

**September 2009**  
**Baptist World Alliance Leader at Yates**

On Sunday September 13 the Rev. Neville Callam, General Secretary of the BWA preached at Yates Baptist Church. Following the morning worship service General Secretary Callam shared more details about the BWA's mission in the world. He began by sharing the five major objectives of this organization which represents 200 conventions and fellowships, 38 million baptized believers, and 105 million people who attend Baptist churches. Those objectives were:

**1) Uniting Baptists worldwide**

One of the biggest obstacles to effective evangelism for Baptists is our penchant for internal conflict. These disputes tarnish our witness and dim Christ's light among us. The BWA offers the world an example of unity and togetherness among Baptists unseen anywhere else.

**2) Lead in world evangelism**

Recently the BWA has hosted "Living Conferences" around the world to train pastors and lay leaders in evangelism. While much of North America and Europe seem uninterested in the Gospel, the people of Asia, Africa, and South America are hungry for this good news. Millions of people are hearing and receiving the Gospel because of the BWA efforts.

**3) Respond to people in need**

BWAid is the very successful program that funnels money, support, and expertise to crisis laden lands around the world. When the recent tsunamis hit Sri Lanka, the Baptists of that area received immediate financial support from BWAid to do disaster relief. Clean water, fresh food, and housing reconstruction were provided without a great deal of red tape.

**4) Defend human rights**

When Baptist Christians are thrown in jail unjustly, or women are sold into sex trafficking, or governments create laws that criminalize Christianity the BWA is there to offer a global voice to expose injustice and persecution. Hundreds of us can right letters to the government of Sudan, but that doesn't carry the weight of one phone call from an acknowledged leader of 100 million Christians around the world. The BWA is doing a crucial work in liberating people from oppressive and harsh regimes.

**5) Promote Theological Education**

In order to offer a compelling witness for Christ in a complicated world, Christians need to be guided to think through and learn about the weighty issues of our times. Theological reflection is essential to witness Baptists offer the world. We need to be engaged with non-believing thinkers as well as theologians from other denominations to foster greater understanding and a compelling vision of the Christian faith. The BWA promotes this kind of study in places where academic resources are very limited.

I'm proud to be associated with the BWA and I am delighted that its articulate and influential leader was able to spend a day with us. The missions dollars that we send to the BWA are some of the most important dollars we spend throughout the year. Thank you for making this mission a vital part of the Yates Baptist Church identity.