

THE SPIRE

September 2013

MIXON MUSES

In summer of 1963 I was 16 years old and had just finished a promising sophomore year of high school. I was finding high school much more satisfying than the bleak years of junior high. I'm sure it was, at least in part, due to the number of fulfilling activities – choir, drama, clubs, honor society, etc. – that provided both personal stimulus and social connection. I had just had a featured role as the hapless Hugo in *Bye, Bye Birdie*, our biennial high school musical. (Sophomores were not allowed to have singing roles, so Hugo provided an opportunity to shine in a speaking role.)

I was also very involved in the Baptist Youth Fellowship on the local and state levels. That summer I was privileged to attend one of the high school conferences at the American Baptists' national assembly, Green Lake, in Wisconsin. I had been going to church camp on a state level since I was in the 4th or 5th grade. It was a huge part of every summer. The opportunity to learn, to deepen one's faith and just hang out with friends at Camp Palomar (in southern California) or Cathedral Pines (in central Idaho) provided life-shaping experience. Still, for teenager like me going to Green Lake was a big deal!

Right now we are caught up in a lot of press about the summer of 1963 and the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. It has also been a time to commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s most famous speech, "I Have a Dream." (Yes, I know it also means my 50th high school reunion is just around the corner!) Living in Boise, Idaho, that summer was still a time of innocence for me. Washington and the Civil Rights Movement were far away, something we read about in the Idaho Daily Statesman and saw occasionally on television, but they didn't have much direct impact on our small, largely white, western city.

There were a few black people in Boise. There was St. Paul's, the black Baptist church, with which we occasionally had worship exchange, but the harsh reality of racial and economic injustice didn't affect us much. I do remember when Congress began to debate civil rights legislation there were ugly ripples among my peers about how the legislation would create a huge influx of black people into Boise and we

would lose our freedoms so that they could gain theirs. The arguments were absurd and I recognized that on the spot. It caused tension within my social circles.

Another memory I have of that time is the way in which my father, Baptist pastor, born and raised in the deep South, in so many ways conservative in his theology and politics, supported that legislation. He must have had a profound understanding, given his roots, of what was being asked of our government and how right it was. He didn't need to take a stand for the Civil Rights Movement in Boise in 1963, but he did. I believe it was a gospel mandate for him. It certainly helped to shape my understanding of and passion for a "social gospel."

So, back to Green Lake. That high school conference featured the Rev. Dr. Paul Stagg as speaker. Paul was a small, passionate man who was part of the Division of Evangelism for the American Baptist Convention. He belonged to a remarkable team of social gospelers put together by Jitsuo Morikawa to guide the "evangelism" efforts of our denomination. Morikawa and his team believed in and practiced an "evangelistic life-style." That is, there was a story to be told but there were also lives to be lived. It was important to let people know about Jesus, but it was also important to see and emulate the way Jesus lived in service of those most in need in his society. A personal relationship with Jesus inevitably led one to work for social justice and, to a significant degree, vice versa. The practice of social justice could lead directly to an encounter with the living Christ.

Paul Stagg was also a college classmate of my father's, who, in 1958, had been fired as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Front Royal, Virginia, for his advocacy of racial integration. These "sons of the South" had been touched by Jesus and the gospel in such a way that they became activists in support of the Civil Rights Movement. Paul's prophetic preaching moved that group of high school kids deeply. By the end of the week we had drafted a petition in support of the movement and all signed it. I don't remember the content of that petition but I do remember how important it felt to each of us to speak up. Youthful enthusiasm, yes, but also a commitment I hold to this day.

Another memorable element of that week was that my dorm counselor was the great Charles Emerson "Chuck" Boddie. At that time he must have been a member of the Division of Evangelism as well. I know he was a great preacher, song leader and,

eventually, the long-time President of American Baptist College, an African American college and seminary in Nashville, Tennessee. His gentle presence and moving music left an indelible impression on this white boy from Idaho. (Indeed, a couple of years later, Chuck was the speaker for the Idaho BYF Convention, stirring some 600 youth from around the state with his signature song, "I Can Tell the World" – also the theme of the convention.)

I'm not sure why I'm telling you all this, except this summer's commemoration stirred my own memory to harken back to where I was and how I was shaped by the summer of 1963. It was a significant time in the life of our nation. Events of that summer helped to alleviate some of the most overt forms of racism and economic injustice in our society. It would be nice to settle into our fondest memories of that time. But the truth is that time marches on. The progress of 1963 was neither comprehensive nor complete. Racial injustice and economic inequity are still endemic to life in the USA. The dream has not been delivered. It has been deferred, confirming MLK's worst fears. It is past time for us to take up the cause again – to speak, to march, to advocate for justice and fairness. Justice deferred is justice denied, and until all of us are free, none of us is truly free.

Racial profiling, the new Jim Crow, which finds our prisons crammed full of young men of color, a shrinking middle class with an increase of those living in poverty while a very few grow obscenely wealthy, all situations against which Jesus would rail, are the order of the day. From our own comfort he still calls us to follow. The reign of God, for which he gave his life, is a beloved community in which we find our common humanity and the common kinship in the One who has made us and loves us all - equally. That reign recognizes that God provides abundant for everyone to have enough to live in reasonable comfort. As disciples we're called still to find ways to proclaim release to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, freedom for the oppressed and that acceptable year of God when we may yet "act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.

Pastor Rick

INJUSTICE ANYWHERE IS A THREAT TO JUSTICE EVERYWHERE. WE ARE
CAUGHT IN AN INESCAPABLE NETWORK OF MUTUALITY, TIED IN
A SINGLE GARMENT OF DESTINY. WHATEVER AFFECTS
ONE DIRECTLY, AFFECTS ALL INDIRECTLY.

Christian Formation and Family Life

Friends of God,

And we begin again.

What does it mean to be born again? Well, it looks a little like a new program year, like going back to school again. It's familiar but different. You think you know how everything works but you are also prepared for some new surprises along the way. Heck, you might even be excited or a little scared because you *know* that there are surprises in store. You have been promised surprises.

Welcome to Church, the Beloved Community.

The youth room will be under construction over the next couple of weeks as we begin to live into some new things this year. Our children are getting older. Do you remember senior year of High School? Well, prepare yourself to watch it happen again before your very eyes as Oscar lives into his final year of High School. Our kids are growing up and the room we worship and study in needs to change with us. I don't know what it will look like in the end. So much of that is up to them. So, color me a little scared and excited, too.

The Beloved Community has children in it...and they grow up.

This year, as you already know, we are welcoming Doug Davidson and Naomi Schulz into our fellowship as student interns. They are members of the Beloved Community, but now also members of our fellowship. They will help out from time to time with our children and youth, but you will see them more in worship and in our adult education hour following worship.

Adult education this year will include the exploration of some key Christian themes like how and why we read scripture, what it means to be "The Church" and how that's different than being a Democrat, an American, or being Irish (sorry, Naomi). We are a people without a country. But we are also a people called to be together at a certain time in a certain place as an outpost of God's Kin-dom. This is the "eschaton," the fulfillment of God's whole self, God's being in the world. What does it look like to live it?

You tell me. I'm just starting to figure this out. Some of you have been at this for a while.

It's a new year and together we shall be born again. It's a little scary and exciting, but together we can move forward into this new thing God has in store for us. Jesus has paved the way. Take courage. As the song goes, "It's the end of the world as we know it, but I feel fine!"

Peace and All Good Things,

Pastor Tripp

To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God. To open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God." — William Temple (1881-1944)



THE WORK OF THE CHURCH



The **ADULT BIBLE STUDY** will commence again on **Tuesday, September 3 at 10:30 AM** at the Terraces of Los Altos at Janet Maxwell's apartment. The address is 373 Pine Lane, #2106, Los Altos. Let Pastor Rick know if you need transportation.

MEN'S BREAKFAST, Every first and third Wednesday at 8:00 AM, at Hobe's Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. . All the men from our Church family are welcome. The next **MEN'S BREAKFAST**, will be on **Wednesday, September 4.**



CHURCH CHOIR will resume its weekly rehearsals at 7:30 PM in the Parlor on **Thursday, September 12th.**



The next **CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING** is scheduled for **Thursday, September 19, at 5:00 PM**



WOMEN'S BRUNCH meets on the last Thursday of the month at 10 AM. All women of our church community are invited. Please join us at at Hobe's Restaurant, 4224 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, in the "Wine Room." All women of the congregation welcome.

PATIO TASK TEAM, Friday, September 6 at 10:00 AM.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE TASK TEAM, Friday September 6, 2:00 PM in the Parlor.



RALLY DAY, Sunday September 8, 10:00 AM. We will worship, kick-off the church's educational year, officially welcome our interns and share a potluck lunch in **celebration of our 120th anniversary** as a congregation. If you have photos or memorabilia you would like to share or a story about what FBCPA has meant to you over the years, please tell one of the pastors or contact the church office.

WORSHIP THEMES FOR SEPTEMBER 2013

September 1	Entertaining Angels	Heb. 13:1-8-15-16
September 8	We've Come this Far by Faith	Heb. 11:1-3, 13-16
September 15	The Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day	Psalm 14; Luke 15:1-10
September 22	Balm in Gilead	Jeremiah 8:18-9:1
September 29	On Eagles' Wings	Psalm 96:1-6, 14-16

Adult Spiritual Formation:

It's a new school year! Welcome to First Baptist Palo Alto's School of Spiritual Formation, everyone. We've expanded the faculty quite a bit over the summer adding two new leaders in Doug Davidson and Naomi Schulz. We're also looking for adjunct instructors from within your ranks. We'll talk about scriptures (what makes that Bible so special, anyway), micro-loans, and "masters" of the Christian spiritual tradition. Brace yourselves. There will be short series of three and four weeks as well as single, one-day offerings. This year we will also use video presentations by contemporary scholars and spiritual leaders in the Church. Ecumenically situated, intellectually and spiritually challenging, we hope that you will enjoy participating in these sessions. All are welcome.

Our first gathering will be on September 15 at 11:30 following worship. Please bring a No. 2 pencil.

Mark your calendar for these SPECIAL events at FBCPA:

SEPTEMBER 8	120TH ANNIVERSARY POTLUCK
OCTOBER 25	POTLUCK AND PUMPKIN CARVING
NOVEMBER 22	GRATITUDE POTLUCK
NOVEMBER 30	HANGING OF THE GREENS
DECEMBER 15	CAROLING AND CHILI SUPPER
DECEMBER 22	CHRISTMAS BRUNCH AND PAGEANT
DECEMBER 24	CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

Happy Birthday this month to:

Marilyn Hunwick	September 2
Ron Tuttle	September 2
Dustin Ha	September 7
Lynn Hunwick	September 16
Tammy Poffenroth	September 21
Beth Johnson	September 25

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

DOROTHY AKER MEMORIAL

Dear Friends,

On behalf of myself and my family, I want to thank all of you for your help and support to make my mother's Memorial Service a special tribute to her. I think she would have been pleased. I feel so blessed to be a part of this loving congregation.

Carolyn Shepard



SENIOR CHAT

Senior chat is a community of people from varying churches and organizations in Palo Alto. We meet once a month, on the Second Friday, at 10:00. The Fireside Room of Covenant Presbyterian Church is where we convene to learn new ideas, share friendship, have light snack and a light exercise. Please join us. We are open to all ages, if the presentation subject is of interest. No RSVP is necessary. For more information call Rev. Dona Smith-Powers 650-494-3093

September 13 "Memory Issues" is a subject we all will face - in one way or another. Duanni Hurd is President and co-founder of StarLight CareGivers. She has a MA in Communication and has had over 13 years of experience with major technology companies before stepping aside to pursue her passion of serving with the vulnerable. Out of her own and her husband's experience and struggles with grandparents and parents' needs they now desire to enhance the quality of life for seniors and their family members. She will share about early detection for memory issues, including Alzheimers, and how to care with people and caregivers who struggle with this issue.

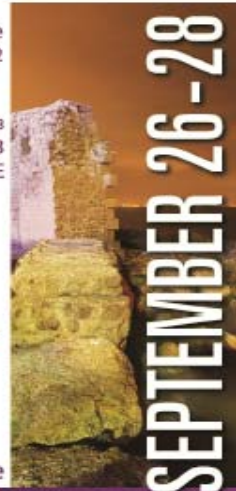


1600 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132

FACEBOOK.COM/ROOMFORHOPE2013
@ROOMFORHOPE2013
ROOMFORHOPE.ME

Room for Hope

Celebrating Palestinian Creativity



Tickets packages start at just \$22.50!
For more info, please go to RoomForHope.Me



Experience the creativity of the Palestinian people
through dance, music, art and entrepreneurship.

Room for Hope, A Celebration of Palestinian Arts is happening **September 26-28** at San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California. Tickets begin at \$22.50 for a single event. An all access pass can be purchased for just \$125. For more in-depth detail and to purchase tickets, please visit www.roomforhope.me. Below is a festival overview.

Thursday, September 26, beginning at 6 p.m.

- Intro to Dabka Dance will teach you about *Dabka*, modern theatre and contemporary dance and how it is used to promote creativity, imagination and freedom of expression as crucial ingredients of cultural and social development.
- Being a Writer, and Palestine: Nathalie Handel. Come hear from this award-winning author who hails originally from Bethlehem, Palestine.
- Diyar Dance Troupe Performance will electrify you as this troupe of co-ed youth dancers share a vision of creating a forum for young adults to celebrate Palestinian culture and history.
- Reception featuring food from Palestine and wine from Chile.

Friday, September 27, beginning at 4:45 p.m.

- Female Entrepreneurial Challenges in the U.S. and Palestine will allow for women entrepreneurs to share the obstacles they face and how they overcome those challenges.
- Presentation by Mahasen Nasser-Eldin a Palestinian filmmaker who works with documentary and fiction narratives.
- Film Series featuring "Restored Pictures," "Town Barber," "Space of the Alleys," "Heavy Peel of Onion," and the U.S. premier of Yasmine Pemi's movie, "The Stones Cry Out."

Saturday, September 28, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

- Workshops and Discussions on topics including *Dabka* Dance; Integrating your Spirituality into Art; Being a Writer, and Palestine; and Arabic Music and Art from Bethlehem.
- Keynote address by Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb the President and co-founder of Bright Stars of Bethlehem.
- Music Concert featuring Palestinian artists Georges Lammam (violin and vocals), Miles Jay (bass), Tareq Rantisi (percussion), and Ali Amr (qanun and vocals.)



**IMAGES FROM OUR RECENT JOINT
WORSHIP SERVICE with COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH AT MITCHELL PARK, PALO ALTO
AUGUST 4TH, 2013**

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Quarterly Business Meeting Minutes, August 11, 2013

Moderator Carolyn Shepard opened the meeting at 11:30 AM with a prayer for wisdom to help us with our meeting. Twenty-three voting members were present, exceeding the quorum. Carolyn thanked the Annex Sales Committee for its difficult two-and-a-half year effort to sell the church's 25% ownership of the Annex to the Palo Alto Community Child Care organization.

Pastor Rick thanked the kitchen crew for assembling the lunch for fellowship and repast for the meeting. He reported that Oleta Proctor's brother was operated on with the discovery that he does not have lung cancer, but rather some other serious but not life-threatening malady. He remarked on Pastor Tripp's travel to Oxford to present a paper on church music.

Rick spoke about his trip to Atlanta last week to attend the Conference on Progressive Renewal. He indicated that much of the talk encompassed social justice.

Carolyn noted that a summer program for girls called *iSing* held a very successful summer camp in the church from July 23rd to July 27th. They gave a choral concert in the church for 150 and then enjoyed a potluck picnic in the patio afterwards. This program will continue at our church with the hope that it will grow and be able to establish its own 501C3 status and self-management.

Carolyn then invited discussion of the Council's motion: *"That the church approve the use of up to \$54,620 from the Lundquist Funds to help defray the costs of a new Patio and sound system upgrade."* Further discussion clarified that this amount is earnings from the original amount of the Lucile Lundquist Fund set aside in a stable investment for expenditure in accord with the provisions in her will. Rick reviewed discussions with the designer for the patio that an initial project for paving the patio and installation of electrical wiring and plumbing for future use could be built for about \$47,000 as a first segment of a \$120,000 total project. Charlie Clark pleaded that the four fruitless mulberry trees be kept. Rick assured that the trees are safe.

Rick also summarized discussions with a sound engineer for upgrading the sound

system in the church. The outside figure for this project is \$24,000. This project could be segmented also, doing the most important work first. After more discussion, those present voted unanimous approval of the Council's motion.

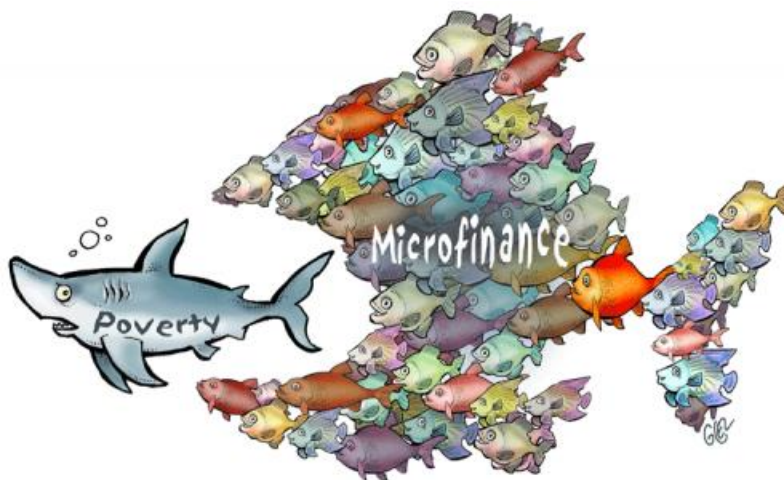
Carolyn introduced for discussion a proposition from the Council that ten percent of the proceeds of the sale of the Annex (\$29,400) be gifted by the church for some good work. Ideas were put forward followed by others. Discussion followed. Many spoke for sharing our good fortune; others thought the funds should be held as part of building a sustainable renewal. Those participating in discussion included Jin Chin, Alex Spiridon, Kathy Gillam, Thelma Parodi, Paul Berry, and Dan Cudworth, and Lynn Hunwick. A straw vote of hands was 16 in favor and 2 against.

Discussion then ensued about investing another ten percent of the proceeds in a microfinance instrument. These instruments make available very small loans to individuals, usually, for self-help small businesses in very poor countries. Discussion was mostly enthusiastic. A straw vote of hands was 19 to 1 in favor. Literature and printed discussion of various microfinance investment instruments will be collected and disseminated to help with our understanding of this type of investment.

Pastor Rick closed the meeting by noting that while he has been here he has been happy to see our church building become much busier with activities from the local community.

Submitted:

Hugh Satterlee, Clerk



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Council Meeting Minutes, August 22, 2013

Moderator Carolyn Shepard opened the meeting at 5:03 PM. Pastor Rick quoted from a piece by Martin Marty that progress grows from trial and error, not trial and triumph. Rick also noted from Joan Chittester that hope nourishes the soul.

Present: Dan Cudworth, Jane and Jin Chin, Marilyn Hunwick, Pastor Rick Mixon, Eleanor and Hugh Satterlee, and Moderator Carolyn Shepard.

Rick reported on his trip to Atlanta to attend the National Conference on Progressive Church Renewal. He was impressed with the work of the Northshore Baptist Church in Chicago in which five churches work together in one building. He also spoke with Bruce Reyes Chow who grew a 200 member multicultural church in San Francisco. Social justice was the major emphasis at the conference.

Rick reported on the quiet contacts which the church's Facebook page has drawn. With time, some such contacts may be drawn into closer association with the congregation. He anticipates that our shift from the present First Baptist Palo Alto "website" format to a more current "blog" format will provide additional interest for some in the public who may acquaint themselves with our church among these popular channels.

The Council reviewed the calendar of events drawn up by Rick, Tripp, and the two interns, Naomi Schultz and Doug Davidson. Included are a monthly Inter-generational Sunday and a monthly family social supper or cookout. Pastor Tripp will be away from our church one Sunday per month during this church year. His salary for these absences will be used to fund the two interns who will be with us every Sunday beginning September 8th. A discussion ensued about recruiting help for setting up these events and for coffee hours. Publicity will be pursued to solicit help from the wider church membership.

The church will celebrate its 120th anniversary on Sunday, September 8th. A potluck picnic will follow the service.

Jin reviewed the Treasurer's report, noting that pledges are up-to-date, and the tenant revenue is ahead of schedule because of prepayments and the enlistment of new tenants. Other sources of income and expenditures to date are consistent with expectations.

Jane distributed a report on the finances of the recent and successful iSing Summer Camp. This program will continue in the same manner during the school year, using available church facilities at no cost while their not-for-profit status is established and they have a good footing. The leaders, Jennah Delp and Shane Troll, will continue as independent contractors to the church and will make all disbursements for expenses and help. They will continue to prepare reports on expenditures. Office space has been made available to iSing in the former women's dressing room near the baptistery.

Jane also distributed a report on the expenses incurred in the sale of the church's portion of the Annex. The net proceeds reported are \$294,168.59. The Council tasked the Mission Task Team to provide recommendations by September 17th for the 10% tithe and the further 10% investment in microfinance in needy places in the world.

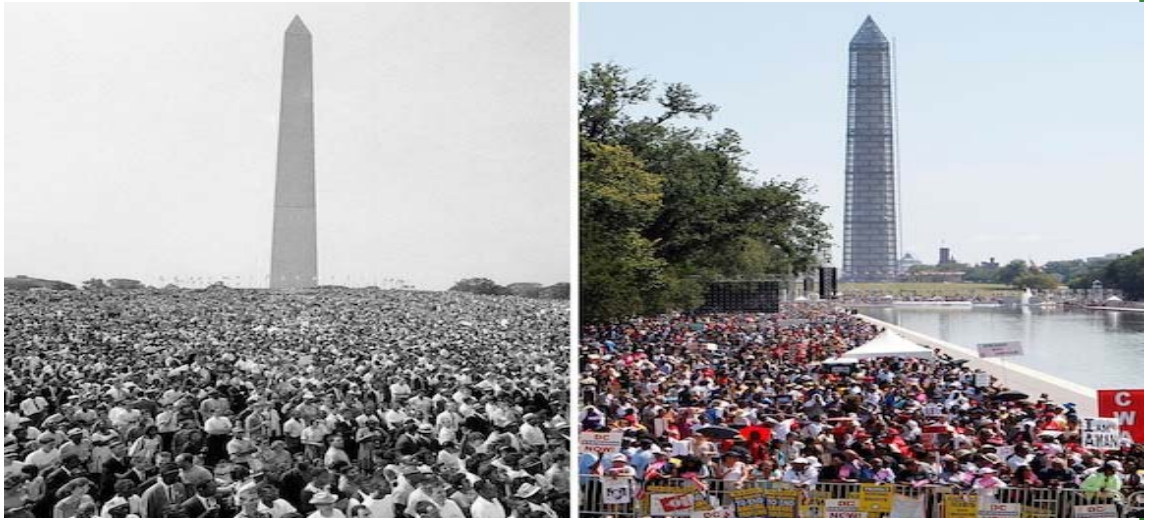
Task Teams: Patio – the team will meet on Friday, September 6th at 10 AM to review the designer's plans and decide which segments of the overall project to proceed with. Bequests and funds from the Lucile Lundquist legacy will be used per the assent of the church at the last quarterly business meeting.

Congregational Life: It was noted that Pearl Pe will be relocating to Burma. This will be celebrated in the church service on Sunday, August 25th. Betsy Anderson will have outpatient surgery on August 26th. Eleanor Satterlee will prepare a signup sheet for Fall coffee hours.

The next two Council meetings will be held on Thursday, September 19th, and October 17th, at 5:00 PM. The third Quarterly Business meeting is planned for October 20, 2013.

Carolyn closed the meeting with a short prayer giving thanks for guidance on this day.

Submitted: Hugh Satterlee, Clerk



A Pastoral Letter Spurred by the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington

Dear American Baptist,

Prologue: "As I write in honor of the commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington, I am cognizant of the challenge that our society and the church still face on matters of race. As I write, it is important that I acknowledge that I do so out of my context as a Euro-American, raised in the segregated South. Those facts have defined my own wrestling with the issue of race as both a spiritual and a social issue for me. Important in my own journey has been Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which describes a church that surmounts the divisions of the cultures in which it is embedded as testimony to the transformative work of Christ within his community of believers. This letter provoked my struggle with the cultural norms of the segregated South that were all too often present in the life of the church as well. Equally important to me has been the influence of African-American and other friends of color who have accompanied me on this journey with grace, challenge, and forgiveness. Their perspectives have offered me new insights into their experiences in America that have challenged me and helped me understand the enduring nature of racism in our culture."

This week marks the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington where Dr. King delivered his prophetic "I Have a Dream" address that still inspires today. This march was the high-water mark in the Civil Rights movement. As we

mark this moment in history, I am grateful that throughout the Civil Rights struggle American Baptists were actively involved in the effort to create a more just and loving society.

Many were buoyed by new possibilities for America as the March on Washington brought a moral challenge not only to the nation's capitol but to every American. As Dr. King proclaimed a dream of an America where "one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit together at the table of brotherhood," his words fired my imagination with hope as a 15 year-old white teenager in Georgia for nation and church.

This week's anniversary celebrations mark both how far we have come and yet, how far short of Dr. King's vision of the beloved community we have fallen. Since the March on Washington, real gains have been made. Whatever gains we have made have come at great cost to many who sacrificed much for Dr. King's vision. Today an African-American occupies the highest office in the country, an idea that was unthinkable apart from the struggle of many. Yet sober reflection must acknowledge that Dr. King's dream is only partially realized. Underneath outward signs of progress lie layers of distrust and dis-ease and a questioning of the fairness of our systems for people of color. These are matters we seldom address in conversation with each other across the lines of race. And intra-racial conversations – black with black, white with white, brown with brown – reveal very different perceptions of the "American experience" 50 years after Dr. King's address.

Most recently, the killing of Trayvon Martin and the subsequent acquittal of George Zimmerman on the basis of "stand your ground" laws have dramatically showcased the still-festering wound of race in this country.

As the grandfather of a two year old grandson who bears the ebony hues of the African heritage of our beloved daughter-in-law, I have been confronted with the enduring nature of racism in our country in a new way. Everywhere we take my grandson, everybody oohs and aahs over him – and rightfully so! "How cute!" "Isn't he precious!" "He's so darling!" But I fear for when he is 16 or 17, and is walking in a neighborhood and not his own to visit a friend, how folks will see him then. I worry for him in a way I have never worried for my two sons because I know the power of the race-based assumptions and suspicions that are deeply ingrained in our culture.

The "American experience" differs in many ways depending upon one's race. I frequently reflect upon a conversation I had with a friend of mine several years ago. We were commiserating about how both our sons were coming of age and would soon get their driver's license and how, consequently, our insurance rates would go through the roof. The conversation took a serious turn when she, an African-American mother, began talking about the fears she had for her son when (not if) he would be stopped for driving her Mercedes-Benz. She began to recite to me parent-

to-parent all the cautions and warnings she had given her son about how he was to act if pulled over in order not be seen as a threat. Never had I thought about the need to give my son any advice except, "Don't be rude if (not when) you are pulled over." Now with my grandson, I wonder what I must say to him in the America of 15 years from now. Just as 50 years ago I hungered for an America free from the stain of segregation, now I want for my grandson and for all our sons and daughters an America free from the stain of enduring racism.

It was the stance of American Baptists against slavery, ABC's work in the South after the Civil War founding schools and working for the rights of African-Americans newly freed, and our involvement in the Civil Rights movement and support for Dr. King and his family that led me and others to become American Baptists. I wanted to be part of church that lives Ephesians 2:14, and dreams of being "the beloved community" that the prophet Isaiah heralded when he declared, "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples." (Isa 56:7 RSV) This is the church's calling: to be a community where all are joined together in the power of God's redemptive love, and live in the harmony and unity that actively flows from the life of the Trinity: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

The National Executive Council of ABC (Louis Barbarin of MMBB, Virginia Holmstrom of ABWM, Michael Birdsall of ABHMS for Aids and Wright-Riggins who is on sabbatical, Reid Trulson of ABC/IM and me as General Secretary) yearns for ABC to become such a community and to be in the forefront of a new movement for racial justice. We believe it is of the essence of being Transformed by the Spirit that ABC become in Paul's words "the new humanity" where racial and cultural differences are received and honored as gifts that reflect God's manifold riches.

We further believe that scripture's affirmation that God "has given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18) both empowers and compels us to take up this cause not only within our lives and within our churches but within our society as well. To that end, we have purposed together to lead American Baptists in a sustained engagement around the issues of race in our nation. ABHMS will be taking a key programmatic role in this effort, but all of us will be offering leadership.

We invite American Baptists to participate in the dialogue that ABHMS is initiating on its Facebook page. We also invite every ABC congregation to engage in this dialogue not just internally but with sister churches whose memberships do not mirror its own. We will be identifying and making available resources to assist our conversation and engagement as brothers and sisters in Christ.

In our struggle for a nation that more fully reflects God's reign, repentance will be demanded. Listening with the heart will be required. New habits, attitudes, and practices will be essential.

American Baptists were a strong force for change in the Civil Rights movement.

American Baptists can be a strong force for justice today. As the hands and feet of Christ, let us fulfill Christ's command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves through our work for a society that does justice and loves mercy as the expression of our walking humbly with God and neighbor.

In Christ,

A. Roy Medley, General Secretary, American Baptist Churches USA

Our September Mission Outreach Offering

THE OPPORTUNITY SERVICES CENTER OF PALO ALTO: GOAL- \$600.00

In July 2012 San Mateo County's Shelter Network merged with Santa Clara's InnVision, The Way Home, to become what is now known as InnVision Shelter Network. "InnVision Shelter Network is now one of the leading shelter/housing and supportive service providers in Northern California, supporting over 20,000 homeless men, women, and children annually."

Our special offering for September goes specifically to our local service provider, the Opportunity Services Center, located at 33 Encina Avenue in Palo Alto. The center functions as a service to the wider community by providing a creative response to home-less related problems and offering opportunities for the community to respond to those needs. Its highest concern is to provide a positive and caring environment that respects the dignity of every person.

The center "accomplishes its mission to serve the needs of the homeless and those at-risk in the Midpeninsula area by providing" several different types of services. There are 88 units of permanent supportive housing for families (18 units) and single adults (70 units) on site. The **Multi Service Drop-In Center** provides a wide range of services from case management services, laundry, food, showers, computer lab, health care, lockers to children's activities. The **Adult Services Center** provides services for single men and women. The **Bredt Family Center** serves women, children and families by providing help with basic needs, education, support and children's activities. The **Peninsula HealthCare Connection** offers primary care, mental health care, case management, and other support services to both adults and children. The **Clothes Closet, Family Harvest** (a monthly grocery distribution) and **Emergency Assistance Program** are also available through the Opportunity Center. The **Food Closet**, located on Hamilton Avenue, is open weekdays, providing canned goods, fresh produce, dairy products and bread to very low-income residents of Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, and Menlo Park.

This is an opportunity for us to impact those in need right here at home. Our goal for this offering is \$600, so please give generously.

Carolyn Shepard

Minister: Rev. Randle (Rick) Mixon
650-327-0561; FAX 650-327-1562
Email: fbcpaloalto@sbcglobal.net
Web Site: www.fbc-paloalto.org

September Mission Outreach Offering
THE OPPORTUNITY SERVICES CENTER OF PALO ALTO
GOAL: \$600.00

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PALO ALTO
305 N. California Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94302-4105

Address Correction Requested