

While CBF has a robust list of missionary involvements, both locally and internationally (see attachment), one need we've had for quite a while has been a deeper and broader connection with other Baptists beyond ourselves.

While we've historically had a few loose ties with American Baptists, Cooperative Baptists, and Southern Baptists, those groups are essentially—though not exclusively—Anglo. There are similar groups such as the National Baptists and the Progressive Baptists who are essentially—though not exclusively—African American.

Perhaps partly because neither set of choices matches the wonderfully “ebony and ivory” mix that CBF represents, we've not been very involved with Baptists beyond ourselves. Something else was clearly needed so that our vision could better include the whole world.



Happily, the **Baptist World Alliance** is just such a global group of Baptists. Composed of 228 Associations, Conventions, and Unions in 121 Countries and Territories, the BWA encompasses a global worshipping community of 110 million persons in 173,000 churches, with 42 million baptized followers of Jesus. Wow! That sounds a lot like CBF!

So it was that a delegation from our MISSION Team traveled to the BWA offices in Falls Church, Virginia last year to explore how CBF might partner more fully with the BWA. Shortly after that visit, Dr. **Neville Callam**, a Jamaican who is the BWA Executive Director visited us and was our guest preacher. Our exploratory conversations have continued, and last month, Dr. **Fausto Vasconcelos**, a Brazilian who is BWA's Director of Mission, Evangelism, and Theological Reflection was our guest preacher.

On that occasion, Chima Ebinama, our MISSION Team Leader, presented Dr. Vasconcelos with a check for \$1,000 from CBF to begin our partnership as a BWA Global Impact Associate Congregation. Here's what the BWA has to say about Global Impact Congregations:

“The BWA Global Impact Churches Program is for a Baptist Church wishing to participate actively in supporting the worldwide ministry of the Baptist World Alliance. Global Impact Churches respond to needs around the world, where many still have not received the salvation Christ offers, where sexual trafficking must be battled, where lepers still live in gutters, where widowed women become prostitutes, and too many Baptist Christians are denied the freedom to gather freely for public worship.

“Global Impact Churches pray for other Baptists, such as those in a church of twenty people, meeting in someone's house in a country where 98% of the population is Muslim. The Baptist World Alliance works to connect those isolated believers with other Baptists around the world through prayer, international meetings, and through modern electronic communications so they will know that they are part of a vibrant faith family that is praying for them, caring for them, and ready to serve them.”

Overall, the BWA's **MISSION** is “Networking the Baptist family to impact the world for Christ,” and its **VISION** is that “The Baptist World Alliance is a global movement of Baptists sharing a common confession of faith in Jesus Christ bonded together by God's love

to support, encourage and strengthen one another while proclaiming and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit before a lost and hurting world.”

The BWA has six constituent bodies around the world, which are the All Africa Baptist Fellowship, the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation, the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, the European Baptist Federation, the North American Baptist Fellowship, and the Union of Baptists in Latin America. In Falls Church, the BWA is organized in several departments, as follows:

MISSION, EVANGELISM & THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

- Baptist Heritage & Identity
- Baptist Worship & Spirituality
- Christian Ethics
- Doctrine & Christian Unity
- Evangelism
- Ministry
- Theological Education
- Bread of Life
- Baptist Fund for World Evangelism & Discipleship
- Member Body Statistical Forms
- Baptist Colleges, Seminaries & Bible Schools

FREEDOM & JUSTICE

- Baptist-Muslim Relations
- Human Rights Advocacy
- Peace
- Religious Freedom
- Social & Environmental Justice
- Human Rights Awards
- Human Rights Day
- Prayer Requests
- Resources
- United Nations

BAPTIST WORLD AID

- Developmental Projects (BWAID Projects Catalog)
- Relief
- World Hunger Emphasis

WOMEN: Women’s World Day of Prayer

MEN: Men’s World Day of Prayer

YOUTH

- Baptist Youth World Day of Prayer
- Baptist Youth World Congress
- Youth Committee
- Mission Projects

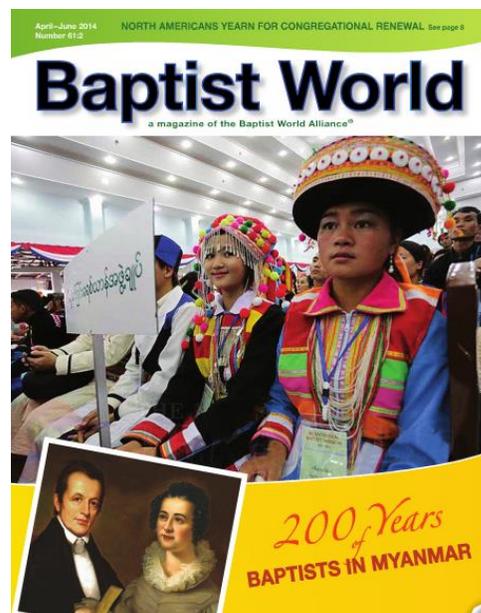
I've included six informational pieces about the BWA in the zip file attached with this *Laptop*:

- BWA 2013 Brochure
- BWA Centennial Statement
- BWA World Aid Overview
- BWA PowerPoint (PDF)
- BWA 2013 Project Catalog
- BWA Constitution & Bylaws

You can also access these through the BWA website at www.bwanet.org, and you can read the current edition of the BWA's bimonthly journal, *Baptist World*, at <http://content.yudu.com/A2ssi7/BW612/resources/index?referrerUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bwanet.org%2F>

I hope you'll look at some of these materials and begin your own journey of global missional involvement through prayer, giving, and going . . . that God's Kingdom may come!

Dave



Preaching Schedule from now until the end of the summer:

May 25 Memorial Day	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Passionate Worship</i>
June 1 Communion	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Radical Hospitality</i>
June 8 PENTECOST	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Intentional Faith Development</i>
June 15 FATHERS' DAY	<i>Because I Said I Would</i>
June 22 Summer begins	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Risk-Taking Mission & Service</i>
June 29	<i>Fruitful Congregations: Extravagant Generosity</i>
July 6 Communion	FREEDOM SUNDAY <i>Character that Counts: Dependence</i>
July 13	<i>Character that Counts: Vulnerability</i>
July 20	<i>Character that Counts: Humility</i>
July 27	<i>Character that Counts: Righteousness</i>
August 3 Communion	<i>Character that Counts: Mercy</i>
August 10	<i>Character that Counts: Purity</i>
August 17	<i>Character that Counts: Reconciliation</i>
August 24	<i>Character that Counts: Integrity</i>

The Joshua Code: Fifty-Two Verses Every Believer Should Know

O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson, 2012)

Week twenty: OH, THAT SAGGING MIDDLE!

*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;
and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20).*

My father's family came to Texas from Tennessee back in the 1800s. When I was a boy in the 1950s, each summer we would make our annual trek back to Tennessee to visit my Great Aunt Ann. I loved those long car trips in the days before the interstate highways. We would stay in her house, and I would sleep in an old iron bed on a feather mattress. Anyone who has had a similar experience knows that several times during the night you awaken in a ball in the middle of that soft feather mattress. I once heard Stuart Briscoe refer to the Christian life as a soft mattress. I can relate. That bed was extremely firm on both iron ends; but, oh, that sagging middle.

A lot of Christians live their lives like that old iron bedstead with the soft feathered mattress. That is, they are firm on both ends. They are firm on the front end: they know that, at a certain point in time, they put their trust in Christ and have the assurance that they have been born again. They are also firm on the other end: they know they are going to heaven when they die. But, oh, that sagging middle; those years in between for beating out the principles of the Christian life on the anvil of personal, daily experiences. And that middle often seems to be sagging.

Galatians 2:20 is the secret to firming up the middle of our walk with Christ. This was the second verse I remember memorizing as a teenage believer. I knew after my conversion that something grand and glorious had taken place within me. I asked one of my new Christian friends, "What happened to me?" He pointed me to Galatians 2:20. I memorized it that day and have held it close to my heart as one of my life verses throughout the years of my own Christian experience. This is one of the most personal verses in the entire Bible. Like a spring meadow with its buzzing visitors, the verse swarms with personal pronouns. (There are seven personal pronouns in all, depending upon the English version.) This single verse is perhaps the most complete description of the Christian life to be found in the New Testament. It reveals to us what Christ has done for us.

HE TOOK something from me: MY OLD LIFE

"I have been crucified with Christ;"

HE PUT SOMETHING IN ME: MY NEW LIFE

"it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;"

HE GAVE SOMETHING FOR ME: HIS OWN LIFE

"[He] loved me and gave Himself for me."

Perhaps your life is like my Great Aunt Ann's old iron bed: firm on both ends, but sagging in the middle. You can firm up the middle by coming to the reality of this one verse and incarnating it.

*I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss;
My sinful self, my only shame; my glory— all the cross.*