

BWA appoints French theologian to ambassador role

November 12, 2025

The Baptist World Alliance announced the appointment of Valérie Duval-Poujol from France as the first BWA ambassador for standing against gender-based violence.

Approved unanimously by the BWA trustee committee, the role includes a five-year term of service and membership within the BWA Leadership Council.

“The BWA celebrates Valérie and her historic appointment to this position which demonstrates our commitment as a global Baptist family to respond to this worldwide issue,” said Elijah Brown, BWA general secretary and CEO.

“I am grateful for Dr. Duval-Poujol’s years of faithful engagement and advocacy, and I look forward to how God will continue to work through her in this new role.”

BWA ambassadors serve as volunteer leaders who provide pastoral presence, specialized expertise and global representation in advancing strategic ministry priorities.

Working under the guidance of the BWA general secretary and alongside a designated staff liaison, ambassadors serve as catalysts for strengthening relationships, equipping churches and elevating the global witness of the Baptist family.

Advocate for gender justice

Duval-Poujol, a theologian and Bible translator, brings years of experience and passion to this role. She has long been an advocate for gender justice and launched the gender-based violence advocacy initiative known as the Red Chair Project.

Typically implemented annually during the United Nation's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the Red Chair Project involves reserving an empty red chair in a public place alongside information about domestic abuse and violence against women. The empty chair symbolizes the many women who have been killed through acts of gender-based violence.

The French government awarded her the National Order of Merit in 2023.

"I thank BWA leadership for showing their commitment to stand against the terrible plague of gender-based violence through this appointment," Duval-Poujol said.

"Together, we will fight against this as a witness to God's love and justice for this broken world. I ask the BWA family to pray for this position and to support it in all ways possible."

Involved with BWA Women

Duval-Poujol has been involved in various BWA Women advocacy efforts, including serving as a delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

She also was co-leader of numerous BWA Women workshops related to domestic abuse, presented research as a panelist at the 2025 Baptist Women's Summit, and helped launch the [Stand Against Domestic Violence](#)

resource hub.

“It has been a profound honor to work alongside Dr. Duval-Poujol to advance our shared commitment to raise awareness, offer support and provide resources that stand against the scourge of gender-based violence,” said Merritt Johnston, BWA Women executive director.

“Her passion, wisdom and collaborative spirit make her an instrumental voice in the world to address this critical issue. I look forward to continuing this important advocacy together as she steps into this new role with the potential for even greater global impact for the glory of God and the good of women across the globe.”

Committed to BWA global ministry

Drawing from her personal passion for the Bible and her educational background that includes doctorates in history of religions and theology, Duval-Poujol is the author of several books and serves on various theological faculties.

In her work as a Bible translator, she was also the chief editor for the revision of the French Bible Nouvelle Français courant.

Within BWA’s global ministry, she has been a presenter at numerous BWA and European Baptist Federation events and served as vice chair of the Commission on Baptist Doctrine and Christian Unity from 2020 to 2025.

She also represented the BWA as a fraternal delegate at the Synod on Family in 2013 and the Synod on Synodality in 2023 and 2024.

Duval-Poujol also serves in her local church alongside her husband who is a French Baptist minister.

Her commissioning will take place in March 2026 when the BWA

Leadership Council convenes in Falls Church, Va., with global leaders in attendance from all six of the BWA's regional fellowships, commissions and standing networks.