight in, a varied fare of music and song in worship. From time to time, Christian people are ready to set aside the traditions that are peculiar to the dominant culture where they worship in order to make room for others. They pass the acid test of hospitality when it is administered on a Sunday morning.

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**A Test of Hospitality**

**Joined together in harmony and having received the godly strain in unison… sing in one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father.**

— Ignatius of Antioch

CIRCULATION STATEMENT

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

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Eron Henry, Editor

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Neville Callam

4 BAPTIST WORLD MAGAZINE
The International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) in Prague, Czech Republic, will move to Amsterdam, Netherlands, becoming an International Baptist Study and Research Center, probably by September 2014.

This was the unanimous recommendation of the Board of Trustees of the seminary to the Council of the European Baptist Federation (EBF) that met in Elstal, Germany, from September 26-29. The trustees proposed a new partnership with the VU (Free) University of Amsterdam, the Baptist Union of the Netherlands (BUN) and the Baptist Seminary of the Netherlands (BSN).

The global financial downturn that has adversely affected the seminary’s income and the increasing financial burden of the upkeep of a large suite of buildings in Prague, led to a severe financial crisis for IBTS from 2008 onwards. The decision was made to refocus the school as a non-residential study and research center. This means selling the property in Prague and moving to a new location.

“One of the joys of being Baptist is living with the provisional nature of all institutions, and the capacity to reshape how we do things to meet changing situations,” said Ruth Gouldbourne, chair of the Board of Trustees. “It is exciting to see God once again leading us into new places, and to rest in the faith of this community, that wherever God leads, God also opens the way and equips the people.”

IBTS will be located in a “Baptist house,” a Baptist church building in South Amsterdam. The Baptist house will be shared by the new Study and Research Center, IBTS’ specialist library of Baptist and Anabaptist books and journals, the BUN (which will move its offices to Amsterdam), the BSN, and the office of the EBF.

Work to renovate and extend the church building will be carried out by the BUN. Students will be housed in local hotels and other facilities when they visit the Baptist house for intensive weeks of study and learning.

The new Study and Research Center has been invited to become an “embedded institution” in the Department of Theology of the VU University Amsterdam, which is situated close to the proposed Baptist house. This university, founded by Dutch Calvinists, is now a large public university that seeks to preserve a Christian ethos. The Faculty of Theology is one of the largest in Europe and already has several seminaries, including the Dutch Mennonites and Baptists, as embedded institutions. This will give the opportunity for sharing of academic and practical resources and higher degrees awarded by VU University.

The new Baptist Center will focus on doctoral studies in Baptist and Anabaptist Studies, and Mission and Practical Theology. Study at the masters level may still be possible using the combined resources of the center and VU University.

The current rector of IBTS, Keith Jones, will conclude his term of office in the summer of 2013. He is confident that “the Amsterdam option and working in a much larger academic theological setting opens up whole new possibilities for our doctoral and research programs.”

Jones stated that “in the new economic climate with old buildings, declining donor income and much higher costs in the Czech Republic than previously, this represents an imaginative way forward to preserve for Baptists throughout the EBF and beyond a center of excellence in research and learning as we continue to offer high class degrees from a top flight European Union University at masters and doctoral levels.”

IBTS relocated to Prague in 1997 after almost 50 years in Rüschlikon, Switzerland, where it was begun in 1948 by the then Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to provide a high-level education for pastors in war-ravaged Europe. The seminary was handed over to the EBF in 1989 and is now wholly owned by the EBF.

IBTS was re-focused in 1998 to concentrate on higher degrees for seminary teachers and union leaders, validated by the University of Wales and the Czech Ministry of Education. In 2000 it began a PhD program that has to date produced 18 doctoral graduates.

IBTS currently has approximately 120 students pursuing higher degrees in Baptist and Anabaptist Studies and Applied Theology.

The IBTS campus in Prague
Photo courtesy of IBTS
Baptists in the United States and elsewhere responded to the disasters caused by the passage of Hurricane Isaac through sections of the Caribbean and the United States.

Churches in Haiti provided shelter and other forms of assistance to those affected by the storm. “Source of Light,” a new complex of school, orphanage and other facilities in the Delmas 19 community in Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital, built largely through funding provided by the Baptist World Alliance® (BWA), sheltered a number of families. Haitian churches were also used as shelters during the storm.

Isaac left at least 19 dead and at least six missing in the Caribbean nation, and many farms were destroyed and livestock killed. A number of Haitian churches and other property were damaged, while some Baptist members were left homeless.

Heavy wind and rain caused by the storm also affected other Caribbean countries, including Antigua, Jamaica, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, but there were no reports of loss of life or widespread damage.

The North American Baptist Fellowship (NABF), one of six regional fellowships of the BWA, activated its Disaster Response Network to assist Americans who suffered from the effects of the storm. The network comprises a diverse group of Baptist conventions and unions that cooperate with each other in disaster response.

Isaac dumped enormous amounts of water along the US Gulf Coast. Reports were that some 864,000 residents in the state of Louisiana were without electricity, while Mississippi also experienced outages. Heavy rain affected Arkansas. At least five states were under tornado watches. Blocked roads and high winds hampered initial response efforts.

The BWA response was coordinated by Baptist World Aid, which works closely with the NABF Disaster Response Network.

The Baptist World Alliance® (BWA) responded to appeals for assistance from Baptists in North Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) due to a humanitarian crisis that has seen tens of thousands of Congolese fleeing their homes.

The United Nations Refugee Agency reported that since April, its staff on the ground has witnessed tens of thousands of people fleeing their homes in North Kivu due to intense fighting between government forces and armed rebels. Many have sought safety in neighboring countries such as Uganda and Rwanda, while others looked for refuge in other parts of the DRC.

Baptists in the region told the BWA that conditions in camps housing displaced persons were deteriorating rapidly. Assistance from nongovernmental organizations was not sufficient and there was urgent need for both medicine and food. “Many sick people are without help and sanitary conditions are not good,” the BWA was informed. “Among those dying most are children. Many people are going to die not because of hunger but because of sickness.”

The BWA, through Baptist World Aid, its relief and development agency, appealed to Baptists to make donations to meet the urgent needs of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the DRC to assist with food, clothes and medicine in at least some of the eight IDP camps that have been established.
Iranian Pastor Released from Prison

Youcef Nadarkhani, the Iranian pastor who faced a possible death sentence, has been released. He was arrested in October 2009, and charged and convicted for apostasy and for attempting to evangelize Muslims.

Nadarkhani was released in early September after being acquitted of apostasy. He was, however, found guilty of evangelism, but was released for time already served.

Reports circulated in late February that Iranian courts had issued an execution order for Nadarkhani and that the execution could take place at any time.

The Baptist World Alliance® (BWA), joining other Christian and international organizations, had condemned the arrest and conviction. Raimundo Barreto, BWA director of the Division of Freedom and Justice, urged Baptists not only to pray, “but also to contact their own governments in order to increase international pressure on the government of Iran to annul the death sentence, and demand his immediate release.”

Baptists in several countries reportedly responded to the appeal, including Brazilian Baptists who, along with other Christians, met with the Iranian ambassador in Brasilia. The Argentina Baptist Association presented a note to the Iranian embassy in Buenos Aires asking for Nardakhani’s release.

The BWA wrote a letter to Iranian authorities and to Suzan Johnson Cook, the United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. Several meetings were also held with Victoria Alvarado, the former director of the US State Department Office of International Religious Freedom, to discuss strategies on how best to approach this case. The BWA also communicated with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the UN, and with Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti of the Brazilian permanent mission at the UN.

“As Baptists, we all rejoice with the release of Pastor Nardakhani, and also with the release of at least 130 political prisoners in Iran last month,” Barreto said. “We should continue to pray for his safety, that of his family, and for other prisoners of conscience still held captive in Iran, including Christian pastor Farshid Fathi who is serving a six-year sentence, and seven Baha’i leaders serving 20-year prison sentences on the basis of their religious beliefs.”

Prior to his imprisonment, Nardakhani, who converted to Christianity at the age of 19, was pastor of a 400-member Christian congregation and a network of Christian house churches in the city of Rasht in northwestern Iran.

BWA Receiving Human Rights Award Nominations, Preparing for Human Rights Day

The Baptist World Alliance® (BWA) has begun the process of accepting nominations for the 2013 Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award. Nominations close on November 30.

Any Baptist individual, church, or organization can submit a nomination, and any Baptist is eligible to receive the award. The award is intended to recognize and give visibility to men and women who have done outstanding work in defending and promoting human rights as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Persons may not make nominations on their own behalf.

The awardee will be announced at the March 2013 BWA Executive Committee meeting and the award will be presented during the Annual Gathering in July 2013 in Jamaica.

The BWA is also making preparations for the observance of BWA Human Rights Day on December 8 and 9, depending on whether churches worship on Saturday or Sunday. This year’s observance emphasizes prayer for countries that experience egregious violations of human rights, and in particular, violations of religious liberty, with special focus on Nigeria.

Boko Haram, a militant Islamic group, has carried out a series of bombings and other acts of violence that have led to numerous deaths, injuries, destruction of property and widespread fear in Nigeria. Christian churches and government offices and buildings, including police stations, have been among the main targets of the militants. More than 1,400 people in northern and central Nigeria have been killed in attacks by Boko Haram since 2010.

Nigeria is home to the largest number of Baptists in Africa. The Nigerian Baptist Convention has a total of 3.5 million members in more than 10,000 churches and the Mambilla Baptist Convention has approximately 23,000 members in more than 250 churches.
Gardner Taylor has long been called the “Dean of American preachers” due to his eloquence and depth. The former civil rights leader was recently lauded by the BWA for the way he “modeled a holistic ministry and courageous commitment to civil and human rights, religious liberty and social justice,” the resolution reads.

Taylor was, along with Martin Luther King, Jr., a founder of the Progressive National Baptist Convention in 1961 that helped to spearhead the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. He was elected president of that body a few years after its founding.

The grandson of slaves and the son of a Baptist pastor, Taylor was born in 1918 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He earned degrees from Leland College and Oberlin Graduate School of Theology. His pastorates included Bethany Baptist Church in Elyria, Ohio; Beulah Baptist Church in New Orleans, Louisiana; Mt. Zion Baptist Church, his home church and pastorate of his father, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and the Concord Baptist Church of Christ in Brooklyn, New York, where he spent 42 years.

While in New York, Taylor became involved in a number of civil rights causes. He led fundraising in New York on behalf of Martin Luther King’s civil rights movement; was arrested for public protest on behalf of African American and minority trade workers; and promoted political and racial equality within New York as the first African American on the New York Public School Board.

But it was Taylor’s preaching gifts that won him acclaim in the United States and other countries. Callam, who is Jamaican, reminisced with Taylor about the sermon Taylor preached at a
Much Achieved in Chile

By Eron Henry

More than 2,500 Chilean Baptists welcomed the approximately 300 Baptist leaders and delegates from some 40 countries attending the Baptist World Alliance® Annual Gathering at the Teatro Caupolican in Santiago on the evening of July 2.

The evening was a cold (it was winter in Chile) but pulsating affair with extensive cultural performances by students from the Baptist College of Temuco, a cultural group from First Baptist of Concepcion, the Broncos de Jerico Band, comprising mainly brass instrumentalists from Baptist churches across Santiago, and Osvaldo Quadros, a well known Brazilian-Chilean singer, who has converted to Christianity.

Chilean Baptists were particularly delighted that BWA General Secretary Neville Callam delivered his entire greeting in Spanish. He assured Chilean Baptists that they are part of one Baptist family sharing oneness with other Christian believers around the world.

“We are one Baptist family, brothers and sisters, witnesses for our Lord Jesus Christ,” Callam stated.

BWA President John Upton told the audience that Baptists had supported and remembered Chileans during recent crises, such as the massive February 27, 2010, earthquake and the mining disaster that trapped 33 miners underground for more than two months, from August 5 to October 13, 2010. He expressed the joy of the BWA to be able to go to Chile for its Annual Gathering of global Baptist leaders.

The two hosting conventions played significant roles leading up to and during the Gathering. In addition to planning the evening celebration at the Teatro Caupolican, the National Baptist Convention of Chile and the Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Chile also assisted in logistical planning for the Gathering. Leaders and delegates from both bodies attended Annual Gathering sessions, provided volunteers, including translators, and made moving presentations at a forum that examined Baptist response to disasters. The backdrop to that forum was the February 2010 earthquake and the role that both groups played in providing relief in its aftermath.

Decisions

A number of important decisions and developments came out of the Annual Gathering, which was held July 2-7 at the Sheraton

(continued on next page)
Faustin Bashaka, attended the Gathering, was formally accepted
Reformed Baptist Convention in Rwanda, whose president,
African continent.
such as mission trips in South Africa and other countries on the
International Women's Conference, and post-congress activities
local preparations. A number of other events will be planned
Arrangements Committee, which assists the BWA in making
except for persons who choose “home stays” with fellow
thousands of Baptists that are expected to attend the congress,
The housing manager will help to coordinate housing for the
2015. Most of the meetings will be held at the convention center.

The General Council authorized the general secretary
to circulate a notice of motion that will be
decided on at the next sitting of the council in Jamaica in July
2013. If approved, the motion will allow all BWA vice presidents
to be members of the executive. The notice of motion came after
representation by the vice presidents to the Executive Committee.

The council, acting on a recommendation from the executive,
granted authority to the BWA general secretary to appoint
additional persons to commissions. Previously, Callam made
appeals at Executive Committee meetings in March in the United
States and during the Annual Gathering in Chile that the BWA
should act to deepen and broaden participation within the global
umbrella organization that represents Baptists in 120 countries.

Contracts have been signed with the International Convention
Centre in Durban and a housing manager in preparation for the
21st Baptist World Congress to be held in South Africa in July
2015. Most of the meetings will be held at the convention center.
The housing manager will help to coordinate housing for the
countless of Baptists that are expected to attend the congress,
except for persons who choose “home stays” with fellow
Baptists. Home stays are being coordinated by the Local
Arrangements Committee, which assists the BWA in making
local preparations. A number of other events will be planned
around the congress, including pre-congress events such as the
International Women’s Conference, and post-congress activities
such as mission trips in South Africa and other countries on the
African continent.

The BWA welcomed two new member organizations. The
Reformed Baptist Convention in Rwanda, whose president,
Faustin Bashaka, attended the Gathering, was formally accepted
into membership of the BWA. The Baptist group, formed in 2005,
comprises more than 12,000 members in 34 churches. It becomes the fourth BWA member
body in the country, located in the central
region of Africa. Also accepted into BWA
membership was the Free Baptist Churches
of Burundi, which has 70 churches and more than 8,000 members.
There are now two BWA member bodies in Burundi, a country that
shares a border with Rwanda.

The BWA now has 223 member organizations in 120
countries.

Baptist Relationships

Relationships among Baptists received special attention. Members of the General Council supported continuing dialogue
between the BWA and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).
Leaders of both the BWA and the SBC held a joint meeting
in December 2011. The SBC had previously withdrawn its
membership from the BWA in 2004 but an agreement was arrived
at on April 13 in that year that the leadership of both bodies should
“meet at least once per year to continue an ongoing dialogue.”
While the issue of SBC membership within the BWA has not and
is not expected to arise, the council sees the talks as steps toward
the establishment of harmonious relationships among Baptists
worldwide.

Durosinjesu Ayanrinola, elected as general secretary of the
All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF) in November last year,
expressed his gratitude for the intervention of Callam in helping
to settle long standing issues of disunity among Baptists in Kenya.
Ayanrinola also reported that pending litigation among Baptists in
Sierra Leone has been settled as the court case has been withdrawn.

Concern was expressed about the Telugus in India. The General
Council is hopeful that the Telugus, one of the largest Baptist
groups in India comprising more than one million members,
can be welcomed back into the BWA “without condoning the
divisions and conflicts” that have affected Telugu Baptists for the
past several years. The Telugus have been bitterly divided over
administrative and property issues and
were suspended from the BWA in 2004.
The BWA expressed its support for all
attempts made at reconciliation and
the settling of disputes.

Personnel Changes

Two new personnel ap-
pointments were formalized. Rothangliani Rema Chhangte,
originally from Northeast India
but whose last position was
liaison for Burmese refugees
with American Baptist Home
Mission Societies in the US,
was formally appointed by the
General Council as the director of Baptist World Aid. Ayanrinola
was formally appointed as the BWA regional secretary for Africa.
He was previously director of the Missionary Organization
Department of the Nigerian Baptist Convention before being
elected AABF general secretary.

A number of BWA retiring staff members were recognized for
their period of service to the BWA. Paul Montacute of Britain was
director of BWAid beginning in 1993 and was previously director
of the BWA Youth Department beginning in 1990. Lee Hickman
of the US has been assistant to the BWAid director for 25 years.
Linda Falimy of Indonesia came to the BWA in 1991
as assistant to the director of communications and was
appointed database specialist in 2006.
Judy Campbell started out with the
BWA in 2001 as events coordinator and
later became financial assistant. Alberto

Right: BWA General Secretary Neville Callam
addressing the Annual Gathering in Chile
Below: Durosinjesu Ayanrinola, newly
appointed BWA regional secretary for Africa,
spokes at the Annual Gathering

Above: Rothangliani Chhangte
addresses the General Council after
she was formally appointed director
of Baptist World Aid

Right: Retiring director of Baptist
World Aid, Paul Montacute
Prokopchuk was BWA regional secretary for Latin America and general secretary for the Union of Baptists in Latin America for 11 years, starting in 2001. Harrison Olan’g was BWA regional secretary for Africa and general secretary of the AABF between 2007 and 2011.

Montacute, Campbell and Falimy retired at the end of July and Hickman retires in December. The terms of both Prokopchuk and Olan’g had come to an end and they did not seek re-election to their respective positions.

Resolutions

Six resolutions were approved for action by the General Council. One resolution called for Baptist church leaders to renew urgently the teaching on religious liberty for all persons and to serve as advocates in their congregations and communities for the protection of all who wish to worship as their consciences dictate. A second resolution expressed concern about the discriminatory bombing of places of worship and properties in Nigeria, the slaughtering and killing of the Nigerian people and the abuse of human rights in the name of religion. It appealed for a peaceful ending of all violence and abuse of human rights in the West African country.

A resolution on climate change urged Baptists to teach and model creation care, identify “simple and practical means” to incorporate an ecologically responsible lifestyle, and to support “the framework for action” that came out of the recent United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Rio conference, held June 13-22 and in which the BWA participated, issued a document, *The Future We Want*, which seeks to achieve certain environmental goals at the international, national, regional and local levels.

The BWA, through another resolution, commended and endorsed *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World* for study by Baptist churches, conventions and unions. The document was endorsed by the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue of the Vatican, and the World Evangelical Alliance.

The 200th anniversary of the formation of the General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions, which “helped to transform Baptists in North America to a missionary people,” will be observed in 2014. A resolution called for a celebration of this milestone and encouraged Baptists to continue to give support through the giving of themselves, their prayers and their gifts to the cause of Christian mission around the world.

An appreciation, via a resolution, was expressed for Gardner Taylor, who recently celebrated his 94th birthday. Taylor, a former BWA vice president, was a noted leader in the Civil Rights Movement in the US. He was involved in the BWA over several decades and was a keynote speaker at four consecutive Baptist World Congresses.

**Human Rights Award**

Edgar Palacios of El Salvador received the Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award during a meeting of the General Council. Palacios was hailed as a pastor and leader, teacher and theologian, and as a pioneer educator. Referred to as a respected peacemaker, he received special recognition for helping to negotiate peace in El Salvador during the civil war of 1980-1992 and for working for the social wellbeing of the marginalized in Central America and in North America.

In his response, Palacios paid tribute to “the heroism and courage of hundreds of leaders of the Salvadorian people that worked with CPDN (Permanent Committee of the National Debate for Peace) who gave their lives and talents to achieve justice and peace.” He made special mention of Medardo Gómez, Lutheran Bishop of El Salvador, “my friend,” who supported the struggle for peace in El Salvador. He recalled the role played by his late wife, Amparo, a Mexican by birth, but whose “heart was for El Salvador and Latin America.” He lauded her efforts to influence the UN and the Congress of the US to ensure that those who suffered had a voice “in these centers of power.”

“I was only a servant. The Lord used me. With this award, the world Baptist family reaffirms its vocation for justice, the respect for human rights and human dignity.”

Both BWA President Upton and General Secretary Callam lauded Chilean Baptists on their hospitality, commitment, and support that made hosting the Annual Gathering in the South American country successful and fulfilling.
A mong the meetings of the Baptist World Alliance® Annual Gathering in Chile were those by various constituencies, including regional groups.

There are six geographical or regional expressions of the BWA: the All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF), the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation (APBF), the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (CBF), the European Baptist Federation (EBF), the North American Baptist Fellowship (NABF), and the Union of Baptists in Latin America (UBLA).

Africans expressed joy that the continent will host its first Baptist World Congress, which will be held in Durban, South Africa, in July 2015. African Baptists saw the congress as being hosted by all of Africa, hoping the meetings will reflect much of African Christianity and culture, not just South Africa’s. Those in Chile promised to give full support to the congress, including attending in great numbers.

The meeting also heard from and met Durosinjesu Ayanrinola, who was elected AABF general secretary in November last year. He was confirmed as BWA regional secretary for Africa during the meeting.

Caribbean Baptists discussed their upcoming Mid-Term Assembly set for August in Antigua, as well as the hosting of the BWA Annual Gathering in Jamaica in July 2013. Disaster response was also a matter of concern, as the region is prone to hurricanes that occur each year. The ability of Baptists in the region to respond to natural disasters is an ongoing discussion. Haiti, which experienced a devastating earthquake on January 12, 2010, killing hundreds of thousands and displacing more than one million, received special attention in the discussions, including details on the response from the CBF and conventions and unions within the region.

European Baptists heard of visits made to the Middle East by teams from the EBF. The EBF includes conventions and unions in the Middle East. The status of the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) in Prague, Czech Republic, was also discussed, with a decision to be made on the school’s future location and priorities. The IBTS has been battling financial challenges over the past few years.

Sofia Camnerin, vice president of the Joint Future Church in Sweden, introduced the new church which was formed in May 2015.

Below: BWA Vice President Burchell Taylor, left, offers prayer for Neville and Dulcie Calliam during the meeting of Caribbean Baptists at the Annual Gathering. Sharing in the prayer are CBF President William Thompson, 2nd right, and Everton Jackson, CBF executive secretary/treasurer, right.

BWA ANNUAL GATHERING

Pastors, Theological Educators & Mission Leaders Share Common Concerns

A number of affinity groups met during the Baptist World Alliance® Annual Gathering in Chile. Affinity groups are a gathering of persons sharing similar vocations or engaging in similar ministry endeavors. Groups meeting in Chile included pastors, Baptists in higher education, and missioners and mission leaders.

Preaching, teaching, counseling, visiting, management, and leadership were mentioned as the main activities that occupy the time of pastors. The activity that got the most attention depends on the cultural context and on pastoral leadership styles.

Loneliness and burnout were some of the common challenges pastors face, regardless of country or context. Pastors at the meeting felt a strong desire and need to spend time alone with God in order to fulfill their duties more effectively, as well as the need for friends, shoulders to lean on, and time to get away to regain strength. The group recognized the need for pastors to take vacation time and to make use of sabbaticals.

Churches need to be educated on the need for pastors to have continuing education, preparation, and resources in order to carry out the daily and weekly ministerial responsibilities. It was recommended that pastors hold the same kinds of discussions as were held in Chile with colleagues in their own context, whether at the local, regional or national levels.

Higher education participants, who represented some 18 institutions at the meeting in Chile, acknowledged the need for more relevant theological education and better communication with local churches on the purpose of theological education. Theological education, it was emphasized, needs to have curricula that focus more on character formation and praxis, a term used to express how the Gospel is to be lived in the world through a combination of reflection and action.

Hubris, it was stated, needs to be avoided, not being critical of those who do not have formal theological training or who do not have theological degrees.

A number of trends in theological education were identified. These include a decline in student enrollment in theological schools, and an upward trend of seminary students in their 30s, most of whom are pursuing ministry as a second career. The upward movement in the cost of theological education was also another factor, which is having an impact on the ability of students or their sponsoring churches to afford ministerial training and theological education, and thus the viability of the schools themselves.
2012 when the Baptist Union of Sweden, the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden and the Swedish Methodist Church, created a single entity. Camnerin, who is from the antecedent Covenant Church, was attending her first BWA meeting. European Baptists also received details on the youth leaders’ online training program, Horizons.

Jim Hill, who was elected NABF president in March and who assumed responsibility in July, was introduced to North American Baptists in Chile. Hill is from the Baptist General Convention of Missouri and will serve as NABF president for the next two years. He succeeds David Goatley of the Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention.

A task force is to be formed to encourage individuals and groups from North America to attend the Baptist World Congress in South Africa in 2015, and to engage in missional activities while in Africa. It was also announced that the NABF 2013 Annual Gathering will be in Falls Church, Virginia, in the United States, from March 7-8, and that the 50th anniversary celebration of the NABF will be held March 6-7, 2014, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, also in the US.

Approximately 60 persons from seven countries in South America and four from Central America attended the regional meeting for Latin America. Parrish Jacome from Ecuador, who was elected UBLA general secretary in April at a meeting in Paraguay, was introduced to Latin American Baptists. He succeeds Alberto Prokopchuk of Argentina.

Decisions were made to conduct a survey on urban ministry in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in November of this year. The next annual consultation of presidents and general secretaries of the conventions and unions in Latin America will be held April 2013. UBLA will also encourage rectors, deans and others involved with theological education to participate in the next Baptist International Conference on Theological Education, which will immediately precede the Annual Gathering in Jamaica in 2013. Latin American theological educators were also encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to exchange experiences with each other.

The International Baptist Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires was congratulated on its 100th anniversary. The school trains Baptist pastors and other church leaders who serve in Latin America.

The mission leaders and missioners affinity group was clear in the understanding that the mission of the church is, first of all, the mission of God. The task of the church is not to develop its own programs but to respond to the mission of God, participating in that mission.

The essence of mission is understood within the concept of Missio Dei, an expression that says mission derives from the very nature of God, and the missionary initiative comes from God alone. God invites persons and churches to participate in God’s initiative. This response is expressed through commitment and seeking God’s guidance in the fulfillment of that mission. We get our understanding of mission from our theology, and a proper understanding of the Trinity helps our understanding of mission.

A concern expressed in the meeting was the sustainability of mission, especially in light of limited resources and waning interest. It was strongly felt that those among whom mission is exercised should be encouraged to take on the responsibilities of mission themselves. A planned exit strategy by those leading the mission effort that includes training of local leaders and the locals eventually resourcing the mission enterprise themselves is fundamental to sustainability.

An important aspect of mission is attention to social and justice issues. Evangelism and social work should be done together. The practice of mission should be relevant to the realities and context in which mission is exercised, and paternalism should be avoided.
Baptist scholars, theologians, educators, leaders and pastors presented papers on a wide number of issues and subjects in commission meetings held during the Baptist World Alliance® Annual Gathering in Chile, providing a wealth of theological discussions.

Subjects covered by commissions of the Division of Mission, Evangelism and Theological Reflection included Mapping a 21st Century Global Baptist Identity, A Latin American Baptist Identity, Baptists and Catholics: Latin American Perspectives, and History and Developments in Theological Education in Northeast India.

Papers presented in commissions of the Division of Freedom and Justice included Religious Liberty in the US Political Experience, Peace and Human Rights Education, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Latin America, Christianity in a Multi-religious World, and Addressing Domestic Violence in our Religious Communities.

Darren Cronshaw, a researcher at the Baptist Union of Victoria in Australia, delivered a paper on theological education and leadership formation. He said there are two challenges faced by the modern church – how to meaningfully engage the broader community, and how to foster genuine spirituality. He said that the church is faced with a society that, even if it is open to spirituality, is oftentimes “less attracted to the church.”

Cronshaw argued that there is a need for “re-envisioning theological education and missional spirituality” in order to meet the twin challenges that the church faces. He contends that this is best achieved “in a new monastic framework that helps students cultivate inner contemplation and outer engagement and relate their faith to everyday life.”

Cronshaw said that there are four main models of theological education. The classical model of transforming the individual, typified by the Athens Academy; the confessional model with a stress on knowing God, embraced by the Geneva Seminary; the vocational model aimed at strengthening the church as represented by Berlin University; and the missional model of converting the world, symbolized by the Jerusalem community.

While Cronshaw does not fault or reject any of these four models, he, drawing on his Australian experience, proposes a model that stresses spiritual formation, missional spirituality, messianic spirituality, monastic spirituality and contemplative spirituality. There is also what he terms engaged spirituality, “an alternative, missional approach to being and doing church where retreat and reflection are embraced as part of a broader spirituality that values engagement and action.” This model, he said, can be adopted not only in colleges and seminaries but in churches as well.

Glen Stassen, professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary in the state of California in the United States, said that Richard Overton, whom he described as an “Anabaptist Baptist,” was the first person writing in the English language to have written a comprehensive defense of religious liberty. He gave a prepared response to a paper on Thomas Helwys presented by European Baptist Federation General Secretary Tony Peck.

Overton was part of the fledgling Baptist movement in Amsterdam, Netherlands in 1609. Stassen told Baptist leaders and theologians at the gathering that, decades later, “during the Puritan Revolution in England, Richard Overton was the best writer of the Leveller Movement, championing the human right to religious liberty.” Overton was jailed for printing books not approved by the government, and his wife and infant child were also jailed when she continued to print his works during his imprisonment. Stassen declared that Overton published a “comprehensive doctrine of human rights” that “remarkably still fits what most church denominations have said when they have affirmed human rights.” These include the right to religious liberty and civil liberty; the right to life, including basic needs of life; and the right to dignity in community, with rights of participation for all in a church of their choice.

Anaida Pascual Moran, professor in the Department of Graduate Studies at the University of Puerto Rico, stated that the centrality of human rights in peace education is crucial. Peace education and human rights education, she claimed, are not only closely intertwined, but inseparable. She insisted that human rights provide the necessary framework to contextualize peace education, making peace relevant, real, and concrete and that a culture of human rights and a culture of peace are essential for the defense of human dignity. Active nonviolence and conflict resolution constitute the only possible route to a culture of human rights and peace. The idea of peace as a human right constitutes a key dimension for a new culture built upon the values of nonviolence, democracy, justice and peace.

Realities, however, have to be contended with. “We are talking about a paradigm shift that requires us to transit, from the utopian vision of perpetual peace as a final state; to an imperfect peace, understood as a dynamic, always unfinished, evolutive path,” Moran declared. But, she insists, we can “surpass the conception of negative peace, and aim at a multidimensional positive peace.”

Louise Kretzschmar, professor of Theological Ethics at the University of South Africa, evaluated policies developed by the Chilean and South African governments to reduce poverty from the perspective of Christian spirituality and ethics. She stated that Christians need to critique false values of acquisitiveness and consumption within society. “The huge failure of delivery on the part of government needs to be exposed… When acting in concert, churches can put pressure on government to implement policies of poverty alleviation and anti-corruption initiatives.”

The church, Kretzschmar said, “along with other members of civil society need to speak and act decisively so that good policies are actually implemented and government behaves as the servant of the people, rather than a rapacious master.”

Myon Chung of South Korea makes a presentation at a commission meeting.
Recalling our Story,
Treading New Ground

By Jerrod Hugenot

Over the past few years, Baptists have been celebrating the 400th anniversary of key moments in our history and heritage. In 2009, we marked the four centuries since the time an English group of religious dissidents living in asylum in Amsterdam began articulating views about Christianity that have become the hallmarks of the Baptist tradition. In 2012, the British Baptists celebrated the 400th anniversary of those who returned to England in 1612 to establish the first Baptist church in London, located in Spitalfields.

Also in 2012, Baptists can celebrate another remarkable anniversary, commemorating the writings of Thomas Helwys, who wrote a document considered to be the first appeal for universal religious freedom written in English. Entitled *The Short Declaration of the Mystery (Mystery) of Iniquity*, the book challenges the English crown’s claim to rule the realm and the Church. Further, Helwys articulated the view that persons of any religion, or none, should be able to have said convictions without Church. Further, Helwys articulated the view that persons of any religion, or none, should be able to have said convictions without Church. Further, Helwys articulated the view that persons of any religion, or none, should be able to have said convictions without Church. Further, Helwys articulated the view that persons of any religion, or none, should be able to have said convictions without Church.

Helwys went as far as to send the royal court a copy of his book, addressing by his own hand an inscription to King James I (aka “the King James” of the Bible translation known popularly by his name). Showcasing that Baptists have always attracted an ornerous type, Helwys wrote some words directly to the King, saying the crown “hath no power over ye immortal souls of his subjects, to make laws and ordinances for them, and to set spiritual Lords over them” (i.e. the King does not rule the church nor set the rules and leadership).

With such candor, Helwys advocated for views now embraced by many in the world, yet in his day, such an expansive vision was not shared. Over the subsequent years, Helwys and his congregation advocated for the freedom to practice religion. Eventually, Helwys would be imprisoned for his views, where he remained until his death.

One wonders what Helwys thought of the future, living most of his adult life as a religious dissenter, not in favor with the establishment. Very little is known of Helwys’ time in prison, other than the records indicating it was likely that he died there in 1616. Like most whose visions seem overshadowed by storm clouds and rough seas, Helwys likely despaired as much as he kept hope within.

I could not help but think of Helwys and his legacy while attending the 2012 meetings of the Baptist World Alliance® held in July in Santiago, Chile. Four centuries after Helwys (or better said, four centuries later because of early Baptists like Helwys), the BWA claims a fellowship of 223 conventions and unions in 120 countries comprising 42 million members in 177,000 churches (and that’s not the sum of all the Baptist followers in the world!). Four hundred years later, our witness as Baptists continues to spread in new and diverse ways. At the BWA meetings, we gathered from the many nations of the world with major sessions being offered in English, Spanish, French and Portuguese, the most commonly spoken languages among the delegates at this year’s meetings, but by no means the sum of the languages Baptists worship in around the world.

Just as Helwys, the Baptists gathered in Chile reminded one another of what it means to speak up for religious freedom and to live in a multi-faith world. One of the panel discussions offered as part of the Freedom and Justice Commission featured Nigerian Baptists reflecting on the religious tumult in their country. In recent months, Nigerian churches have been targets for “discriminatory bombing of churches and properties” with many Nigerians killed in these attacks, planned and coordinated by militant Islamic jihadists. The stories of these Baptist leaders were quite harrowing to hear, and the question of the BWA’s involvement as a global organization was raised. How can Baptists near and far from these situations provide support, advocacy and aid to fellow Baptists in such times?

The witness of Helwys’ writings resounded in the “next steps” taken from this session to the time when the General Council, the BWA’s decision making body, met at the end of the week. The General Council passed a resolution recognizing the difficult situation in Nigeria, decrying “these horrendous acts of inhumanity” that have “promoted fear to freely worship and assemble” and threatened the “safety and security of all people in Nigeria.” The resolution also reflected the BWA’s values that all persons are entitled to religious freedom and “for people of all religions to live at peace with one another in the same territory.” It is hoped that in the coming weeks and months, the BWA will increase its efforts to offer support to Nigerian Baptists through various government channels and nongovernmental organizations.

Some efforts to promote this peace are already underway, including the BWA’s Baptist/Muslim dialogue which promotes opportunities for common ground between Christians and Muslims. The BWA’s leadership recognizes that many persons, Christians included, give into the temptation to label all adherents of a religion with the fringe tendencies of a militant group. In fidelity to our history and heritage, and more importantly the Gospel, the BWA encourages its member conventions and organizations to seek an end to violence, to speak out wherever we are for those experiencing fear or hardship near and far, and “for the Christian witness to be a light in the face of violence.”

(continued on next page)
At this year’s meeting, my thoughts often turned to the question of what a “global faith” can do in the world. While I learned of the pressing issues in Nigeria, I also had the opportunity to hear from Baptists coming from countries with recent histories of systemic violence, oppression or marginalizing practices. From an ethicist teaching at a state university, I learned of the developments of post-Apartheid South Africa. From my advance readings and a walking tour of Santiago, I learned of Chile’s efforts to move on after the Pinochet dictatorship ended. (Opportunities to learn about Chilean Baptist history were offered, however, I was not able to attend these sessions due to schedule.) From an El Salvadoran church leader, the Rev. Edgar Palacios, I learned of his work as part of the effort to end the long internal civil war that paralyzed his country for 12 long years. The Rev. Palacios received this year’s Human Rights Award for his efforts in El Salvador and his ministry as a peacemaker and pastor.

In each of these sessions, whether hearing of dismantling Apartheid, arising out of a long era of iron-clad rule, or the harrowing experiences of getting all parties finally to a peace when there was none before, I heard encouraging stories of the role that local faith communities played in providing a witness and living it out. In the midst of these narratives, I discerned the role religious communities can play when they choose to engage the difficult questions, especially when speaking truth to power. Sometimes religious leaders and institutions can opt to be passive, or worse, too closely aligned with the systems of power and authority that perpetuate the unjust conditions. Siding with those who are voiceless and without much political currency is familiar territory to those who remember the witness of our early forebears such as Thomas Helwys or Roger Williams.

Sadly, one question lingers for these situations. As each country is raising the first generation of post-Apartheid, post-Pinochet or post-Salvadoran civil war, the question of shaping the understanding of the youth becomes critical. In each conversation, I raised a hand and asked what local congregations were doing to help raise a generation knowledgeable of where their parents and grandparents have come from and how to build a different future as engaged citizens of their nation and as faithful disciples of Jesus and the Reign of God. The answers were understandably in part, not full, as each person reflected on the challenges of engaging youth and connecting the churches with a new generation who might not have interest in what “religion” can offer, let alone the role religious people can play positively in societal change. The questions were many, though the answers were still being sorted out.

Even as the future seems murky and the present day’s demands nearly too challenging to bear some days, we Baptists near and far are moving forward with a history and heritage of a faith that knows how to speak to Christ’s gospel and earnestly live out his ways. We recall where we have been in the story of Helwys and listen to one another around the global table as we hear stories of faith undergoing challenges of many kinds. In such faithful recalling and humble listening, we seek how to be Christ’s witnesses for the day and the times at hand, recalling our story and treading new ground.

Jerrod Hugenot is coordinating minister at First Baptist Church of Bennington, Vermont, USA
The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio 2012 and Rio+20, provided the Baptist World Alliance® an opportunity to make important contributions to discussions and the final document coming out of the meetings.

UNCSD was held to mark the 20th anniversary of the 1992 Earth Summit, also held in Rio de Janeiro. The 1992 conference placed sustainable development as a priority on the agenda of the UN and the international community, whereas Rio+20 focused on how to use sustainable development to create a long term structure for systemic changes in “economic development, social development and environmental protection.”

The BWA participated in two onsite side events, serving as lead organizer of one. In addition, the BWA took part in four offsite side events.

On June 16, the BWA cosponsored the side event, “Democratization of International Relations – Role of UN World Conferences,” along with the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the UN (CoNGO), and others.

On June 17, the BWA along with the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church were the main organizers of the side event, “Ethical Implications of Sustainability: Educational and Religious Perspectives,” which had the participation of a number of other organizations. Raimundo Barreto, BWA Director of Freedom and Justice, was moderator. Mark Greenwood of BMS World Mission, the British Baptist mission society, was one of the panelists.

Another version of this side event was presented, in Portuguese, at the Bennett Methodist Institute. On both occasions, suggestions and concerns were collected from participants and were added to an official document that was sent to each of the 191 negotiators who were part of the preparation of The Future We Want, the final document coming out of Rio+20.

Among the issues addressed were the ethical implications of sustainability, the response of religious and educational institutions to environmental challenges, the impact that religious and educational institutions can have on the global agenda for sustainability, and the ways in which religious and educational practices offer a critical understanding of a “green society.”

The participants concluded that the priority goals defined in the statement, The Future We Want, cannot be achieved without a serious consideration of the “ethical implications of sustainability,” including perspectives expressed by religious and educational communities around the world.

“The nexus between ethics and sustainability is provided in the Charter of the United Nations which expresses clear ethical imperatives,” the document out of the side event states. These include efforts to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights; to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained; and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.” Sustainability, the document elaborated, is “based on these ethical perspectives, entails peace with justice and human security, development of peoples and communities, as well as responsibility of nations and states to uphold norms and standards of human rights.”

The BWA also partnered with the Brazilian Baptist Convention to promote an offsite side event that highlighted initiatives being developed among Brazilian Baptist churches and other Christian organizations in Brazil to care for the environment and to promote a sustainable lifestyle. Barreto preached at the closing session of that event, addressing the theme of sustainability and the care for creation as a moral and justice issue that requires change in mindset and behavior. He informed the gathering that 780 million people lack access to a potable water source; 3.41 million people die each year from water, sanitation and hygiene-related causes; and that water and sanitation crises claim more lives through diseases than any current war.

Barreto attended several sessions at the People’s Summit, a parallel event organized by thousands of NGOs at the Flamengo Park in Rio, which sought to offer grassroots perspectives in contrast to the more political views from state representatives and UN officials leading the official event. On June 22, a delegation representing the People’s Summit was received at the Rio Centro Conference Center, the site of most of the official meetings, by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, and handed to him a document prepared by the People’s Summit, an alternative to The Future We Want.
Beyond Rio: The Relational Character of God as Trinity as a Basis for Ecological Renewal

By Helle Liht

The recent United Nations summit Rio+20 and its outcome document, *The Future We Want*, has prompted me to think about one of its main concepts – “integration.”

The document calls “for holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth’s ecosystem.” In this document, “integration” is considered an assumption for ecological renewal, as it is wished, hoped for, and encouraged. Yet, how exactly “integration” is to be understood, remains somewhat obscure. So I invite us to explore it together with Jürgen Moltmann, contemporary Protestant theologian.

**Perichoretic understanding of God**

The English word “integration” comes from the Latin “integrātūs” which means “having been made whole” (Latin “integer” means “whole”). It can also be translated as “renewed,” “restored,” “re-created,” “refreshed.” The original meaning of the word indicates that “integration” is an answer to the question as to how different characters co-exist in order to form the whole in a way that is satisfactory and pleasing for all involved. How can such reciprocally satisfactory and pleasing co-existence be achieved? What does it require from the characters involved?

In his recent book *Sun of Righteousness, Arise: God’s Future for Humanity and the Earth*, Moltmann draws together insights from different theologians and Christian traditions into what he calls “the new trinitarian thinking,” and which, in my opinion, also leads to a fuller understanding of “integration.”

The central concept of Moltmann’s understanding of the triune God is *perichoresis*. It originates from the Greek fathers and describes the nature of the Triune God and the relationships between different “persons” within the Trinity. Into English it can be translated as “interpenetration,” “reciprocal indwelling,” and semantically it conveys the meaning of a dynamic movement between and among different persons, including “surrounding, embracing, enclosing.”

A perichoretic understanding envisions the Triune God as a fully relational God where the whole is not a result of different “persons” complementing each other, or a metaphysical divine substance commonly shared by each “person,” but where “in the power of perfect love” each person goes “out of itself to such an extent that it is wholly present in the others.” Therefore, the perichoretic approach understands each “person” of the Triune God not only as a “person” but also as an open space, which offers a dwelling place for the other two. In a sense it shapes a co-existence in which each trinitarian “person” in its wholeness limits itself to prepare space for the other two to represent the whole and one God.

**The concept of perichoresis as key for understanding “integration”**

As spiritual and physical beings, the space we have available (or we are) is spiritual (or mental) as well as physical. As Baptists, I believe we understand the importance of the spiritual space well when we describe our relationship with God and when we talk about “Christ living in us;” we do this also in terms of worship and prayer. However, too often we undermine the physical space, which is also defined by various relationships.

In the increasingly globalized world, the physical space as a source of someone’s wellbeing is becoming more and more crucial. For example, in recent years a new term – environmental migrants – has emerged. They are people who have fled their homes because of extreme weather conditions, triggered by environmental degradation and climate change caused mainly by human exploitation of the Earth’s treasures. According to the International Organization for Migration, “In 2008, 20 million people have been displaced because of extreme weather events compared to 4.6 million internally displaced by conflict and violence over the same period.” The estimation is that by 2050 the number of international environmental migrants will increase to approximately 200 million. To these numbers characterizing human suffering, we need to add animal and plant species, which have become extinct because of the destruction of their habitats.

So the space, which current environmental migrants as well as animal and plant species have shared with each other and which has been a source of life, has been taken over by others whose main desire is to increase their wealth. Too often a consumerist life style has turned a space of life-affirming relationships into a graveyard.

Therefore the question everyone needs to ask is whether the space I shape and create with my consumption habits, daily work, social and political involvement, worship – the space I ultimately am – is a private comfort zone, which I enlarge for myself, or whether it is an open and safe space embracing others in their joy and suffering, and inviting others to dwell in there.

It is only by limiting our own space and offering space for others that we can more fully participate in the redeeming and integrating work of the Triune God. In his recent book *Sun of Righteousness, Arise: God’s Future for Humanity and the Earth*, Moltmann draws together insights from different theologians and Christian traditions into what he calls “the new trinitarian thinking,” and which, in my opinion, also leads to a fuller understanding of “integration.”

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It is only by limiting our own space and offering space for others that we can more fully participate in the redeeming and integrating work of the Triune God who is embracing the entire creation, renewing it and bringing it to its wholeness.

Helle Liht is assistant general secretary of the European Baptist Federation.

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3 Ibid., pp. 149-152.
4 Ibid., p. 155.
Approximately 120 leaders, pastors and church members from the Brazilian Baptist Convention (BBC), the National Baptist Convention (NBC), and the Convention of Independent Baptist Churches met on July 21 in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Both the BBC and the NBC are member bodies of the Baptist World Alliance®.

It was the first such diverse gathering of Baptists in all of Brazil in living memory, and raised hopes that similar meetings on a larger scale could be held in the future. Fausto Vasconcelos, BWA director of Mission, Evangelism, and Theological Reflection, who is Brazilian, expressed the hope that Brazilian Baptists will begin a process of close cooperation.

Leaders from two other groups that were expected to participate, the Bible Baptist Fellowship and the Convention of Regular Baptist Churches, were unavoidably absent, but are thought to be supportive of the initiative.

As keynote speaker for the gathering, Vasconcelos highlighted the BWA commitment to uniting Baptists and gave examples of the BWA’s impact in bringing Baptists together around the world. He encouraged Baptists to work together in areas of mission and evangelism, citing the 2014 World Cup of Football and the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, both of which will be hosted by Brazil, as opportunities for cooperation.

He challenged them to plan a nationwide “Jesus Christ, Bread of Life” outreach action for 2013/2014 as an appropriate and major follow up to this first gathering. “This action could start with all local Baptist churches in Rio as a pilot plan for the entire country,” Vasconcelos said. There are approximately 800 Baptist churches in total in Rio, the second largest city in Brazil.

To further his challenge, the METR Director is expected to return to Rio later this year to present the Bread of Life strategy in various churches from each of the five Baptist conventions in Rio, and to hold meetings with local denominational leadership. Bread of Life is an international training program in evangelism by the BWA, with the aim of mobilizing Baptists at the local level.

A committee made up of representatives of the Baptist groups was formed to facilitate communication among themselves with a view to future actions.

Above: Fausto Vasconcelos, 3rd left, BWA director of Mission, Evangelism and Theological Reflection, along with Baptist leaders in Rio

Below left: BWA Director of Mission, Evangelism and Theological Reflection Fausto Vasconcelos, left, during the meeting of Baptists in Brazil

Below: Children performing at the meeting of Baptists in Rio
The National Baptist Convention (CBN) of Brazil is one of two BWA member bodies in the largest country in South America. Since it gained membership within the BWA, CBN has gained added credibility. “Membership within the BWA has enabled us to be integrated in the Baptist world,” said Ronald Carvalho, executive secretary of the Administrative Board of Missions (JAMI) of the CBN. “We are able to share our experiences and be enriched by the experiences of others,” he stated. “The BWA brings us international credibility not only among Baptists but among the wider evangelical community.”

Carvalho has spearheaded the convention’s mission outreach as head of JAMI since its formation in 1995. At present, his agency has 180 missionaries in the field, both within Brazil and in other countries such as Albania, England, Spain and Portugal in Europe; Mozambique, Angola, Senegal and Guinea Bissau in Africa; East Timor in Asia; and the United States.

Over the last 12 years, JAMI has operated the Shalom Center, a school of 400 students in an area of great need in East Timor. According to Carvalho, the children would not otherwise have had an education. In recent examination results, students in grade nine preparing for high school had one of the highest pass rates nationally, and received recognition from the country's government, Carvalho told the BWA.

East Timor is one of the youngest countries in the world, having its nationhood restored in 2002 after declaring independence in 1975 that was followed by a drawn out war of independence with Indonesia.

JAMI has similar programs in Angola and Mozambique.

But it is its ministry among indigenous people in the Amazon region of Brazil that Carvalho seems especially proud of. Currently JAMI works among four indigenous groups but has contact with a total of 12. The work involves mainly church planting and Bible translation, as well education and health services. The New Testament has been translated into the native tongue of the Tucano people. There are approximately 400 Tucano Christians in two villages, with leadership in one village already passed over to the Tucanos themselves. JAMI also produces school books in reading and writing for the Tucanos and has a number of nurses serving as missionaries in the villages.

Bible translation work has begun among the Aparai people while evangelism and education is being done among the Marubu who live on the border near to Peru. Attempts are being made to have missionaries who speak the language of each indigenous group.

The Tucanos have a practice of not marrying each other. This opens the door for JAMI to begin mission work among the indigenous groups from which Tucano spouses come. “The Tucano do not marry each other but retain their own language,” Carvalho explained. “Ministry to Tocanos benefits ministry to other groups due to this intermarriage.” Carvalho also revealed that Baptists in Brazil have helped to transform a drug-infested region in Sao Paolo, the largest city in Brazil and one of the largest in the world, into a center of Christian evangelism and witness.

It all happened by chance, or by providence, according to Fernando Brandão, executive director of the Home Mission Board of the Brazilian Baptist Convention (BBC). “I was walking down a street in Sao Paolo to preach at the First Baptist Church and I made a wrong turn,” Brandão told the BWA. “I found myself in the so-called ‘Crack Land.’” According to him, “Thousands of people were using drugs and prostituting themselves.”

Afraid that he would be mugged or killed, Brandão prayed for protection but got an unexpected answer. “God spoke clearly to my heart and said, ‘Look around you and see those who need mercy. Where is my church? Where is the light? Bring my church to this place. You know why there is so much darkness in this place? Because the light is not here.’”

This incident led to the birth of the latest mission initiative of the BBC, one of the largest Baptist groups in the world.
that the “Aparai have close relations with the Yana, so ministry to the Aparai leads to ministry to the Yana.”

CBN gets its vision from Acts 1:8, effecting mission at the local, regional, national and international levels. The convention focuses on three main areas: church planting; training and equipping of missionaries; and social action, relief and community development such as health and education. Training takes place in the 23 seminaries and theological schools that are scattered throughout Brazil, with almost one in every Brazilian state (Brazil has 26 states and one federal district). JAMI also operates the Center for Missional Studies that focuses on training persons for the mission field.

CBN is symbolic of the growth in Baptist witness and mission in Brazil, and Latin America more broadly. Celebrating its 43rd anniversary in September 2012, the convention has grown to more than 2,800 churches and more than 384,000 members.

almost 1.3 million members and more than 1,700 churches. The “Brazilian Mission for Christ Land” was born.

The BBC has, for the past several years, pioneered a movement among Baptist youth called “Radicals” that has since been adopted by Baptists in other South American countries. These young people, usually aged 18 to 33, go through a period of training and placement during which they undertake particular mission initiatives such as church planting, sports ministry, and teaching, etc. The BBC’s Home Mission Board drew on this initiative and trained a number of “Radicals” and other missionaries to reach out to those in Sao Paolo’s Crack Land.

A 24-hour-a-day mission endeavor was the result. The success of the mission caused its own problems. Those converted had no church and, in most instances, no home. Church, accommodation, meals and rehab services now had to be provided. One center alone in Sao Paolo needed more than one ton of rice each month. Detox units were placed throughout the area. More than US$120,000 is spent every month on the mission.

The number of baptisms grew – more than 1,000 persons have been baptized. A 200-plus member choir was formed. “When someone comes to know the Lord there is the spiritual motivation that will enable him or her never to return to the drugs,” Brandão explained. About 45 Crack Land converts are now in theological seminary and Bible school and are being trained for the Christian ministry. “We never knew that one day Crack Land would provide us with Baptist leaders. This is a miracle,” he said. Of the 47 “Radicals” that were recently trained for mission outreach, 25 are from Crack Land.

The success at Sao Paolo’s Crack Land has led to other “Christ Lands” being created in other major Brazilian cities such as the capital Brasília, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro. Brandão claimed that Brazil is the second highest consumer of illegal drugs in the world and that the problem has affected every Brazilian city and even small communities. The government, he asserted, does not have an answer for the drug problem. Baptists, it appears, have found an answer.

“This project has made a deep impact on Baptists in Brazil,” the Baptist mission leader said. It has generated much interest in the media and has caught the attention of the government and the wider public.

Ronald Carvalho, executive secretary of the Administrative Board of Missions of the National Baptist Convention of Brazil

“The BWA brings us international credibility not only among Baptists but among the wider evangelical community.”

Fernando Brandão, executive director of the Home Mission Board of the Brazilian Baptist Convention
Early on Monday, June 25, 10 members of the Baptist World Alliance® Women’s Department Executive Board left on a four hour drive south of Santiago to visit families and church members that were affected by the 2010 earthquake in Chile. On the way, Dámaris Zapata Arriagada, director of Social Ministries for Union of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Chile (UBACH), joined the team.

The first stop was in the city of Curicó at the First Baptist Church. Pastor Francisco and two of the church’s deacons welcomed the team. The church is 50 years old and has 50 members. In the 1985 earthquake the church building had some damage, and right before the earthquake in 2010 the front wall was rebuilt. The 2010 earthquake destroyed the old part of the church building, leaving only the wall that had just been rebuilt. People could go through the front door, but there was not anything behind it. Everything had to be torn down. The church plans to rebuild with the purpose of reaching the entire community. They have architectural plans and a model of the new church building that will seat 300 people. They ask that we pray with them for God’s guidance and help in rebuilding in order to impact Curicó for Christ.

In the city of Parral, Pastor Joel Rivera and several members of the Parral Baptist Church welcomed the team. The Parral Baptist Church and parsonage were destroyed by the 2010 earthquake. Pastor Joel shared that it felt as if they were moving like the wheat in the field, and with this movement everything was destroyed. Pastor Joel, his wife, and daughter, as well as some members of the church, were happy to show the new church building to the team. The new church building was built with funds from BWA and volunteers that helped with the construction. There are plans to rebuild the parsonage, but at present the pastor and his family live in some of the Sunday School rooms. The church is 16 years old and has about 30 members, but the church was built to hold more than 100 people. The church is strong in evangelism, Bible study, and work with children. They plan to reach their community for Christ, and fill the sanctuary with new believers. The church provided a typical Chilean lunch that was enjoyed by everyone.

After lunch, Pastor Joel and his wife took the team to Retiro. The Baptist church in Retiro is a mission of the Baptist church in Parral, and it was also destroyed in the earthquake. A temporary building was provided by UBACH. There are about 18-20 people who attend the church, which to this day continues to meet in the temporary building.

In the afternoon we arrived in Talca at the Baptist Church El Sembrador (the sower/planter). The Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) of the church was meeting when the team arrived. They greeted the team with hugs and words of welcome. The ladies shared with the team about what God did through them and other Baptists in the area after the earthquake.

Baptist Church El Sembrador was not destroyed, but was used as a center to receive food, clothes, and other things shared with more than 3,000 people who had lost everything in the earthquake.

They had about 200 volunteers that helped sort clothes, prepare three meals a day, and deliver them to the people. They did this for two and a half months, seven days a week, twice a day. They also distributed 150 temporary shelters that were provided by UBACH. They helped to rebuild a school using two of the temporary shelters.

Also in Talca, the team visited the First Baptist Church of Talca. The WMU planned their regional meeting around the team’s visit. Gloria, the president, was so excited to meet Yvonne Pitter, president of the Caribbean Baptist Women’s Union. As soon as she saw her she said, “I know you from the 2011 Day of Prayer program.” Gloria excitedly shared how the women in this region had celebrated the 2011 Day of Prayer. A 2010 video about the earthquake was shown to the team, as well as to the other women in attendance. The video was a reminder of the strongest earthquake ever recorded, and how God was present and provided for the needs of the people so that God’s name would be glorified.

On Tuesday, June 26, two more board members joined the team to visit the Hogar Bautista de Ancianas Union Femenil Metropolitana (nursing home for women sponsored by the Metropolitan WMU).

The residents of the home are affectionately called “abuelas” (grandmothers). There are about 20 abuelas at the home, and the oldest is 94 years old. The team had lunch with the abuelas and afterwards shared some gift bags that were prepared especially for them. Each bag was unique because the team members brought small gifts from her country. Even though most of the team members did not speak Spanish, they shared the love of Christ through hugs, smiles, and the gifts. The abuelas were appreciative.

Each of the residents has been very involved in the work of the Lord through their Baptist church and convention. They are now at an age where they need some help, and the Metropolitan WMU, National WMU, the Baptist Women’s Union of Latin America, and the BWA Women’s Department have helped to support this ministry. Berta Villarroel shared with the team that she is the only full time paid staff of the home, and other workers are either volunteers or part time staff. They have to follow government guidelines in order to continue with this ministry. At the time of the visit they did not have the money to pay the staff, but Berta knew that God would provide as God has in the past.

Several of the team members have a passion for working with senior adults, and it was a beautiful experience to see how they related to the residents. They brought to our board meeting the idea of taking a voluntary love offering for the home. This was done and the BWA Women’s Department matched what was given. An interested couple also matched that amount.
Baptist women from 16 countries began arriving in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), on August 13 for the 12th Continental Conference of the Baptist Women’s Union of Africa (BWUA). It was a beautiful scene as the women arrived wearing their different colorful dresses and uniforms representing their national and local women’s organizations.

The theme for the conference was “Women of Africa…Hear the Spirit…In order to be in Step with the Spirit.” There were about 300 women registered for the five day conference (August 13-17) who heard the Spirit through Bible study and prayer.

An evangelistic march opened the conference. There were approximately 2,000 people who gathered and marched through the streets of Kinshasa singing and sharing the gospel with anyone they met along the way. Baptist women from all the Baptist women’s groups in the DRC participated in the march and opening ceremony.

The evangelistic march ended at the church for the opening ceremony. There was singing, dancing, and praising the Lord. Ponzi Nzuzi Masele Anne, president of the Baptist Women’s Union of the DRC, welcomed everyone. There were words of greeting from special guests as well as beautiful music from several choral groups. Raquel Contreras, president of the BWA Women’s Department, brought the opening message which was based on the theme of the conference.

Two topics of interest for the women were the role of women in ensuring peace in Africa and how to rekindle the flame of the Spirit. Each of the four sub-regions gave reports on how God is working in their area of Africa.

Each day started with a Bible study. The eight Millennium Development Goal Bible studies were used. These are Bible studies that the BWA Women’s Department prepared with the help of Baptist women from each of the seven Baptist women’s continental unions.

On August 15, an invitation from her Excellency, Mrs. Olive Lembe Kabil, the first lady of the DRC was received. She invited several people to come and talk with her. They were Raquel Contreras, Dorothy Selebano, Patsy Davis, Motunrayo Adegbilero, Ponzi Nzuzi Masele Anne, and Mama Lala. It was a special time to share about the conference and the work of Baptist women. Before leaving the meeting the group prayed with her Excellency, and Raquel Contreras gave her one of the new BWA Women’s Department Lucinda pins to remind her of our visit and of women around the world.

During the decision meeting, the BWUA bylaws were updated, and a new slate of officers was elected, led by Joina Dhlula of Zimbabwe as president. She succeeds Motunrayo Adegbilero of Nigeria.

August 16 was a cultural night and a time of celebrating 56 years of BWUA ministry. This was done through song, dance, and a special anniversary cake.

A group of women from the Central African Republic arrived on the last night of the conference. This was after they had spent 10 days traveling by boat on the Congo River. It was to take them seven days but the boat broke down, extending the trip. They were tired and hungry when they arrived. They were immediately given the opportunity for a shower and a meal before joining the others for the closing celebration where they were received with song and dance.

The women were reminded that BWUA will be the host continental union for the 2015 Baptist Women’s Leadership Conference in Durban, South Africa. They were encouraged to start making plans to be in Durban in order to help receive Baptist women from around the world with African song and dance.

Patsy Davis is executive director of the BWA Women’s Dept.
Speakers Confirmed

The Baptist World Alliance® (BWA) has confirmed the main speakers for the Baptist Youth World Conference to be held in Singapore from July 17-21 next year.

More than 6,000 youth from some 100 countries are expected to attend the plenary sessions each morning and evening, “fringe events” with musical performers and other participants, and “family Bible Study groups,” as well as other activities.

Speakers include Edmund Chan, pastor of the Covenant Evangelical Free Church in Singapore; Christian Rommert, head of the German Baptist Youth Department; Lucas Leys of Argentina, director of the Hispanic Division of Youth Specialists and vice president of publishing at Zondervan publishers; and Rachael Tan, a member of faculty at the Taiwan Baptist Theological Seminary and associate dean at the Asian Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary.

Other speakers include Thembelani Jentile, senior pastor of the Mamolodi Baptist Church in South Africa; Dave Overholt, founding pastor of the “Church on the Rock” in Canada; and Diana Francis, president of the Student Christian Movement of the Bahamas and host of a youth television program.

Youth are invited to share in a number of mission projects before and after the conference that are planned by the Baptist Youth Department.

Registration, travel and accommodation details for the youth conference can be obtained at the BWA website at www.bwanet.org.

Caribbean Baptist Youth Moving Forward

“We’re moving forward, no turning back ’cause we are sold out, we are sold out…”

These were the lyrics of the exciting theme song that rang throughout the Caribbean Baptist Youth Festival convened in Kingston, Jamaica, from July 25-29, under the theme, “Sold Out: Fully His,” based on 2 Corinthians 5:20.

The conference, which had 210 registered participants from the Bahamas, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad, and Turks & Caicos, as well as the United States, began with a grand opening ceremony. A packed house moved to the rhythm of the Bethel Steel Orchestra (Jamaica), was entertained and informed by a Jamaican cultural presentation, and was challenged as speaker Merlyn Hyder-Riley of the Jamaica Baptist Union set the tone for the days to follow with a reminder that to be “sold out is a call for us to be faithful, loyal, dedicated and steadfast.”

For the first time, the opening service was streamed live via the youth department’s webpage.

The remainder of the week followed with daily Bible Study, led by Pedro Williams from Turks and Caicos, who challenged attendees to be “fully reconciled,” “fully reliant” and “fully resolved.”

Other daily activities included Sonrise Intercessory Prayer, a time for small group sharing and prayer to start each day, and workshops in which facilitators from across the Caribbean dealt with a variety of topics that challenged and addressed the needs of youth. “[T]ruly a wealth of information…” is the view of one Bahamian who received much from the workshops she attended. There were also mission opportunities where conferees had outreach programs in homes for the elderly and in children’s homes. Participants found their mission experience sharing with the elderly and home-bound, abandoned children and children with HIV/AIDS “heartwarming and unforgettable.”

An open air event, dubbed “Fully Prais-ing,” began with participants marching

Baptist Youth Leaders Gather in Chile

A conference for Latin American Baptist youth leaders was held in Santiago, Chile, from June 29 to July 1.

Sponsored by the Baptist World Alliance®, the conference focused on resource and information sharing, leadership development, and mission. Among the issues explored were youth in crisis, evangelism and social media, and the goals and values of youth ministry.

The BWA used the opportunity to urge these young leaders to encourage their peers to attend the 16th Baptist Youth World Conference that is to be held in Singapore from July 17-21, 2013.

Thirty Baptist youth leaders from eight countries attended, including from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Venezuela. It was the first time Baptist youth leaders in the region interacted with each other and they expressed the hope that this will be an ongoing experience.

Presenters included Dean Miller of the Virginia Baptist Mission Board in the United States and Dale Stairs of the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches in Canada.

The youth conference immediately preceded the BWA Annual Gathering which was held in Santiago from July 2-7.

Baptist Youth World Conference
African Baptist Youth Celebrate Milestone

More than 150 delegates from 13 countries traveled to Harare, Zimbabwe, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the All Africa Baptist Youth Fellowship (AABYF) from August 1-5.

“It was a moment of reunion, fellowship and worship,” said outgoing AABYF President Brickson Sam of Sierra Leone after the meetings. “Youth were indeed empowered with the Spirit through Bible study, prayer and preaching.”

Sam told the gathering, “We are here this week to honor our past, celebrate our present, and empower our future.” He called on youth in Africa to be empowered “to face the present and future challenges of social injustice, corruption, civil wars and religious conflicts in our beloved continent of Africa. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot achieve these goals.”

Baptist World Alliance® (BWA) Youth Director Emmett Dunn, who made two presentations during the meetings, spoke of spiritual gifts within the context of leadership. Dunn declared that the responsibility of the Christian leader is to use “God-given abilities to lead God’s people toward Christian maturity.” The BWA youth leader stated that “what determines whether a gift is really spiritual is not its unusual character but the purpose for which it is used and the effect it has.”

The spiritual value of a gift, he said, “is to be measured according to whether it edifies or builds up God’s people.”

Workshop topics discussed at the meetings included The Legacy of Nonviolence, The Effect of Electoral Violence in the Development of Africa, and Spiritual Leadership in a Secular Age.

A new slate of officers was elected, led by Koffi Soke’ Kpomgbe of Togo, president. Dunn as well as past and present AABYF leaders were honored.

Paul Msiza, BWA vice president and former president of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF); Michael Okwakol, current AABF president; and Duro Ayanrinola, BWA regional secretary for Africa and general secretary of the AABF, attended the celebrations.

The African Baptist youth arm was formed in 1982 at a meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, and was formally inaugurated in Harare at a gathering in 1984. Zimbabwe hosted the only major BWA meeting in Africa, the Baptist Youth World Conference, in 1993. The second major BWA meeting in Africa, the 21st Baptist World Congress, will be held in Durban, South Africa, in July 2015.
Caribbean Baptists
Emphasize Strong Support for the BWA

Baptists defied Tropical Storm Isaac and met in the Southeastern Caribbean island of Antigua for the Mid-Term Assembly of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (CBF) from August 22-26. The storm passed over Antigua on the evening of the 22nd, resulting in delays in the arrival of a number of leaders and delegates from other Caribbean countries and territories, and some cancellations. It went on to affect other islands and the United States.

Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Winston Baldwin Spencer, who brought greetings at the opening session, made a tongue in cheek reference to the passage of the tropical storm when he declared, “When the Lord is in the vessel, you can smile at the storm.”

Spencer, who has led the islands since 2004, encouraged Baptists from around the region “to pray for individuals like myself,” people in political leadership and public life, even while the church spurns partisanship. “The church should pray for leaders for God to provide [them with] vision and wisdom,” the prime minister told the gathering.

Referring to the biblical quote that “man shall not live by bread alone,” Spencer declared that “while there should be the dominance of spirituality and developing relationships with Almighty God,” the biblical reference “suggests to me that man does live by bread.” He said the church has a secondary role to ensure “mankind lives in the best possible situation as they prepare for the second coming of Christ. This is an extension of what Christ expects the church to do.”

Decisions and Achievements

The CBF, one of six regional fellowships of the Baptist World Alliance®, received reports of achievements made since the CBF general assembly in 2010. The assembly made a number of decisions that will help to shape the future of the regional body, the smallest in terms of the number of Baptists in worldwide population, but diverse in language and culture, covering vast distances from the southern edge of North America to northern South America.

Among the notable achievements of the assembly was the signing of a partnership agreement with American Baptist International Ministries (ABIM). The three year agreement, signed by CBF President William Thompson and Eleazar Zihrambere, ABIM director for African American Mission, allows for cooperation between CBF and ABIM and between member churches of both bodies.

The meeting also ratified a proposal that will pave the way for the provision of ongoing training for pastors and lay persons in the region through the Ministry Development Program. The program’s options may include weekend seminars and module courses conducted over a two-year period. Most territories and countries in the Caribbean do not have a theological college or seminary.

A decision was also made to establish the Center for Caribbean Baptist Studies “to enable the voices and the perspectives of Caribbean Baptists to contribute their unique perspectives.” The center will “secure and be the repository of documents relevant to Caribbean Baptist life, history and thought.” The center is expected to be located at the United Theological College of the West Indies in Jamaica.

One matter to be resolved is conflicts of dates with the BWA. The CBF general assembly is normally held every five years. The last general assembly was held in 2010, the year of the 20th Baptist World Congress in Hawaii, while the next assembly is scheduled for 2015, the same year as the 21st Congress in Durban, South Africa. In an attempt to avoid holding major BWA and CBF meetings in the same year, a notice of motion was issued to amend the constitution to allow change of date by CBF leaders whenever such conflicts arise.

There will also be other constitutional and bylaw changes. One such change allows for the establishment of

CBF President William Thompson, seated left, and Eleazar Zihrambere of American Baptist International Ministries, signing a partnership agreement. Witnessing the event are, from left, Jacinth Wood, CBF vice president; CBF Executive Secretary/Treasurer Everton Jackson; Perkin Simpson, executive director, American Baptist Foundation; and Horace Russell, a Caribbean national and retired pastor.
A category of supporters referred to as “Friends of CBF.” This recognizes churches and individuals “that have shown particular interest in the work of the CBF, contributed directly to its budget, or rendered special service to the CBF.”

Achievements reported on were the redesigning of a new website for the CBF, improved communication through a new, quarterly newsletter, and the creation of a new weekly prayer calendar that is distributed at the start of each week.

**Relationships**

Relationships with member bodies within the Caribbean were also enhanced. Everton Jackson, BWA regional secretary for the Caribbean and executive secretary/treasurer for the CBF, visited Antigua in November 2010 with the aim of resuscitating the dormant Antigua Baptist Association (ABA). That meeting opened the door for the association to host the CBF Mid-Term Assembly, which is held roughly half way in between general assemblies. Mark Azille, ABA president, declared the meeting historic as it was the first time Baptists on the island were hosting a regional meeting.

The Haitian Connection Baptist Church for Mission Integral is to be received as a new member organization of the regional body. Based in Port-au-Prince, Haiti’s capital, the organization was formed in 2004 and comprises 12,500 members in 60 churches with a presence in six states in the Caribbean nation. It operates 13 primary schools and two orphanages.

Participants at the assembly were encouraged to give their full support to the BWA, recognizing that the region currently has persons in significant leadership positions within the international organization, especially Neville Callam who is BWA general secretary. Baptists from across the region were encouraged to attend both the BWA Annual Gathering that the region will host in Jamaica in July 2013 and the Baptist Youth World Conference in Singapore from July 17-21, 2013. Regional Baptists were also encouraged to begin preparations for the Baptist World Congress in South Africa in 2015.

CBF President Thompson and Executive Secretary/Treasurer Jackson celebrated the achievements of Caribbean athletes at the Summer Olympic Games in London in August. Usain Bolt and Shelly Ann Fraser-Pryce of Jamaica, Kirani James of Grenada, Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago, the Jamaica men’s 4x100 meter relay team and the Bahamas men’s 4x400 meter relay team – all gold medal winners – were specially mentioned. The region, it was noted, won a total of 18 medals during the Summer Olympics.

A resolution was passed celebrating the 50th anniversary of political independence of both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago while another resolution supported the formation of the Caribbean Court of Justice. The latter resolution encouraged countries in the region “to expedite all requisite procedures, pursuant to the signing of the appellate jurisdiction of the said court.”
The Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB) was one of the sponsors of the initiative, known as the “More than Gold” network, and worked to help Baptist churches to “seize the moment.”

According to Ian Bunce, head of the Mission Department of the BUGB, More than Gold was “a consortium of churches and Christian agencies working together as a single response to the Olympics.” It collated information and resources to help local churches to, among other things, host approximately 500 athletes’ families, provide 5,000 volunteers, distribute one million drinks, hold 2,000 creative arts events, and host 100 big screen events.

“We also had a lot of Olympic chaplains working at the venues,” Bunce told the Baptist World Alliance®. “Street pastors, who have strong Baptist roots, were also very heavily involved. We had someone working in London full time for the past 18 months to help the church to get ready to welcome the world,” Bunce elaborated.

The lead chaplain for the Olympics was John Boyers, a Baptist minister and former chaplain for the Manchester United soccer club, who led a multi-faith chaplaincy team. Boyers reported that there were “around 160 chaplains serving both games – about 110 in the Olympics and 50 in the Paralympics.” Chaplains were drawn from within the UK and other countries. The chaplaincy began on July 9 when the Athletes’ Village opened officially, Boyer said. “We [tried] to be a friendly presence in the Athletes’ Village, without getting under anyone’s feet and to respond to interest and enquiries rather than be overtly proactive or forceful.”

Baptist churches were invited by the BUGB to provide volunteers for the service and hospitality programs; to engage with their community through guest events, sports outreach and creative arts; and to join other churches to run community festivals and hospitality centers.

Baptists welcomed and utilized the resources of short-term church mission teams that visited London from other countries leading up to and after the games.

Churches were encouraged to organize events around the Torch Run relays throughout the UK leading up to the opening of the Olympic Games. The route took the Olympic Torch through more than 1,000 communities and within 10 miles of most of the UK’s population. Events that churches hosted included large screen festivals, barbecues, street parties, picnics, breakfasts, children’s games, sports quizzes and sport competitions.

According to the BUGB, “The Olympic Torch Relay can be used as a catalyst by hundreds of churches to mobilize united and creative prayer for their communities and the nations.”

Gold Hill Baptist Church organized a two-week festival called Run the Race. More than 7,000 persons attended the Olympic opening ceremony celebration hosted by the church. Activities included a children’s holiday club, a vintage tea party for seniors, men’s and ladies’ nights, and an “It’s a knockout” competition for local businesses.

Dedworth Green Baptist Church in Windsor opened its building at the request of British Rowing during the Olympics. The church is just half a mile from Eton Dorney Lake, the venue for the rowing competitions, and it responded to a request to be a safe haven where members of the rowing team could meet with friends and family after the completion of each day’s event, away from public gaze and press attention. The church provided small hospitality teams who served drinks and refreshments.

“As the athletes accepted our hospitality, I trust that they encountered something of God’s love in a meaningful and significant way,” said Matthew Scott, pastor of Dedworth Green.

“We have certainly learned that we can sustain a significant ministry through hospitality and need to reflect on how we might apply this experience in our local community.”

The BUGB also entered into partnership with BMS World Mission and the Baptist Union of Wales to produce Undefeated, a resource designed for a one-hour church service “to celebrate the faith and excellence of Paralympians, address issues of global injustice, and improve [the churches’] inclusion of people with disabilities.”

The Paralympic Games are an international multi-sport event for athletes with a physical disability.

The aim of Undefeated was to enable Baptists to discover what the Bible says about disability, to celebrate the contributions made by people with disabilities in British Baptist churches, to become more inclusive in their welcome toward people with disabilities, to be inspired by the faith of athletes who compete in the Paralympics, and to remember international issues of justice and disability.

David Pile, appointed by the London Baptist Association as full time coordinator for the Olympics and Paralympics, saw both games as an “opportunity to step out of the sidelines and get back into the center of community life once again,” and declared his excitement at this “once in a lifetime moment.”

The BUGB’s Baptist Times reported that thousands of churches have experienced an increase in confidence as a result of the success of London 2012. “Churches across the UK have stepped out to run events, large and small,” it quoted David Willson, CEO of More Than Gold. “Time after time they have experienced outstanding success – by way of the quality of what they have done and the numbers that turned up….The impact has been to raise the profile and credibility of churches in their communities, especially where they have joined hands to work together. This has given many a fresh confidence to take into the future.”
Seventh Day Baptists Occupy
Unique Part of Baptist Tradition

By Nicholas Kersten

One of the touchstones of Baptist life and thought is personal responsibility before God for our life and beliefs. As one might expect, having such a challenging belief at the center of Baptist life has created, through the years, a robust and diverse tradition – all centered on individual convictions and the teachings of the scriptures.

One portion of this diverse tradition has been lived out by adherents to the seventh day (Saturday) Sabbath for more than 350 years. Known today as Seventh Day Baptists (SDBs), they continue to live out the dictates of their faith in dedicated covenant communities around the world.

For nearly as long as there have been Baptists, there have been Sabbath-keeping Baptists. Even before 1611, books circulating in England advocated for the keeping of a Sabbath. Nicolas Bownde, a Puritan, wrote in 1595 advocating for observance of a first day (Sunday) Sabbath. This sparked further debate about which day was the proper Sabbath, drawing Puritans, Anglicans and Dissenters to the broader discussion.

In 1650, Sabbatarian Baptist John Ockford wrote in favor of the seventh day Sabbath, representing the first known book advocating both the Sabbath and Baptist principles. By 1657, there were churches organized and meeting on Saturdays in the greater London area.

In 1671, the first Seventh Day Baptist Church in North America was organized in Newport, Rhode Island. Other churches in the American colonies soon followed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Piscataway, New Jersey. All of these congregations formed in a very similar way: while reading their Bibles, believers came to be convinced of both Baptist principles and the seventh day Sabbath.

A period of rapid expansion followed in the United States after the American Revolution, with SDBs moving into the frontier and creating their own communities. As the demands of the frontier taxed the resources of individual churches further east, they banded together to form the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference in 1802, creating a concerted effort to spread the Gospel on the American frontier. Expansion efforts soon led to a need for additional resources. The founding of publishing and educational interests followed in mid-century, including The Sabbath Recorder, a denominational periodical that has been published continuously since 1844.

While expanding in the US, and inspired by the work of William Carey, Adoniram Judson and others, SDBs began their first foreign mission efforts in 1844 with a mission to China, which lasted until 1950. Other foreign fields soon followed, including Nyasaland (now Malawi). Meanwhile, moved by the Holy Spirit and their study of scripture, other groups continued to contact the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference – including from the Netherlands, Guyana, and Jamaica – and formed their own national conferences.

After years of cooperative ministry internationally, these conferences, along with the British Conference, formed the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation in 1965. Sister conferences in Brazil, India, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Myanmar, Poland, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Burundi, and Zambia have since joined in that fellowship.

Since their genesis in the English Reformation, SDBs have continued to be defined by their convictions, but also by their deep relationships and strong faith communities. These communities have remained strong despite sometimes strident disagreement on matters of faith or practice. SDBs in the US have never split over doctrinal or social issues. Among SDBs, it is widely known that fellow believers are family.

Because their single most notable practice is a mark of easy distinction from other Christians, SDBs have frequently suffered discrimination, even from legislation meant to help Christianity grow (including rules meant to bolster Sunday worship). Despite these trials, SDBs have remained active in their communities, meeting the challenges of difficult conditions with patience and perseverance, while continuing to call both believers and nonbelievers alike to consider carefully the claims of the Bible on their lives.

In the 20th century, SDBs faced the increased secularization and individualization of society, especially in the global West, but globalization has strengthened the movement through broadening perspectives and providing necessary counterbalancing voices. Though challenges still remain around the world for their work, SDBs remain committed to God and their consciences as they strive to take the words of the Great Commission seriously and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Nicholas Kersten is librarian-historian with the Church Historical Society of the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference USA & Canada.

Above: Delegates at the 1986 Seventh Day Baptist World Federation sessions in Westerly, Rhode Island
Photo courtesy of the SDB General Conference USA & Canada

Left: A Seventh Day Baptist conference for teenagers in Marlboro, New Jersey, in 1928
Edwin Lopez,

Baptist World Alliance® regional secretary for Asia from 1980 to 1997 and general secretary of the Asian Baptist Federation during that time period, died on August 31, of cardiac arrest in Iloilo City, Philippines.

Lopez was previously general secretary of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC) from 1976-1979, and, prior to that, held pastorates in several churches in the Philippines.

The Asian Baptist leader led the CPBC to undertake a number of initiatives while he was general secretary, including the launch of CLASP, a program to assist pastors who do not receive adequate financial support from their churches. He also helped to launch the Total Integrated Church Development Assistance (TICDA) program which included training in evangelism, a stewardship emphasis, and a “New Frontier Ministries” initiative. TICDA enabled CPBC to organize a new congregation every two to three days within one year.

An ecumenist, Lopez worked closely with other evangelicals in his native country, as well as with Roman Catholics and Muslims. He was also involved in several community health and development projects.

As BWA regional secretary, Lopez played a role in helping increase Baptist growth in Asia such as in Nepal and Bhutan, and was part of various BWA human rights teams in Asia, including visiting Karen refugees from Myanmar in Thailand.

He leaves wife, Pat, and other family members.

Funeral services were held on September 8.

Calvin Robertson,

president of the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America (NMBCA), died on July 7, after a brief illness. He was 86 years old.

Robertson was serving his second four-year term as president of the NMBCA, one of four historically African American Baptist groups in the United States. He was also moderator emeritus of the Fellowship District Association in Dallas, Texas, and president of the Dallas Baptist Ministers Union.

Born in September 1925, he joined the US Army and served as a military police officer during World War II. After the war, he attended Bishop College in Marshall, Texas, and Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia.

He became pastor of Community Baptist Church in West Dallas, where he spent 30 years, from 1957-1987. He later succeeded his father, Rolston Robertson, as pastor of Bexar Street Missionary Baptist Church, also in Dallas, where he served until the time of his death.

Predeceased by wife, Doris, in 1994, he is survived by daughters, Charlotte and Sherry, and son, Calvin, Jr.

A memorial service was held July 13 at Bexar Street Missionary Baptist Church and a funeral service on the 14th at Antioch Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas.

Most Christians find it easy to understand the cross but struggle to grasp the meaning and significance of the resurrection. Jesus’ death is taken as the central saving event while the resurrection becomes a postscript to the story.

In *The Cross Is Not Enough: Living as Witnesses to the Resurrection*, Ross Clifford and Philip Johnson argue that the resurrection of Christ is the lynchpin. The defeat of death is not accomplished only by Jesus dying on the cross. The apostles do not relegate the resurrection to the status of a footnote. The Christian life of discipleship would be meaningless without the resurrection. Everything hinges on the resurrection: future hope, forgiveness of sin, and the coming reign of Christ. The key theme of justification is not limited to the effect of the cross but also hinges on the resurrection. The resurrection is the lynchpin of Christianity.

The theme of hope and lifestyle are grounded in the resurrection. The authors affirm that Jesus’ death on the cross is important but insist it is Christ’s resurrection that changes everything about how we live.
FROM THE PRESIDENT
John Upton

“Make Music!”

The Annual Gathering of 2012 in Santiago, Chile, was a tremendous experience of well-prepared papers, wise discernment of business matters, and good global fellowship. I am deeply grateful to the Baptist leadership and volunteers in Chile who worked so hard to make our visit meaningful and who hosted us so well. All who attended will remember the gift of the evening we shared learning both Chilean culture and the work of Baptists in Chile. We in the BWA would like to express our deepest appreciation to all who made the Gathering a memorable experience.

When I left the Annual Gathering I flew to Argentina to visit with both Baptist conventions in the country, the Argentine Baptist Association (ABA) and the Evangelical Baptist Convention of Argentina. ABA was having its congress at the time. While there I had a fun moment that led to a fresh insight for me. I would like to share that with you.

I was sitting in the lobby talking with a friend when I overheard a young mother asking her daughter, who I guessed was around two or three years of age, what she had learned in her Bible study group that morning. Oddly enough the girl answered by breaking into a song. The mother said, “That’s beautiful dear, now what did you do in your Bible study?” The child just sang and sang. The mother looked over at us and concluded that music is what they did. Probably that was true, but her toddler got it right in a deeper sense. If someone were to ask what we do in church, regardless of our location in the world, we would have to say that we stand up and sing praises together.

Of course, we are not all about music – but, think about it. Our purpose is to express something simply too wonderful for words alone. Everything we do has its root and end in the praise of God. What do we do when we gather? We make music, a love song for the world. That love song is both praise and a longing for God.

The church has always been a music-making people. When I was in Italy, I heard a pastor say that when the church was in its cradle, a Roman official wrote to the emperor of Rome trying to describe this little Christian sect. This is how he described the church: “They gather in the morning and sing hymns to Jesus Christ.” There was nothing in his letter about a sermon or a lesson or bread and wine or their ministry. All he told about was their music.

In a way, this focus on music just means finally getting on board with the rest of creation. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth – but why? I love the answer given by one scholar, Elizabeth Actemier, that God made the world because God is a music lover. Nothingness means dreadful, terrible, absolute silence. So, God cried out in beauty and love, and longed for beauty and love to come echoing back from creation. When the Creator sang out over everything, He said, “This is very good!” The universe sang back in ringing reply, “Yes, this is very good.”

And on earth, God’s creatures make ceaseless sounds. It seems that nature abhors not only a vacuum, but also silence. Louis Thomas, the biologist, tells us that even termites make percussive sounds to each other, beating their heads against the wood in a wonderfully, organized pattern of rhythm. In the deep caves of the earth there are bats that, while at rest, emit beautiful bell-like tones. Fish make sound by clicking their teeth and blowing air. Even leeches tap rhythmically on leaves. In the ocean depths, right at this moment, whales are singing long complex melodies that can be heard for hundreds of miles through the sea.

Creation sings! It sings and we hear only the tiniest fraction of its song. I’m told if we could hear the great sound rising from the world it would literally lift us off our feet. God hears and is pleased. God is indeed a great lover of music. And God made you and me to join in this praise.

Open the Bible and through many of its pages music from God’s people comes rushing toward you. You hear the great lavishing love songs of Solomon, the songs of Miriam and Moses, the sad songs of the Psalms, the jubilant songs of the Psalms, Mary’s song, and a hymn actually sung by Jesus with his friends on his very last night. You have the hymn of Paul and Silas ringing out from prison and that final great Alleluia song from the Book of Revelation. That is how it will end, it will end in music.

We are entrusted with the duty and delight of expressing and extending the music of God throughout creation. And because humankind is so varied in languages, cultures, sub-cultures, styles and so many kinds of people, the music is spectacularly diverse. On each day of worship God is being praised with African drums, steel drums in the Caribbean, Appalachian fiddles, Latino guitars, electric guitars, didgeridoos in Australia, pianos, synthesizers, prerecorded music, rock bands, pipe organs, full orchestras, gospel choirs, shape note choirs, and every form of music imaginable.

That little two or three year old girl singing her heart out in Argentina reminded me that every possible expression of God’s love is wanted, every possible voice, every available life, every possible caring deed, truthful word, selfless gift, earnest prayer – all of it, needed, wanted, for the glory of God and the loving of the world in Christ’s name. Sing on, little niña!
Enoch Dusingizimana should not be alive. Not after he cheated death at least three times.

The first was when he faced down 10 young men who invaded his home with machetes and grenades bent on killing his wife and five children. “I stood my ground and told them they cannot touch my wife or children unless they go through me,” he told the Baptist World Alliance.

The second escape occurred the next day when the young men returned with their commander to kill not only his wife and children, but him as well. Upon recognizing him, the commander told the young men. “Is this the man you want to kill? You cannot kill him. He is a relative of our deceased president.”

Many months after he and his family fled into the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), some of the same young men who had also escaped into the same refugee camp tossed a grenade into his makeshift dwelling. Miraculously, the grenade sank into the ground and did not explode.

The April 1994 genocide in Rwanda claimed more than 800,000 lives after radical Hutus massacred ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus in the Central African country. Among the victims were Dusingizimana’s father and five brothers and the husbands and fathers in law of his two sisters. But for Dusingizimana’s intervention, his wife, a Tutsi, and their children, would have been numbered among the victims.

Dusingizimana, a Hutu, is founder and bishop of the Community of Christian Churches in Africa (CECA), based in Rwanda, but including churches in Uganda, Burundi, and the DRC. At the time of the massacre, he was a young man leading a body comprising 21 congregations. CECA, which gained BWA membership in 2007, now comprises 189 churches and operates a number of educational institutions from preschool up to high school.

Dusingizimana’s story is one of reconciliation and forgiveness. He had to live with the horror of members of his own congregations participating in the bloodbath. People who, according to him, he thought were Christians. He and his churches also mourned the deaths of 58 members who were killed in the mayhem.

The Baptist leader returned to Rwanda with a mission to effect reconciliation, but, based on his own telling, God had to confront him first. While living in a cave in Goma in Eastern DRC with his wife, children, mother, and two sisters, he asked God to show him what to do and where to go. By this time, he was accorded official status as a missionary, working alongside missionaries from the United States to assist fellow refugees in the camp, distributing aid, opening schools and orphanages, but also preaching and baptizing. His experience as a pastor and church leader, and his fluency in several languages, made him especially effective. According to his own account, they baptized upwards of 45,000 displaced persons.

But he was restless and so went on a three day fast. “I told God I am not ready to work where there is no peace, neither Rwanda nor Congo.” He had the opportunity, he said, of going to Europe or the US as the missionaries from the US had offered to assist him to do so. “I prayed with tears, weeping, when, on the third day, I heard a voice saying ‘Rwanda.’” He rebuked the voice, thinking it was the voice of the devil. It was on the seventh time when the voice said “Rwanda” that he concluded it was God who was speaking to him.

He returned to Rwanda preaching reconciliation as the only way for the country and God’s people to move forward. “The Lord asked me to speak to both sides, Hutus and Tutsis, without hiding anything, telling them they are murderers, telling them the truth that they have to repent. I told them that they are created in the image of God and that there is no need to kill each other. I baptized many who committed genocide. I went into prisons to preach. At one time I baptized 145 prisoners who committed genocide and who repenteth.”

Because of his work of reconciliation, he was appointed chair of the Commission for Peace, Unity and Reconciliation, a body formed by evangelical churches. He was also being wooed into politics but he refused the overtures. “I told them I have only one language, the language of the Bible. If I agree to join you, you are going to change my language and I don’t want my language to change. I have only one language, and it is biblical – the language of unity, peace and reconciliation.”

Dusingizimana believes his country has come a long way, and that another genocide is highly unlikely. “The eyes of Rwandans are now opened,” he said with confidence. “There are many changes in Rwanda now. We are working toward rehabilitation, reconstruction, reconciliation.”

Left: Enoch Dusingizimana, founder and bishop of the Community of Christian Churches in Africa
Above: A Rwanda genocide memorial