

**Baptist World Alliance – Pentecostal Dialogue
Birmingham, Alabama, USA, (December 13-15, 2011)**

A group of Baptist leaders representing the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) and some Pentecostal leaders drawn from denominations with membership in the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) met together at the Beeson Divinity School, Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, December 13 - 15, 2011.

They were graciously hosted by the founding Dean of the Beeson Divinity School, Dr. Timothy George and his staff. The purpose of this meeting was to set the parameters for an upcoming international dialogue between Baptists and Pentecostals. Introductory papers were presented by Dr. Bill Brackney (Baptist) and Dr. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. (Pentecostal) for consideration by the group.

Rev. Neville Callam (Jamaica), General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, and Dr. Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., (USA), Professor of Church History and Ecumenics at Fuller Theological Seminary, co-chaired this planning session. Dr. Callam stated that he was pleased that the time had arrived in which Baptists and Pentecostals could meet to consider how they might work together in the spirit of Jesus' prayer for the unity of the Church. He encouraged the participants to think creatively about how, in future years, Pentecostals and Baptists might cooperate more fully in a number of areas including mission and evangelism.

Dr. Robeck expressed delight on behalf of the Pentecostals at the invitation to open this discussion, noting that while the Pentecostal World Fellowship does not currently have in its mandate such ecumenical discussions, the Chairman of that international body, Dr. Prince Guneratnam of Malaysia, has encouraged its members toward greater ecumenical openness and had given his blessings to this dialogue with the Baptist World Alliance. It is anticipated that teams will meet annually from 2012 through 2014 beginning in Quito, Ecuador next August, where they will be hosted by the South American seminary of the Church of God (Cleveland, TN), SEMISUD. They will present their findings and recommendations for consideration by the two parent bodies in 2015.

During this week's planning session, the group adopted the following statement on how it expects the discussion to proceed. "The purpose of the dialogue is to examine what it may mean for Baptists and Pentecostals to walk together in step with the Holy Spirit. Our intention is for the dialogue to be holistic in its evaluation of faith and practice." It will attempt to answer the following questions. "Are there areas on which we already agree? What can we offer to one another as sisters and brothers in Christ? Who are we as we walk together? What does it mean for us to walk together? How do we walk together in the Holy Spirit?"

Other participants in this planning session included: **[Baptist]** Dr. Bill Brackney, Millard R. Cherry Distinguished Professor for Christian Thought and Ethics at Acadia Divinity

College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, CANADA; Dr. Curtis Freeman, Research Professor of Theology and Director of the Baptist House of Studies, Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC, USA; Dr. Timothy George, Dean of Beeson Divinity School of Samford University and a senior editor for *Christianity Today*; Dr. Fausto Vasconcelos, (Brazil) Director of Evangelism and Mission for the Baptist World Alliance, Falls Church, VA, USA;

[Pentecostal] Dr. Miguel Alvarez (Honduras), President of SEMISUD in Quito, Ecuador; Dr. Leonard Lovett (USA), Ecumenical Officer for the Church of God in Christ; Dr. Jean-Daniel Plüss (Switzerland), Chairman of the European Pentecostal/Charismatic Research Association and historian of the Swiss Pentecostal Mission; and Dr. David Ramirez (Chile), Director of the Latin American desk in the Foreign Missions Division of the Church of God (Cleveland, TN).