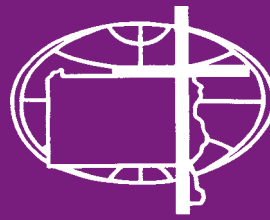


NOTES & NEWS, THOUGHTS & VIEWS



FOR ABCOPAD CHURCHES FROM
REGIONAL EXECUTIVE PASTOR REV. FRANK FRISCHKORN

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 7, 8 AND 9

SEPTEMBER 2011

GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!

The sun just broke through outside my window. I'm not sharing that because I want to provide a weather report, but because right now I need to proclaim that it is so.

These last weeks have been rough — an earthquake has rattled us to the very depths (literally), Hurricane Irene (taken from the Greek word meaning 'peace') brought those along the eastern seaboard anything but peace as she blew a path of destruction through the mid-Atlantic and interior New England, and since Sunday the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee has dumped more than 10 inches of rain in the rain gauge in my backyard, causing families to flee their homes in advance of the rising waters of the Susquehanna River and neighboring creeks and streams. And if that wasn't enough, Sunday will mark the 10th Anniversary of a day that defines itself by its date: 9-11.

So with all that in mind, hear me when I say, the sun just broke through outside my window.

I don't know about you, but I need a little sunshine in my life. When you add together the brutal weather we've been experiencing, the haunting remembrances of 9-11, along with the challenges of ministry that exist right now — seemingly too many needs and too few resources — too many problems and too few victories — it causes me at least to need a fresh reminder of God's Faithfulness

and Grace. And honestly, is there any better type of 'sunshine' than that?

Here are two reminders — two rays of 'sunshine' into your lives, that I hope brighten your world today.

The first comes from Charles Haddon Spurgeon who wrote:

"God's mercy is so great that you may sooner drain the sea of its water, or deprive the sun of its light, or make space too narrow, than diminish the great mercy of God."

And then the gentle reminder from Psalm 84 ...

For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

LORD Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you. — Psalm 84:11-12

The challenges are great, but our God is greater. The pain and complexities of life are profound, but His Love is deeper and wider and stronger than even death itself.

On behalf of our entire staff, let me thank you once again for the rich privilege that it is to partner with you in ministry in the midst of these days. Your words of encouragement and your church's faithful prayer and financial support make the ministry that we share together possible.

The sun just broke through outside my window, and once again I take heart knowing God is near.

Seeking to be faithful,

Frank





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Currently I am reading, *Reboot: Refreshing Your Faith in a High-tech World*, by

Peggy Kendall. Dr. Kendall is an associate professor in the Communication Studies Department at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minn. I had a chance to meet Peggy during the ABC-USA Biennial in Puerto Rico when she conducted a workshop entitled, “The New Normal.” Peggy examined three current communication methods and how these methods are changing the way our culture responds to information. She referenced Marshall McLuhan, a philosopher, educator and scholar who coined the phrase, “The medium is the message.” She explained how the current high tech mediums used to communicate in our current culture is affecting all of us and provided three examples. Peggy made it clear she was not advocating that the church should adopt these methods of communication but the church does need to be aware of how these communication techniques are changing the people we have sitting in the pew.

Peggy first looked at text messaging. People are learning to communicate in short bursts of information no more than 160 characters per message. As a result, attention spans continue to shrink and people expect a communicator to get right to the point quickly. Those that are used to text messaging may find it difficult to pay attention to a lengthy sermon with multiple

points. Peggy also examined Facebook® that allows two way communication with people who have a close relationship. Comments and feedback are the norm. Today’s listeners are becoming accustomed to being able to offer feedback, ask questions and comment. For many of our churches, those in the pew can only listen with no way to respond to what is happening. Finally, Peggy looked at the new 3D Movie format. Movies like Avatar seen in movie theaters create a sense of grandeur and are awe inspiring. Often the church can seem flat and for some even boring. In the new normal we are living in, she suggested we need to be aware of how text messaging, Facebook and 3D movies are changing the people sitting in the pew.

All of us need to be creative and find ways to share a timeless message in ways that will connect with current audiences. Instead of five-point or three-point sermons (remember text messaging) a sermon with a single point that grabs people’s attention is important. Andy Stanley has coined the phrase “sticky point,” a single point that sticks with you long after you leave the worship service. Allowing dialogue in your sermon and opportunities for worshippers to respond to your message (remember Facebook) will allow people to feel connected and valued. Incorporating video in your service and giving people a chance to use all their senses (remember 3D) such as sight, smell, touch and taste can create a sense of grandeur and communicate the awesomeness of God. The new normal does present challenges, but as we bring the creativity of our God to worship we can effectively share the Gospel in our current culture. ■



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SPIRITUAL GIANTS

Some of you have heard me say that I’m always on the lookout for Spiritual Giants in the denomination and elsewhere. I’m still in the process of discerning what a Spiritual Giant is and maybe I’ll never finish, but I know them when I see them. In part, they are people who love the Lord with an uncompromising love and others see this and desire to imitate them. They are also people who love people into being the best that they can be as they respond to God’s call in their lives.

I had the recent privilege to be one of the pastors who spoke about such a person at their funeral. To be honest it was a three hour celebration of their life as a Spiritual Giant. The service was for the Rev. Reginald D. McClain. Person after person came forward to explain in some detail how Rev. McClain had accepted them as a person and then helped them to follow Jesus faithfully. Young people, older people, and people that considered him a Spiritual father when they had no father.

Rev. McClain’s son, the Rev. Coleman McClain gave a message based upon the relationship of Elijah and Elisha. The basic thrust of the message was that his father, the senior McClain, had been given a double portion of his own father’s spirit (also a pastor), and now all of the people present were given a double portion again of faith through the pastoral leader they just lost from this life into eternity. Three generations of faithful men speaking into the congregation to say, God loves you, you can follow Him and trust Him completely. It was moving and inspiring.

Elijah was a powerful man of faith. His story in Scripture is inspiring (OT book of Kings). Our churches and our pastors need to see those stories today in the lives of their contemporaries. We have to let go of our thoughts of scarcity and weakness and claim the spirit of God’s generosity to His children and of His strength to overcome any situation.

As we approach pastor appreciation month in October, I encourage our churches to lift up their own Spiritual Giants — the men and women who serve faithfully. The servants who speak into our lives and help us to understand what it means to live a holy life. You can find some 52 ideas to encourage your pastor and family on our ABCOPAD website at www.abcopad.org/52-Ways-to-Encourage-Your-Pastor-and-their-Family.aspx. ■



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I want to continue my thread of thought from spring's article about measureables.

I was left wondering if my words in the June Notes and News made any sense and if my points had merit. Uniquely enough, the Conference of United Methodist Bishops released a statement that same week coming out of their annual conferences, right after I posted my article, saying that no longer will they settle for the mediocre among their churches. They would begin to judge churches as healthy by the very measureables I shared: (1) worship attendance, (2) baptisms, and (3) rising leadership. Great minds must think alike! ☺

Here are some specific criteria to judge those measureables. They are not meant to condemn you if you don't meet up. They are meant to commend you to greater works — giving you something for which to strive. Please understand, I am not talking about a magic formula that you follow and are therefore guaranteed success. There is so much more to it than that. But, here goes ...

- *For every 60 people in worship, you should have three people who are visitors.* To grow your church you need to have more visitors or retain more visitors, or better yet, both. Does your church have a plan to “catch ‘em and to keep ‘em”? If so, share it with us so we can share it with others across the region for whom it may also work. If not, your ABCOPAD staff can help you with this.
- *For every two people who join your church, one should be by conversion, followed by baptism.* Does your church have a plan

for evangelism? If so, share it with us so we can share it with others across the region for whom it may also work. If not, your ABCOPAD staff can help you with this.

- *For every four new members, one of them should be fully assimilated into the life of the church within their first year.* Does your church have a plan of assimilation (growing people closer to each other) and discipleship (growing people closer to the Lord)? If so, share it with us so we can share it with others across the region for whom it may also work. If not, your ABCOPAD staff can help you with this.
- *For every board, committee, or team member, one out of five should have joined the church in the last two years.* Does your church have a plan for mentoring and mobilizing new leaders? If so, share it with us so we can share it with others across the region for whom it may also work. If not, your ABCOPAD staff can help you with this.
- *For every \$10 received in the general fund, a tithe of \$1 should be invested directly into evangelism connected to missional ministry.* Does your church have a plan to fund going outside the walls? If so, share it with us so we can share it with others across the region for whom it may also work. If not, your ABCOPAD staff can help you with this.

By the way, the stats are actually gleaned from an older but far from outdated resource, *The Church Growth Ratio Book*, by fellow American Baptists, Win and Charles Arn, ©1990. If anything, this book's age infers the percentages for each ought to be higher today than two decades ago since many would say it has gotten harder to achieve and maintain a truly healthy church. I concede, it may indeed be harder, but it is not impossible. Let's stop making excuses, and start making disciples. Your congregation can be transformed as will the community that surrounds it. God in partnership with you can make it happen! ■

It's time for the **Fall Grant Cycle!**

**Be watching for the announcement
of the dates and deadlines
in the coming weeks.**

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE REGION

CENTRE ASSOCIATION

Mill Creek (*Ray Crownover*) has had a busy summer and fall is not going to slow down.

Our VBS was a huge success this year. With over 100 people in and out of the church we learned that Jesus can turn our world inside up and upside down on Main Street. The end of July, we had our annual Sunday School picnic at Camp Blue Diamond. It was a great day of fellowship and the weather was beautiful.

In August, our ABGIRLS' group challenged the church to count their blessings. Each family was given a calendar. On each day of the month, there was an item we were to be grateful for. After reflecting on the item, the girls challenged the congregation to donate a dollar. On Sunday, Sept. 4, the families brought in what they collected. The money will help Dana Spickler, a young woman in the congregation, with the cost of her mission trip to Haiti in November. If the congregation counts their blessings, we are sure Dana will have the funds she needs to get to Haiti.

As August came to a close, the church family geared up for Children's Day on Sept 4. A young lady led Sunday School opening and each of the families with kids led a presentation on a bible story or character.

Then church was excited to have Lois Olmstead visit on Monday, Sept. 12, to speak. We had been praying and promoting to have a great turnout. Lois spoke on "true joy."

Then after the excitement of Lois, we will be gearing up for a Hallelujah Fest. On Saturday, Oct. 1, we will invite the community in for games and have some fall fun, Baptist style. This is our first attempt at this type of outreach.

We are excited about each thing and would appreciate your prayers as we try to get into our community and reach others for Christ. ■

LAUREL ASSOCIATION

The **Laurel Association Fall Meeting** will be Sunday, Oct. 9, 3 – 7:30 p.m., at the Glen Campbell Baptist Church. ■

PITTSBURGH ASSOCIATION

The **Fall Gathering and Continuing Education Event** will be held Friday and Saturday, Sept. 23 and 24. The two-day event will begin on Friday evening with a Clergy and Spouse Appreciation Gathering at FBC, Monroeville (Tom Pesci). This year we have a special treat as Rev. Frank Frischkorn, regional executive pastor; Rev. Jeff Johnson, regional pastor with congregations; Rev. Mark Mahserjian-Smith, regional pastor for mission and communication; and Rev. Kevin Walden, regional pastor with pastoral leaders will be our special guests and will share their ministries with us. On Saturday, Sixth Mt. Zion (Eugene Downing) will host the Continuing Education event. The guest speaker will be Rev. Dr. Gary McIntosh, president of the Church Growth Network and professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University.

Dr. McIntosh's presentation will be on Church Growth for the 21st Century. He will touch on 10 steps that will show how the Holy Spirit is ready and available to empower churches for growth.

Dr. McIntosh, is the author of the enclosed *Growth Points* newsletter. He has served as a consultant for over 27 years; written 18 books on church growth and six manuals on pastoral ministry; served as a pastor and CE director for more than 15 years; and is the recipient of the Donald A. McGavran award from the American Society for Church Growth, the Distinguished Alumni award from Colorado Christian University, The Donald A. McGavran award from the Fuller School of Intercultural Studies, and the Robert B. Fisher award for Faculty Excellence at Biola University.

The gifts of the ABCOPAD staff, combined with those of Dr. McIntosh, promise an inspiration-filled, challenging experience for both clergy and lay leaders.

The cost is \$15. If four or more from one church attend, the pastor may attend for free (.5 CEUs). Please join us. Everyone is welcome! Contact the ABCOPAD Western Office at 888-687-0883 for more information. ■

FBC, **Monroeville** (*Tom Pesci*) had a community service of hope and healing on Sunday, Sept. 11, at 7 p.m. ■

FBC, **Tarentum** (*Bob Walker*) held its annual Vacation Bible School June 26 through July 1. There were 12 children and almost as many adults, and they all had a great time watching the Amazing Panda Adventure, learning about how God made us, listens to us, watches over us, loves us no matter what, and gives us good gifts, eating home-made snacks and making fun crafts. The last night parents and families were invited to have a hotdog picnic after Bible School. Along with planning for and having VBS, the members of First Baptist have also been helping the Allegheny Valley Association of Churches and the Food Bank to distribute food through the Produce to People Program in Natrona Heights on the second Tuesday of each month starting in May. Summer may be vacation time, but God's work still goes on! ■

READING ASSOCIATION

FBC, **Reading** (*Mike Hall*) is looking for mission-hearted servants for their March 2 – 10 and March 10 – 17 mission projects in El Caribe Del Riviera, just outside of the capital city of Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. Projects include ground-breaking construction for a worship and education center and a daily VBS for local children.

The Baptist Church, founded in 1999, has been meeting in a rented home in the community and has prayed and saved for 10 years to purchase land and begin construction. During the first decade of the new millenium a Baptist Church in San Juan, PR, has been paying the rent for this growing congregation. God has blessed and it's time to break ground and build!

Mission team members need a passport and vaccinations. Meaningful experiences

and new friendships are guaranteed! The cost for either week is \$1,550. The cost for two weeks is \$1,650. If interested, please contact Pastor Mike Hall (team coordinator) at 610-223-6204. ■

TEN MILE ASSOCIATION

Bates Fork, Sycamore (*Cristy Wise*) invited Rev. Billy Wayne Arrington, of Vision Productions, Inc, Kingsport, Tenn., for a community outreach event through an Interactive Drama, The Advocate on Sat., Sept., 3. The church welcomed 107 people to the event and lives were changed for eternity.

On Sunday, Sept. 4, Billy Wayne brought the special music and the sermon. God used him to challenge each of us to be more mission minded and to reach out to others for Jesus. It was a great time to worship together and the service was full with guests for this powerful time. The end of the service was a great time for rededication, prayer and first time commitments. May God receive all the glory! ■

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Don't forget to check out our website often at www.abcopad.org! ■

AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION TRIPS TO HAITI

Rev. Mark Mahserjian-Smith, Regional Pastor for Mission and Communication, and Rev. Kevin Walden, Regional Pastor with Pastoral Leaders, will lead the second mission team to Grand Goave, Haiti, Nov. 5 – 14, 2011, to build rubble houses. Rubble houses are designed to be earthquake resistant through the use of an innovative new construction technique that utilizes the debris caused by the 2010 earthquake. One spot is still available, so if you are interested, contact Mark at msmmsmail@abcopad.com or the ABCOPAD Western Office at 888-687-0883/pghbaptist@aol.com.

Two additional trips are planned as well:

John Dorean, Pastor of the Jefferson Baptist Church, will lead a team Jan. 21 – 29, 2012. (John was a member of the first ABCOPAD team that went to Haiti.) For more information, call 724-883-4088.

The American Baptist Men of Pennsylvania and Delaware will lead a team Feb. 18 – 27, 2012. For more information, contact Bob Swan at swantown@aol.com. ■

CAMP CARMEL

If you have not been to Camp Carmel this summer then you have missed out on some great stories! 101 people were in camp for Kindle and our overall summer attendance was higher than it has been since 2007! Great things are happening at Camp Carmel! To learn more about the camp, contact Executive Director Clint Iams at 724-986-0993 or visit info@campcarmel.com. ■

CHURCH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE:

Is there someone in your congregation, that you just know belongs in ministry? Someone who is passionate about Scripture? Someone devoted to serving God? Maybe even someone who is a bit challenging – have you considered that the source of their frustration might be an unanswered call to ministry? **The Church Leadership Institute (CLI)**, a **Ministry Team of ABCOPAD**, provides affordable, quality, biblically-sound instruction for Certified Lay Ministry (CLM), Certified Youth Ministry (YM) and Christian Studies (CS).

Steven Brotzman, CLI Western PA Administrator (724-288-7601)

Tracey Brown, CLI Harrisburg/East Administrator (717-576-2727)

Eleanor Siegrist, CLI Northeastern PA Administrator (814-944-1468) ■

PLEASE NOTE

The CLI of Western PA Reunion scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 8, at FBC, Greensburg has been postponed. The Reunion will be rescheduled for a later date still to be determined. ■

Celebration of Mission Giving

This single month compared to the same single month last year.

	2010	2011
United Mission Basics	\$43,436	\$40,476
Love Gift	\$1,316	\$1,594
Partners in Ministry	\$12,529	\$10,526
Annual Offerings:		
A.F.C.	\$2,505	\$1,404
O.G.H.S.	\$8,169	\$11,710
R.M.M.O.	\$676	\$217
W.M.O.	\$1,996	\$2,185

To view your own church's current giving amounts, visit our website and on the home page click on *World Mission Reports*.

The cumulative comparison figures

United Mission Basics is behind by \$38,874. The decrease in United Missions (includes UMB, Love Gift and Designations) amounts to \$25,742 less in actual dollars that ABCOPAD received this year.

A.F.C. is behind by \$3,891. The decrease amounts to \$1,141 less in actual dollars that ABCOPAD received this year.

Partners in Ministry is ahead by \$7,109.

OCTOBER 2011 DEADLINE

Items to be included in the Oct. issue of Notes & News need to arrive by **noon, Thursday, Oct. 6.**

Please send all material to Carol Bicking.

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Thank you!

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