

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017



*Witnessing to God's peace rooted in justice ~ working together until it comes. | Testificando sobre la paz de Dios enraizada en justicia ~ Trabajando hasta que llegue.*

BPFNA  Bautistas por la Paz  
Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, Inc.

# Annual Theme

In 2017 we continued our five-year focus of *No Longer Strangers: Crossing Borders for Peacemaking* and began a year-long focus on exploring vulnerability and how to clothe each other with hope with the theme *When Did We See You Naked?*



Photo from Javier Ulloa

# Advocacy

## We sent a representative...

to a rally in support of Rev. Hon. Wendell Griffen who was being threatened with impeachment after attending a Good Friday vigil along with members of the church he pastors.

## Endorsed...

the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act

## Sponsored...

a regional gathering for pastors titled *The Church of Jesus in the Age of Trump*

## Provided resources for and encouraged participation...

in National Gun Violence Awareness Day

## Created space and resources...

to better understand injustices faced by Indigenous communities across the Americas. This includes recommended readings and conversations with non-Indigenous members to learn more in order to be better advocates and accomplices; listening to our Indigenous friends and partners at our Summer Conference and responding to requests from these communities when multiple disasters hit later in the year; and learning more about one of our Partner Congregation's work in abolishing Columbus Day to replace it with Indigenous People's Day and compiling a collection of resources around how other cities can do the same.

## Became a pickup location...

for Welcome Your Neighbor yard signs. Created by Immanuel Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, VA, the sign offers a message of welcome in English, Spanish, and Arabic that says "No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor."

“

**Thanks for this opportunity to act in one spirit for love and justice.**

*—From a pastor who signed onto a letter expressing support for refugees*

“

**My husband & I are loving our Welcome Your Neighbor sign in our yard. Thanks for bringing them.**

*—BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Member*

“

**I appreciate all your prophetic work for peace and justice.**

*—BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Member*

# Staffing

## We welcomed three new staff members to BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz!

### Office Manager **Ellie Rencher**



Ellie joined the BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz staff in December 2017. She holds a B.A. in Spanish from The University of Mississippi and a M.A. in Spanish and Certificate in Translation and Translation Studies from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

In addition to working with BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz, Ellie is a project manager for Canticle Communications, a strategic communications firm serving faith-based organizations where her responsibilities include coordinating meetings and events, overseeing the production of print publications and translating written materials into Spanish for multiple clients. She also serves as a conference administrator for wellness conferences offered by the Church Pension Group to Spanish-speaking Episcopal clergy, a role she has held since 2011.

Ellie's past experience includes working for CREDO Institute, Inc. where she managed the daily operations of the College for Bishops, assisted with program development and communications and coordinated and implemented meetings and events offered to bishops of the Episcopal

Church. She also has also worked in human resources at Vail Resorts, Inc. and in the retail and transportation industries.

Ellie enjoys playing outdoors, running, reading and being with friends and family. She and her husband, Ollie, live in Charlotte, NC. Contact Ellie at [ellie@bpfna.org](mailto:ellie@bpfna.org).

### 2018 Summer Conference Managers

## **Elivette (Elly) Mendez Angulo & George Oliver**



The Rev. Elivette (Elly) Mendez Angulo and Rev. George E. Oliver joined BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz at the end of 2017. Together, they will serve as the 2018 Summer Conference Program Managers. In their joint role, they will refine and implement the chosen theme through: the selection of speakers, development of workshops and special events, collaborating on enrichment activities for attendees of all ages, abilities, understandings, and providing language integration from both English and Spanish!

# Staffing

## Elivette (Elly) Mendez Angulo



Elly is a God-fearing/respecting/loving, daughter of Puerto Rico. She is a 2015 graduate of Andover Newton Theological School with a Masters (Mistress) in Divinity degree.

A Pastor and Teacher, Elly is the National Coordinator of the United Church of Christ's Proyecto Encuentros de Gracia y Bienvenida, which focuses on repairing the breach formed between the church and the Latinx and LGBTQIA communities.

She also leads efforts to preserve and expand the history of Franklinton Center at Bricks in North Carolina through their Social Justice Museum and Library.

A committed Christian in the UCC tradition, as well as a lifelong Progressive Pentecostal, Elly has dedicated her service toward strengthening the bonds of communities across lines of

distinction, be they ethnic/racial, linguistic or religious. Contact Elly at [elivette@bpfna.org](mailto:elivette@bpfna.org).

## George Oliver



George is a tireless advocate on the front lines of Criminal Justice Reform and has recently been leading efforts in Western Massachusetts to restore employment access to the formerly incarcerated. A cradle Baptist, George is ordained in the ABC-USA tradition.

He has served in a number of settings planning major conferences and events, like Soledad O'Brien's public roll out of her documentary "Black In America: The Almighty Debt," which debuted at the historic Convent Avenue Baptist Church in Harlem.

George served on statewide steering committees for TABCOM and the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC, and has assisted both in mobilizing church members and clergy toward greater engagement on public policy and church intersections.

These skills also were deployed in his work in Texas as a Congregational Outreach Specialist for the public policy arm of

the Texas Conference of Churches, known as Texas Impact. George is an active member of University Baptist Church in Austin, TX. Contact George at [george@bpfna.org](mailto:george@bpfna.org).

# Networking

## Denominational Gatherings

### Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

At the CBF national assembly, attendees heard from Rev. Hon. Wendell Griffen on the *Paradox of Prophetic Hope in a Distressing Time*, and heard his challenge urging us to be good sails when God's winds are blowing.

### American Baptist Churches

At the ABC's biennial Mission Summit, attendees heard from Rev. Dr. Cheryl Dudley on *Practicing Peace in these Deeply Divided Times* with a message of inspiration and tactical advice for peacemakers struggling to make sense of the current reality, specifically in the United States. Lance Muteyo brought greetings and a word of challenge from our partners, the Pan African Peace Network.



Wendell Griffen



Cheryl Dudley & Lance Muteyo



Our challenge is to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. We do not and cannot control how God's wind will blow... God's wind blows in ways the Holy Spirit chooses to make prophetic changes happen in our lives.

—Rev. Hon. Wendell Griffen from his sermon at the BPFNA ~ *Bautistas por la Paz* Peace Breakfast at the CBF General Assembly



There are three things one has to reckon with in our practice of peace in these deeply divided times: 1. We have to know who we are, 2. We have to be prepared to strip away some things, 3. We have to be prepared to take some other things on.

—Rev. Dr. Cheryl Dudley from her sermon at the BPFNA ~ *Bautistas por la Paz* Peace Breakfast at the ABC Biennial Mission Summit

# Networking

## Baptist Fair Trade Project

We continued the Baptist Fair Trade Project which offers churches and individuals the opportunity to buy fairly traded goods that benefit small farmers as well as curriculum that helps churches to understand the consequences of basic spending decisions.

## Conflict Transformation

When we were not able to directly fund an ambitious Training for Conflict Transformation Training to be led by Philip Kakungulu in Tanzania, we worked with ABC missionary Dan Buttry to contact churches and individuals who might contribute and were able to raise enough to make the trip possible.

“

**Wow, We are so grateful for our friends who have fallen in love with the humble work we do. We declare that we love you all. We continue to stand with you all in fervent prayer and good will. Love from Africa. Amani Milele Peace Forever.**

*–Philip Kakungulu*



Training in Tanzania; Photo from Philip Kakungulu

# Networking



## Re-establishing Longtime Connections...

Hosted a visit by Ricardo Mayol who is leading the newly-formed Christian Continental Network for Peace, which works to support the sharing of resources and intercontinental networking for peace. We assisted him in meeting with numerous local pastors to share his work and gain interest in this program.

## And Creating New Ones

Board member Kadia Edwards offered the sermon at the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. service at Carson-Newman University.

“

If we really care about peace and justice work, then we need to connect those in the North and those in the South and understand together how violence is carried out. For example, those resisting the mining companies in Latin America are being killed, and we know that many of the mining companies are from Canada. So how can we find people in the United States and Canada who are involved in these issues and how can we network? I know they are there, I don't know who they are, but I know they are there.

—Ricardo Mayol



# Networking

## Networking at Summer Conference

Our largest event is our Summer Conference for peacemakers (referred to affectionately as “Peace Camp”) that focuses on a different theme and is held in a different location each year. Here are some examples of the amazing connections formed during this life-changing event. See more about our 2017 gathering on pages 10-13 of this report.

“

**Beth-Jackson Jordan, Director of Spiritual Care Services for Carolinas Health Care System, met Steve and Lynn Newsom at Peace Camp and attended in their workshop on moral injury experienced by combat veterans. Recognizing that understanding moral injury would be deeply useful for chaplains and pastors, she invited the Newsoms to lead a workshop for the chaplains of the entire CHS hospital system as well as local pastors. Coincidentally, one of my friends attended and later posted on Facebook that it, more than anything he'd ever attended, helped him understand and forgive his father who was a WWII veteran.**

*–BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Member*

“

**Andy Loving resourced us a year ago on socially responsible investing of our endowment. We took the first step in designating \$250k investment for a local venture on helping people avoid foreclosure of their home. Andy and I first discussed this at the Peace Camp in Saint Catherine. A great example of the mutual support the BPFNA family provides.**

*–Partner Congregation Pastor*

“

**Member Rachel McGuire is developing a creative new educational model at Colgate Rochester Crozier Divinity School that was inspired by a workshop she attended at Peace Camp.**

*–BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Member*

# Gatherings

## Summer Conference

In 2017 we held our first Summer Conference in Mexico and it proved to be a transformational moment for our entire organization. We exceeded our expectations and drew 217 peacemakers from 12 different countries to our first-ever conference in Mexico. We were thrilled that exactly half of the participants were native Spanish-speakers, many of whom were first-time attendees.

The theme for the week was “When Did We See You Naked?: Clothing Each Other with Hope” and focused on creating community through the lens of vulnerability; how do we become unafraid to share our vulnerabilities with one another and what does it look like to stand with and offer protection to society’s most vulnerable?

“

**After six decades of being serially upended by Grace, it happened once more in Mexico. I was converted again. But more to the point, our charging, charismatic history as a Peace and Justice Movement... was born again in Mexico... We simply cannot let this moment go by without seizing it. We must become something redemptively new... When 20 of us gathered 34 years ago and founded this Movement, we were invaded by the Spirit and a passel of outlandish dreams. But not in the wildest of these dreams could we have imagined what was accomplished in Mexico.**

*—George Williamson, founding president  
of BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz*

Photo by Iliana Yael Castillo



Photo by Beth Jackson-Jordan

Photo by Buddy Gill



# Gatherings



Photo by Iliana Yael Castillo



Photo by Allison Paksoy

“

Both of my girls have benefited from BPFNA scholarships and those experiences have been vital in helping them develop their voices as peacemakers.

—Summer Conference scholarship donor

# Gatherings

## Summer Conference Membership Meeting

Due to all the first time participants, many of whom were from Latin America, we ran our Membership Meeting a little differently in 2017.

Dividing into small groups based on how familiar participants felt with BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz, each group then answered the following questions about themselves and the organization:

1. What are the issues of peace and justice that are guiding your faith and work?
2. How do you see BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz supporting your work?
3. What are the kinds of connections that would be helpful for you?

Such rich conversation resulted from this that most groups did not get past the first or second question! As a result, an ad hoc gathering formed later in the week to continue and expand on the conversation.

What a blessing to have so much new energy and perspectives to provide BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz with much to consider moving forward!

“

**We are here together  
in Mexico, from many  
different places, despite  
some voices trying to  
build walls between us.**

*—Rev. Rebeca Montemayor, co-pastor of Iglesia Shalom Bautista in Mexico City*



Photo by Allison Paksoy

### ¡RESERVA LA FECHA PARA NUESTRA PRÓXIMA CONFERENCIA DE VERANO!

Descentralizando el poder y privilegio: Convirtiéndose en forastero/a

2-7 de julio de 2018

Keuka College, Keuka Park  
Nueva York, EE.UU.

### SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR NEXT SUMMER CONFERENCE!

Decentering Power & Privilege:  
Becoming the Stranger

July 2-7, 2018

Keuka College, Keuka Park  
New York, USA

# Gatherings

## BIG NEWS!

In 2019, we will be cosponsoring the 2019 Global Baptist Peace Conference in Cali, Colombia. This conference will serve as our annual summer gathering.



Photo by Andy Smith  
www.andysmithphotography.com



Photo by Ashlee Weist-Laird



Photo by Andy Smith  
www.andysmithphotography.com

## House Parties

In 2017, we continued our House Parties that celebrate our vision and work. Part social event and part fundraiser, these gatherings invite members and friends to hear inspiring and hopeful stories of the creative, courageous, and effective peacemaking being done across the globe and how they can get involved.

If you would like to schedule one of these parties in your area, please contact LeDayne McLeese Polaski at [ledayne@bpfna.org](mailto:ledayne@bpfna.org).

“

Thank you for opening your home to a group of truly dedicated people. LeDayne really did inspire some introspection and hope for the future. A good and motivating evening.

—House Party Attendee

# Trainings

Training has always been a central part of the work of BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz. In 2017, that work continued in new and creative ways.

## Activism and Social Change

Our Activism and Social Change workshop focuses on effective movements to create equality, justice, and beloved community and what makes them work. It also helps participants discover their unique role and how to find and sustain it. We led this workshop in 2017 at Carson-Newman University and our Partner Congregation St. Charles Avenue Baptist Church.

## Do Not Be Afraid: Changing the Narrative in the Midst of Racial Conflict

While at Carson-Newman, we also led our day-long *Do Not Be Afraid* training. Created in 2016 by Executive Director LeDayne McLeese Polaski and Board Member Kadia Edwards, this Conflict Transformation training centers around race and racism, largely with a US-focus.

## Colour-Coded: Decolonizing Hearts, Minds, and Spirits

Based off of our Do Not Be Afraid training, we worked with several of our Canadian members to create a similar training for a Canadian context called *Colour-Coded: Decolonizing Hearts, Minds, and Spirits*.



**We examined issues of identity, what shapes us, conditions us; how we learn to ‘other’ the other, how we arbitrarily exclude and include, how to identify, interrupt and disrupt unconscious bias, the unmerited privilege dominant cultures harvest without thinking, the systemic reach of personal prejudice... We recognised the tendency of the dominant culture, upon hearing stories too hard to hear, retreating into self-flagellating guilt, a place centered on the suffering of the self rather than on the task of moving beyond guilt and into action and allyship: Who grants it? What does the dominant culture need to do or learn in order to earn it? What is the grace and forgiveness available when we allow ourselves to accept our conditioning and begin the work of consciousness?**

—Lee McKenna on  
*Colour-Coded: Decolonizing Hearts, Minds, and Spirits*

# Trainings

“

[Regarding the Activism 101 training] My students really found the typology of 4 types of activists very helpful. They're still talking about that.

—David McNeely



## Sitting with the Trauma of Racism

We offered this training in 2017 at First Baptist Church of Washington, DC and at the Peace Mini-Camp held by several congregations in New York state.

## Trauma Awareness and Resilience

Available in a variety of lengths and focuses, this training looks at the affects of trauma, victim/survivor cycle, aggressor/offender cycle, breaking out of the cycle, and transformative initiatives and stories. We held variations of this training several times throughout 2017 including at the American Baptist Churches Mission Summit, for the grassroots group Streams of Justice in Vancouver, BC, and as a workshop for the annual Justice Summit in Henderson, KY.

## Conflict Transformation

Some focuses of our Conflict Transformation trainings include the positive potential of conflict, understanding conflict styles, providing tools for analyzing conflict, listening with curious questions, and understanding mainstreams and margins. In 2017 we led an *Introduction to Conflict Transformation* workshop at Henderson County High School in Henderson, KY and participated in a *Latin American Training of Conflict Transformation Trainers* held in Mexico City.

“

**You were absolutely awesome! This was by far the best Summit we've held. Thank you again!**

—Pastor who hosted LeDayne for a weekend of Conflict Transformation and Anti-racism training

# Trainings

## Other

In addition to the other trainings mentioned, we also participated in the following:

### We engaged...

Crossroads Antiracism Organizing & Training to lead our board and staff in a training titled *Exploring White Supremacy, White Cultural Dominance, and their Impact on how BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Engages Questions of Racial Difference.*

### We offered...

Consulting for a college professor working to supplement his peace studies courses.

“

**My thanks again for all your consideration; it was your presentation at Graceland last year that in part led to this [peace studies] project, and so this entire effort is, in some sense, an homage to yours.**

–College Professor

### We worked...

With the ecumenical Christian Peace Circle to offer a well-attended webinar titled *Why Nonviolence?*

### We offered...

*Tools for Transforming Racial Conflict* for the local community at Grandview Calvary Baptist Church in Vancouver, BC.

“

**I'll be taking home a renewed sense of self and purpose.**

–Training Participant

“

**I'm grateful for your time with us. You've given us some really helpful language but also a wonderful reintroduction to what BPFNA is about. Thank you for your time and presence!**

–Partner  
Congregation Pastor

“

**I'm taking with me the tools to have critical conversations, hope, and a renewed sense of zeal to make a difference.**

–Training Participant



# Partnerships

## Disaster Relief

After natural disasters in the US, Mexico and Puerto Rico, we identified local partners doing on-the-ground work for both short and long term recovery and encouraged our membership to donate. Giving has been generous and has been put to work meeting immediate needs such as food, water, and shelter as well as longer-term needs such as earthquake-proof housing and advocacy for a just recovery.

We worked with our partner organizations in Houston, Texas; Mexico and Puerto Rico to communicate immediate needs to our entire membership. For Mexico and Puerto Rico we also raised funds for grassroots on the ground efforts responding to the devastating conditions created in many communities.



Disaster relief efforts at Iglesia Bautista Shalom;  
photo from Ximena Ulloa Montemayor

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The work will continue for a long time. We need to continue working not only for the houses but also working for the lives and hearts of people who lost everything.

–Ximena Ulloa Montemayor, Iglesia Bautista Shalom, Mexico City

We donated 10 percent of the proceeds of our Fundraising Dinner at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church and of Giving Tuesday to these recovery efforts.

We responded to an invitation from the board of the Alliance of Baptists, meeting in Charlotte, to update them on the situations in Mexico and Puerto Rico. We have since partnered with them to distribute aid where we've taken the lead in Puerto Rico and Mexico while they have served as the primary contact for partners in Cuba.

# Partnerships

“

Please know that showing your concern and willingness to help means a lot, so thanks in advance and keep us in your prayers! As you may have heard in the news, this hurricane was of unexpected proportions... As a result, we joined efforts with other community members and leaders to assist the most vulnerable in our community... Our church has been responsible for cooking every day for 300-350 people per day. As we have running water and a 'Purification Water Team', we have been providing purified water to our community and so far to seven other cities, specifically in distant areas in the countryside.

*–Laura Ayala, First Baptist Church  
of Rio Piedras, San Juan*

“

Thank you  
for a way to  
share more  
directly.

*–PC pastor  
responding to our  
disaster relief fund  
for Mexico and  
Puerto Rico*

“

Many thanks to you, our brethren of BPFNA  
~ Bautistas por la Paz, for the campaign  
to raise funds not only for Mexico, but  
also for Puerto Rico. As soon as we have  
the resources we can channel them  
immediately to the families affected in  
Chiapas.

*–Dalia Juárez, Seminario  
Intercultural Mayense, Chiapas*

# Resources

## Peaceful Resistance

We created a new Facebook community called Peaceful Resistance where we share ideas for faithful responses to the political climate of the times. We also send out a weekly supplemental email to those wanting the material emailed to them.

## Resource & Worship Kits

In 2017 we created resource kits on Sanctuary; Charlottesville/White Supremacy; Natural Disaster relief efforts and updates from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba; and Gun Violence. We also created and updated our kits for worship resources on the church year as well as specific justice issues. Examples include resources for Mother's Day/Peace Sunday, Advent/Christmas, and Lent/Easter.

“

**Thank you for the resources.  
These are difficult days and I  
am glad not to walk alone.**

*–Partner Congregation Pastor*

“

**Your organization has  
helped us so much! We  
are beginning the *White  
Privilege: Let's Talk* series.  
Thanks for making it  
available.**

*–BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz  
member*

## Solidarity Series

Through the Solidarity Series we shared resources and facilitated discussions that largely focused around raising cultural awareness and competency. We held three of these events in 2017:

### *On Being an Ally*

*On Being an Ally* is part of the White Privilege: Let's Talk series from the United Church of Christ, a curriculum that's designed to invite church members into safe, meaningful, substantive, and bold conversations on race. Aimed largely at white congregations involved in racial justice work, this particular webinar talks about what it means to be an ally as well as effective and ineffective ways to do so.

### *Resources on decolonization, reconciliation, and white supremacy as they relate to Indigenous peoples*

This session featured readings suggested by a BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz board member who also helped us lead our online discussion.

### *The Dream is Now*

A documentary focusing on the stories of undocumented youth in the United States and their struggles in earning citizenship. This film was suggested by a BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz board member who also helped us lead the online discussion.

# Resources

## Summer Conference Resources

We provided a list of recommended readings to Summer Conference attendees to recognize all our various diversities while also guiding and informing our time together in ways that value cultural competency, awareness, and sensitivity.

## Spanish Resources

Along with holding our Summer Conference in Mexico for the first time, 2017 was a year where we significantly increased our production of resources available in Spanish - both translated materials and original pieces.

## Translated Materials

Hiring Hortensia Azucena Picos Lee in 2015 was integral to this becoming a reality. Hortensia's work in 2017 with translating materials for Summer Conference, the Spanish website, Baptist Peacemaker, and more allowed us to reach more Spanish speakers and live further into our four-nation identity.

## Original Pieces

Thanks to Ximena Ulloa Montemayor, our 2017 Summer Conference Manager, and the success of the 2017 Summer Conference, we are now in contact with more Spanish speakers and were able to publish more original material in Spanish in 2017. The Conference also introduced a more effective way of doing simultaneous translation that we will use at future conferences.

Hortensia through her work has also been providing us with original pieces - some written by her and others found through her networks.

“

**Thank you to BPFNA - Bautistas for la Paz for help in keeping us sane and for reminding us to keep doing the work God has called us to do.**

*-BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz member*

“

**Thanks for the many times you have sent materials relating to current events. Very often I have used those materials with my congregation and in my preaching and am most grateful to you for your work.**

*-Partner Congregation pastor*

# Publications

## Issue Monograph

We created the first draft of a new issue monograph on Justice for Indigenous Peoples. Be on the lookout for it soon on our website.

## Continuous Publications

In 2017 we continued to publish our regular publications such as *Baptist Peacemaker*, *Model Ministries*, and several new essays in the *Borders I Cross* series on our website, to name a few.

“

**[I'm] thinking a lot about these issues and what it means to be allies, especially for those of us who are white.**

*-Participant in Solidarity Series discussion*

## An Open Letter to US President Donald Trump

Inspired by our 2017 Summer Conference in Mexico, BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Founding President George Williamson drafted this letter to the current President of the United States. It was also signed by 97 Conference attendees. The letter was then mailed to President Trump as well as published on the BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz website.

## Weekly and Monthly Recaps

In 2017 we introduced weekly emailed recaps for Peaceful Resistance as well as emailed monthly recaps for the at-large work of the organization. These recaps highlight shared resources and tools, relevant issues, and calls to action that were mentioned during the previous week or month to keep our network updated, informed, and active.

## Publication Awards

Ken Sehested's review of George Williamson's memoir *Born in Sin, Upended in Grace* (published by BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz) won an Award of Excellence from Associated Church Press.

“

**I love the work you do and am so inspired by it. Glad we can be a part of it.**

*-Partner Congregation Pastor*

# Peace Funds

## Gavel Memorial World Peace Fund

In 2017 we provided grants for:

### AMEXTRA

AMEXTRA (Asociación Mexicana de Transformación Rural y Urbana A.C.) worked to build a culture of nonviolence in marginalized communities in two areas of the State of Mexico (Lomas de San Isidro, Los Reyes and Sierra de Guadalupe, Tultitlan), through the training of 16 local promoters.

### Grandview Calvary Baptist Church

Grandview Calvary Baptist Church received funding for the Healing at the Wounding Place Ministry's "Whitehorse Baptist Reconciliation Project" a project in response to Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission that brought together settler and indigenous communities.

### Mariposas Sin Fronteras and BorderLinks

The Mariposas Visitation Program was launched a two years ago as a partnership between Mariposas Sin Fronteras and BorderLinks to grow and equip a base of people, locally and nationally, who understand and can take action against criminalization, militarization and mass incarceration as they intersect with immigration and LGBTQ issues.



**Agradecemos profundamente el apoyo otorgado al proyecto Quetzalohtli (camino hermoso), mismo que servirá para reforzar los lazos de fraternidad, solidaridad encausados hacia una vida digna armoniosa y esperanzadora.**

*–Gavel Grant Recipient*



**[Your] support is very valuable to Amextra and the communities in which we serve.**

*–Gavel Grant Recipient*



**Agradecemos su apoyo solidario para nuestros hermanos de Chiapas.**

*–Gavel Grant Recipient*

# Peace Funds

## Community Action for Development and Integration and the Union of the Baptist Churches in Burundi

Community Action for Development and Integration and the Union of the Baptist Churches in Burundi for a “Training workshop extension on education for peace and non-violence”

## Crossing Lines Africa

Crossing Lines Africa for The GLBTQ Investment Year Project. The primary innovation of the Investment Year Program involves structuring a program for LGBTQ youth around Positive Youth Development principles, adapting those principles for unique LGBTQ youth developmental challenges and empowering the youth to actively participate in the LGBTQ transformation movement.

## Global Baptist Peace Conference

The Global Baptist Peace Conference in Cali, Colombia. The conference is a continuation of a series of global peace conferences that began in 1988 in Sweden. The BPFNA has been a sponsor of all of them (Nicaragua, Thailand, Australia, Italy). This conference will be similar to the Rome conference providing 8-10 training seminars, 48 workshops, and a week-long gathering of Baptists and others from around the world. The purpose is for networking, training, education, spiritual support and renewal, and for enhancing the development of peacebuilding around the globe, particularly through regional groups.



(Re)-thinking Theologies of Life program

# Peace Funds



## Kingdom Of Peace And Development (KOPAD)

*AMANI NA UNDUGU TUONGEE*

This project mobilized politicians, voters and the general public to employ nonviolence and constructive tools during political campaigns.

## Center for Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolutions Studies of Mennonite Brethren Centenary Bible College and the Collective of Dalit Ecumenical Christian Scholars

*(Re)-thinking Theologies of Life*

This 10-day educational program for church leaders from throughout India, Myanmar and Nepal. The ecumenical gathering was meant to encourage young leaders to be theologically informed, to foster sound theological literacy among the lay people and to foster commitment among younger theologians to make justice

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**On behalf of the Baptist Shalom Church, I thank you and to the Gavel Peace Fund committee for the financial support for preparing our workshops for the transformation of conflicts. Without a doubt, they will strengthen our commitment and work in favor of peace and nonviolence in our city.**

*—Gavel Grant Recipient*



# Peace Funds

and peace as central themes of their scholarly and ministerial pursuits. Areas of focus included Social Analysis and Movements for Peace and Justice, Feminist Theory and Practice, Dalit and Subaltern Historiographies and others.

## PAPNET

*Non Violence Struggle Workshops for a Mixed Christian Youth Group and Girls Wisdom Hub Group in Harare*

PAPNET received a grant for two non-violent struggle workshops in Harare. The project was an intensive program teaching conflict transformation, especially non-violent techniques for social change, using experiential learning techniques. This training is a follow-up to a previous introductory training. The impetus for the training is the fact that many youth who have legitimate grievances are too easily swayed to become violent – they need training in techniques of nonviolent protest and social change.

## Gavel Emerging Crisis Fund

In 2017 we provided funding for:

### Baptist Peace Fellowship of Liberia

for Conflict Transformation trainings to help leaders resist and combat violence in the Liberian elections.

### Ecumenical Studies Center of Mexico City (Centro de Estudios EcuMénicos A.C.)

for a project to Mobilize Representatives of Indigenous and Mestizo Peoples towards a new community government in Ayutla de los Libres, Guerrero.

“

**We thank you too for making this happen, your prayers and financial support have not only transformed Africa but have also produced and motivated young and energetic peace warriors across Africa to spearhead the work of peace rooted in justice around the world. God bless you and keep the spirit moving forward!**

*–Gavel Grant Recipient*

“

**Agradecidos/as estamos al comité de revisión ‘Fondo Mundial para la Paz en Memoria de Gavel’, por aprobar el proyecto ‘Musicarte’ varias familias y especialmente niños/as se verán beneficiados/as. No solamente les agradecemos por este fondo económico, sino también por sus oraciones, esas siempre hacen falta así que les agradecemos por tomarse el tiempo para orar por nuestras vidas, y por nuestros ministerios.**

*–Gavel Grant Recipient*

# Peace Funds

We also planned 2018 grants to:

AMEXTRA, Iglesia Bautista Jerusalén, Iglesia Bautista Shalom de la Ciudad de México, Movimiento de Iglesias por la Paz and Seminario Bautista de Mexico

for leading Conflict Transformation training events in Mexico.

## Quetzalochtli (Camino Hermoso / Beautiful Road)

for an arts project within detention centers in Mexico City through which Indigenous men and women who are incarcerated will participate in poetry, music, dance, painting and crafts. The aim is to deepen people's appreciation of their own Indigenous history and practices in ways that will support them to reintegrate into society in peaceful and dignified ways.

## The Mayan Intercultural Seminary

for an art project to promote peace through work with Indigenous children and youth in four orphanages throughout Chiapas, Mexico. "MusicArte" will encourage self-knowledge and expression, an appreciation



BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz member Gwenyth Lewis (far right, front row) rallying in support of Rev. Hon. Wendell Griffen (far left, back row) who was being threatened with impeachment after attending a Good Friday vigil along with members of the church he pastors.

# Peace Funds

of cultural diversity, and the use of practical tools for peacemaking with a group often vulnerable to drug trafficking and addiction.

## Burundi Pan African Peace Network, Kingdom of Peace and Development, Nuer Youth Council for Peace and Development in Ethiopia, and the South Sudan Association for Pastors

for Conflict Transformation training events in Burundi, Kenya, an Ethiopian refugee camp, and South Sudan.

## Ecumenical Christian Council of Guatemala

for a project to empower and accompany 12 communities in the municipality of San Juan Sacatepéquez as they organize against a cement company which is polluting their aquifers and destroying their livelihoods, particularly in flower production.

## Trees of Peace

to assist in the creation of an empowerment center in Zambia. This project will train villagers in conflict transformation skills while at the same time creating economic self-sufficiency.

## BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Peace Fund ~ Fondos por la Paz

With the recognition that the Gavel Memorial World Peace Funds will be depleted by the end of 2018, our board created a new program – BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Peace Fund ~ Fondos por la Paz, which will be funded using a percentage of overall contributions each year.

## Williamson Peace Action Fund

### Summer Study in Chiapas

Approved a \$500 request from member Olivia Jackson-Jordan to support a summer study project in Chiapas focused on the role of women in the Zapatista movement.



**I just wanted to thank you again for your help this summer, it would not have been possible without the support of BPFNA and I really appreciate it. I can not possibly express to you how incredible my experience was or how much I learned.**

*–Olivia Jackson Jordan,  
Williamson Grant Recipient*

# Peace Funds

## Leadership Training for Students

Approved a \$500 request from The Community College of Aurora (CCA) to help send three top student leaders (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim) along with a faculty advisor to the Interfaith Youth Core's Interfaith Leadership Institute (ILI) in Chicago. In exchange for participating in this training, the students have agreed to work together over the course of the next school year to develop interfaith initiatives on their campus and in their community.

## Event with Wendell Griffen

Approved a \$500 request from member Gwentyth Lewis to co-sponsor a weekend visit (workshop/sermon/book signing) by Wendell Griffen in order to gather, unify and empower activists in New Mexico.

## Conference Against the Use of Drones in Warfare

Approved \$500 for a *Conference Against the Use of Drones in Warfare* that was held in October 2017 in Durham, NC, USA.

## Discussion in Nashville

Approved \$250 for a two-part discussion series: *Healing Between: Bridging the Gender Gap for Black Nashvillians* that was held in April 2017.

## Symposium on Remembering Muted Voices: Conscience, Dissent, Resistance, and Civil Liberties in World War I through Today

A capacity crowd of 261 people participated in the four day symposium at the National World War I Museum and Memorial. Scholars and activists remembered the muted voices who resisted, dissented, objected and suffered for their stand against World War I. Participants came from Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA. Faith/world view backgrounds included Quakers, Mennonites, Church of the Brethren, Hutterites, Bruderhofers, Jews, Hindus, Unity, Catholics, Unitarian-Universalists, Lutherans, Baptists, Community of Christ, and secularists of different perspectives. It was a delight to have 50 young people from Hutterite colonies in Manitoba, Canada, and around one quarter of our participants were under 35. It was a conference to both remember history and to change history in our troubled times today.

## Multi-faith Education, Service, and Leadership Program

Supported Garden State MOSAIC, a multi-faith education, service and leadership program focused on middle and high school youth. It is located in Monmouth County, New Jersey.

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**I don't know what I would do without this movement.**

—BPFNA ~ *Bautistas por la Paz* member

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**I'm grateful for BPFNA's constant witness to God's mercy.**

—Partner Congregation Pastor

# Finances

## Thank you for your support!

Generous contributions from members, congregations and others have made possible all the work you see on these pages. We have done significant work in recent years to increase giving and reduce expenses so we can expand our work for peace rooted in justice throughout North America and around the world.

2017 was a good year financially. Contributions were at 99.7% of the budgeted amount. Program income was at 125% of the budgeted amount.

Total income, including Summer Conference receipts, resource sales, grants, as well as contributions, was \$398,946.38. Contributions, alone, were \$238,087.79.

Expenses for the year totaled \$364,351.43, which was 5% lower than originally budgeted. We ended the year with a surplus, which has been incorporated into our budget for 2018 as we continue to strengthen and expand our work for peacemaking.

This is worth celebrating! THANK YOU for your faithful giving. Your gifts, large and small, make it possible for us to do what we do.



Members of Oakhurst Baptist welcoming the Amani family to Atlanta; photo from Oakhurst Baptist Church

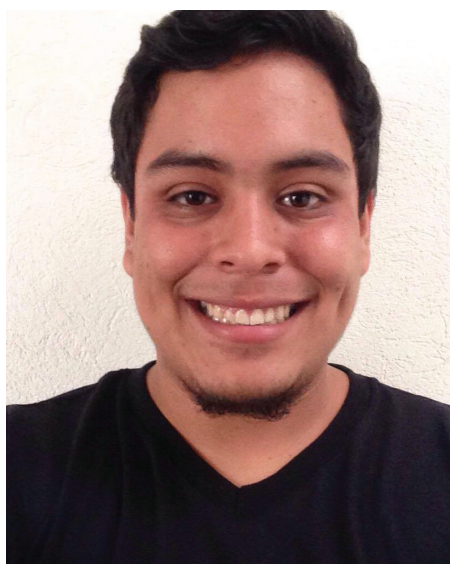
# Other

## Instituted a new board policy

In 2017 we instituted a new board policy that all internal communication be in both English and Spanish.

## Welcomed a new Youth and Young Adult Representative to the board

### Asaf Vera Baltodano



Asaf Vera Baltodano actualmente reside en Ciudad de México, pero nació y creció en Ensenada, Baja California. Es miembro de la Iglesia Bautista Shalom en la Ciudad de México. Asaf se encuentra en medio de sus estudios teológicos y está iniciando un programa de Licenciatura en Pedagogía en la UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México). Desde temprana edad se ha dedicado al trabajo con jóvenes y apoyar el trabajo de su iglesia en Ensenada y en la ciudad de México. También está en la Federación de Jóvenes Bautistas de Baja California y apoya proyectos de la Unión Nacional Juvenil Bautista. Asaf también ha participado en algunos campamentos de jóvenes y adolescentes y ha dado charlas sobre misión integral, justicia y paz. Desde que comenzó su camino con Jesús en temas de justicia social y paz, ha sido un bastión para su fe. Asaf asistió a la Conferencia de Verano de 2016 en Filadelfia, que fue donde se involucró por primera vez con BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz. Asaf dice: “Me siento muy alentado de conocer a hombres y mujeres [haciendo este trabajo]. México ha sido la Jerusalén a la que Dios me ha llamado y confío en que Dios continuará haciendo su trabajo llamando a más y más jóvenes a trabajar por un mundo mejor”.

Asaf Vera Baltodano is currently living in Mexico City, but was born and raised in Ensenada, Baja California. He is a member of Shalom Baptist Church in Mexico City. Asaf is in the middle of his Theological studies and is starting a program for a Degree in Pedagogy at the UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico). From an early age he has dedicated himself to working with youth and supporting the work of his churches in Ensenada and in Mexico City. He is also in the Federation of Young Baptists of Baja California and supports projects in the National Young Baptist Union. Asaf has also participated in some youth and teen camps and has given talks about integral mission, justice, and peace. Since he began his walk with Jesus on issues of social justice and peace, it has been a stronghold for his faith. Asaf attended the 2016 Summer Conference in Philadelphia, which was where he first became involved with BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz. Asaf says, “I am very encouraged to know men and women [doing this work]. Mexico has been the Jerusalem to which God has called me and I trust that God will continue to do his work calling more and more young people to work for a better world.”

## Introduced a new membership structure

We introduced a new membership structure to be more inclusive and welcoming to all in our network. This new structure includes non-monetary contributions people can make to become members of BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz. In this way, we can welcome and celebrate the many ways people are able to participate in the shared work of peacemaking. Along these lines, we continued to add to the membership page on our website that highlights the peacemaking work done by our members and partners.

# Looking Ahead

## Looking Ahead

We will be offering a class called *Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding* as part of the Summer 2018 Hispanic Summer Program taught by Pilar Aquino, a Mexican Latina feminist theologian.

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I am suggesting this course because the theory and practice of religious peacebuilding, conflict transformation, and reconciliation are seldom addressed in the field of US Latinx religious studies and theologies. The course would include topics on the contribution of religious actors to truth commissions, violence prevention, constructive change, and positive peace. I would also include topics on the importance of the global justice movement, interreligious and intercultural dialogue, solidarity, and approaches to feminist peacebuilding.

—Pilar Aquino

We will also hold our annual Summer Conference with the 2018 focus being on Decentering Power & Privilege: Becoming the Stranger. The Conference will take place from July 2-7, 2018 at Keuka College in Keuka Park, NY USA.



Photo by Andy Smith  
[www.andysmithphotography.com](http://www.andysmithphotography.com)



Members of Peace Community Church and others in Oberlin, OH celebrating the city's first Indigenous Peoples' Day; photo from Peace Community Church