



American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania & Delaware

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Isaiah 58:10 - 12 (TMSG) ¹⁰If you are generous with the hungry and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out, Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight. ¹¹I will always show you where to go. I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places — firm muscles, strong bones. You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. ¹²You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again.

In January of this past year, I had a chance to join the ABCOPAD Mission Team doing Earthquake Disaster Relief in Haiti. Most will remember the devastating earthquake that rocked Haiti in January 2010, killing an estimated 300,000 people and leaving many of the survivors of the earthquake homeless. When the mission team arrived in Haiti on January 15, 2011, it was easy to see most people were still living in tents or in temporary, makeshift shelters.

Driving through Haiti, it is easy to see the results of the earthquake both on the faces of those who survived the disaster and in the massive amount of rubble piles apparent everywhere you look. Piles of rock are all that remain where homes and small businesses once stood. The job of the mission team was to take those piles of rubble and to turn them into dwellings through a process of what has become known as a rubble home. It was incredible working with Conscience International to build a rubble home in a mere seven days and to witness a homeless family receive the keys to a brand new rubble house.

In Isaiah 58:12, we are told God's people will use the old rubble of past lives to build anew. In The Message, the passage goes on to say, "You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again." Jesus told his people they were to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. There are many reports available today that document the decline of the church in North America. A large percentage of churches are predicted to close over the next decade. Numerous congregations are diminishing and expecting to close.

But in the midst of all this, here in ABCOPAD, we are seeing God do new things. We are witnessing congregations discover new opportunities for ministry. For years, many churches have been inward focused and maintenance minded. In 2010, ministries, such as the Fanning the Flame pastor's retreat and the ABCOPAD Biennial featuring David Ping and Outflow, challenged both pastors and congregations to become outward focused and missional.

Your support of ABCOPAD through Partners in Ministry allows us to come along side of struggling churches and help them to re-tool, becoming outward focused and missional in today's culture. Partners in Ministry underwrites ministries like the Haiti Mission Trip, providing hands-on, life-changing, energizing experiences that can become transformative in the life of a local congregation.

If you have never contributed to Partners in Ministry (PIM), I challenge you to make 2011 your year to support our Regional Ministry. Many churches last year took up the challenge and contributed \$500. If you are already a donor to PIM, I challenge you to match or exceed your 2010 gift. Your contributions are making a dramatic difference in the lives of pastors and churches. Thank you so much for your support.

Please contact me if you have questions or want to know more about how to give.

God Bless,

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