

First Things

A Newsletter of the First Baptist Church of Trenton

128-140 Centre Street, Trenton NJ 08611-2215
609.393.8810 www.firstbaptisttrenton.org

The Rev. Elizabeth B. Congdon, Senior Pastor
609.954.1450 lizcongdon@comcast.net

The Rev. Calvin Nadir Powell, Associate Pastor
732.277.3751 nadirsstop@aol.com

APRIL 2013

From the Senior Pastor

MIDDLE EAST ADVENTURES IN DIALOGUE: A FEW HIGHLIGHTS

“Why ever did I travel to the Middle East for interfaith dialogue when I can do that right here at home?” I ask myself. The answer came from Jeremiah 4:1-10 “... you shall go to all to whom I send you...” You know that I did not ask God if I was “.... too young.” You know that I asked God if I were too old!

It was my privilege to be part of a team on mission to Beirut, Lebanon and to Tbilisi and Batumi in the Republic of Georgia between 1/15/13 and 1/29/13 to facilitate dialogue between American Baptist women and Muslim women. The team was led by the Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley, General Secretary, ABCUSA and Virginia Holmstrom, Executive Director, American Baptist Women’s Ministries. Nine others were on the team including: Rev. Carol McVetty, Rev. Carol Sutton, Nancy Atkins, Barbara Anderson, Karen Conover, Laura Austin, Lorna Hansen, Marcia Street, and Rev. June Totten. We were able to be with the Rev. Dr. Malkhaz Songulashvili (Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia), and Dan & Sarah Chetti (American Baptist International Ministries missionaries in Lebanon). I am still reflecting on all that happened. It was an amazing time. Awesome!

We had many opportunities to meet and spend time with Muslim women, and Muslim men as well. We prayed together. There's nothing like staying overnight in someone’s home to get to know them. Muslim families invited us to stay in their homes in Batumi, on the Black Sea in Georgia. We did not speak each other’s language and yet we were communicating. The first thing I learned was that brides live with their mother and father-in-law! It was amazing to see how our hosts related to one another. I also learned that Muslim men in Georgia are allowed to marry up to four wives. I do not know how they all work this out. We arrived and our host brought out food and invited a neighbor family to join us. By midnight they were going strong. A real treat was watching the host’s wedding video. For me to see the traditions and realize just how similar Muslim receptions are to ours was so interesting. They do not drink alcohol, but share many toasts with non-alcoholic beverages! They dance and cut the cake and have a wonderful time. Our bride had over 400 guests at her wedding!

The following day we were included in a meeting with the President and government officials of the

region. The local newspaper's headlines **the** following day read: "*Baptists Demand a Plot of Land for a Mosque.*" We were in solidarity with the Muslims asking for permission to build a mosque. Maybe our presence helped. Several weeks after our return we received an email from Malkhaz Songulashvili saying, "You will be delighted to know that yesterday the Georgian authorities in Tbilisi made a decision to let Muslims build a mosque in Batumi. This is a tangible result of your visit to Georgia."

Another highlight was preaching at the **Faith Baptist Church** in Beirut, Lebanon when the Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley was ill. It was the first time a woman has preached in that church! This was shocking to me as I gazed upon a sea of theologians, professors and the President from the **Arab Baptist Theological Seminary** where we were staying. As I began I mentioned that if perhaps they were not accustomed to a women preaching they could pretend that I was teaching. They chuckled. But we each knew that the laugh was on me! I was preaching to the professors of preaching.

Dan and Sarah Chetti's cutting edge ministry with the MAIDs in Beirut was a highlight. Sarah goes into the local prison to minister to women twice a week. She brings food and cooks a meal for them. She encourages them. And she helps maids who are not fairly treated in Beirut.

Dr. Martin Accad's lectures about Islam, Muslims, Israel and Palestine were a highlight. Dr. Accad is the Director of the *Institute for Middle East Studies* at the **Arab Baptist Theological Seminary**.

Interfaith services at the Baptist Cathedral and the holocaust victims' remembrance at the National Parliament building in the Republic of Georgia were highlights. Seeing the **SAT 7** office and truck used for the satellite ministry in the Middle East and in North Africa was exciting. Meeting with the *Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD)* most informative. LSESD's ministry includes a very unique ministry of the Beirut Baptist School with its student body of around 1,400 students (over 90% non-Christian); the inspiring work of the SKILD Center for *Smart Kids with Individual Learning Differences*; learning about the fast-expanding humanitarian aid program that now serves around 500 Syrian refugee families in Lebanon (and a similar number of internally displaced families in Syria); the children and youth ministry that reaches out through spiritual and recreational camps to children who are in dire need to know that Jesus loves them and that they are special in His eyes; and the publishing house *Dar Manhal Al Hayat*.

We spent time in several mosques, and met with seminarians and several groups including the *Lebanese Christian-Muslim Dialogue* group. It was enlightening. I was so glad I went. I am reminded of the commandment "...those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also." (I John 4:21) And that is not limited to loving only Baptists!

With love, Rev. Elizabeth B. Congdon

APRIL SERMONS

4/7	Special Joint Worship Service with Karen Guest Preacher and Testimonies from the Youth Retreat	
4/14	Acts 9:1-6, John 21:12-17	"Two Men Meet Jesus" Pastor Liz
4/21		The Rev. Dr. Lee Spitzer
4/28		Jesse Nietzer

A word from the Associate Pastor

Fruit on the Tree

There it stood in a space of its own
A tree whose fruit had not yet been shown
For it's said that a tree is judge by the fruit it bares
When this tree starts to bloom many people will stare

When people see this tree many things will be said
Especially after seeing its colors of red
For this color will line the tree from the top down to the ground
Both grief and laughter will be heard from those in the crowd

For this fruit is able to make your spirit sore high
Once you eat it know that everything will be all right
For it's more precious than diamonds and more costly than gold
As you consume it revelation will unfold

Although this fruit will die before your eyes
It will live again to help make your wrong right
For this fruit on the tree name is Jesus the Christ
He died and rose to give you a more abundant life

Written by
Rev C Nadir Powell
Associate Pastor

PRAY FOR PHIL AND CORENNE (GARRISON) SMITH BRINGING CHRIST'S TRANSFORMING POWER TO HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN BRAZIL

In Brazil, poor youth often choose life on the streets to escape the poverty of the slums and, more often, to escape abusive families. Corenne and Philip minister to children who are part of a residential program that rescues homeless street children and youth ranging in age from 8 to 18. The program provides guidance, education, and training for future employment. Corenne works mainly with the older children, working with them on life skills so that they can eventually transition away from a boarding school to independent living. Corenne also serves as a surrogate mother to many of the children, sharing with them the love of Jesus. After experiencing day-to-day living in a safe, caring Christian environment, most of these children make decisions to follow Christ. Phil Smith is the president and CEO of the residential program, Here is the story of Joyce, a life transformed by love. She writes: When I was born, my mother gave me to my grandfather - because he was my biological father. The idea of raising me was too painful for her. I didn't know this until I was seven years old. I lived with my grandparents, and, as I got older, my grandmother didn't want to keep me either. She was afraid my grandfather would start abusing me. My grandfather also didn't want me around. I felt alone. I became very rebellious and didn't obey anyone. I left home and went to a short-term holding house. The authorities knew it was dangerous for me there, so they called Hope Unlimited right away to come take care of me. I was just 11 years old. When I first arrived at the City of Youth, it was not easy. I didn't know what it meant to love or to be loved. The staff nurtured me and taught me about God's love, though. Over my first few months at Hope Unlimited, I felt valued. My behavior changed, as I eventually understood the power of God's love for me. I remember receiving Valentine's Day cards at our summer Day of Love party from people in the United States. The first time I opened one of these cards, I was overwhelmed. Someone who didn't even know me, but who wanted to encourage me and pray for me, sent it with love. I was at the City of Youth for seven years. There were highs and lows, but the staff here became my family. They taught me how to behave, how to slowly open my heart, how to love, and how to have healthy relationships. I would not be where I am today without Hope Unlimited. Today I am a happy wife and mother to two sons, Giovanni (6) and Lucas (3 months). My husband and I live and work here at the City of Youth. By God's grace, I am an example to the kids that transformation is possible. With God's help, no matter what your past is like, you can learn to love and write your own family story. And it's not just me. Our church is full of examples of others who have graduated from the City of Youth and had similar experiences of healing and transformation!• Pray for Corenne and Phil as they bring the love of Christ in word and deed to the “lost” children of Brazil.• Pray for the many children and youth in Brazil who are lost, lonely and vulnerable.

PRAY FOR DAVID AND LESLIE TURLEY, HELPING TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS IN OKINAWA.

David and Leslie Turley serve on the island of Okinawa, Japan. David works with the Okinawa Baptist Convention, teaching Bible classes, doing pulpit supply, and working in leadership development. Leslie is an administrator at Okinawa Christian School International (OCSI), and also assists with convention activities.

David writes: Many fragile, marginalized people attend First Baptist Church of Okinawa City. One novice believer left the church after a few months because he thought that his becoming a Christian had caused the earthquake and tsunami that struck Northeastern Japan! Another sensitive middle-aged man severely stutters and stammers when speaking, yet loves deep philosophical

discussions. Add to the mix, a security guard keenly interested in the Gospel, who reads the Bible on his own, but is troubled by “visions.”

One fellow suffered brain injury in a car accident a couple of years ago. His speech is slurred, and his eyes dance when speaking, yet he enjoys worship and fellowship. He became friends with the other fellow with a speech impediment, and they get into amazing academic discussions that only they seem to understand.

One gentle, very intelligent fellow, is also recovering from an accident, (between his bicycle and a truck), that caused permanent injury to a leg and shoulder, and emotional trauma. During recovery, he began to search for spiritual truth. Like a sponge, his heart seems to soak up the Gospel.

Though we view our church as a spiritual hospital, a recent experience with a man with mental illness stirred deeper thoughts about how and where to place boundaries with certain tormented souls we encounter in ministry. Each person is in need of the Good News, yet images of the demoniac of the Gadara tombs flash through my mind when I meet some deeply wounded souls. I realize that we are not equipped to handle certain behaviors or conditions. My family suffered the loss of my niece in 2006 due to the mental instability of her husband, so, I am well aware that boundaries are a must to protect those we love. Please pray for me to be wise in knowing when, where, and how to draw the lines, but also to be like Jesus in loving everyone.

We are so glad to know that in this spiritual warfare for the sake of precious souls, we are being backed up by such a wonderful group of folks like you. Thank you.

- Thank you for partnering with us by praying for us.
- Pray for David and Leslie and their family as they continue to serve Christ in Japan.

IM MISSIONARY, ED NOYES, BEGINS HEALTH CARE PROJECT WITH IMA WORLD HEALTH

Ed Noyes, American Baptist International Ministries (IM) missionary, is expanding his agricultural development work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by partnering with a global faith-based health organization, IMA World Health.

Noyes will remain an IM missionary while contributing 60% of his time to IMA World Health/Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC) as Senior Agricultural Extension Specialist for the Congo. The remaining 40% of his time will continue his work with IM’s church partner, the Baptist Convention of Congo (CBCO) in Lusekele.

With IMA World Health, Noyes will be the principal agricultural extension advisor for a project that is rehabilitating primary health care systems. He will be working with rural health centers and hospitals to use agriculture as a way to improve the overall health of the communities they serve.

“Over the next five years, I will be leading a program that trains village extension workers, distributes high quality seed and seed cuttings over wide swathes of Congolese territory, and helps village groups turn agricultural produce into cash contributions to their local health care system,” explains Noyes in a recent journal. The project hopes to impact more than 4.9 million people during its lifetime.

Noyes has spent the last 25 years of his missionary service working with CBCO to eliminate hunger in the central Bandundu Province. He worked alongside Congolese Christians to increase crop production, grow more nutritious food, and put an end to hunger in the region.

Noyes reflects on his work and how it helps build God’s kingdom: “A world without hunger and a world where farm families live productive lives while building the capacity of the land to produce

sustainable yields—for me that is part of the rich harvest, a sign that God is finally being honored and obeyed.”

IM is a member organization of IMA World Health and a partner not only in Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also in Sudan and Haiti.

IMA World Health advances health and healing to vulnerable and marginalized people the world over. IMA World Health is a specialist in providing essential health care services and medical supplies around the world. It is a nonprofit, faith-based organization working to restore health, hope and dignity to those most in need. It works primarily in the developing world, where an estimated 30 to 70 percent of health care is provided by faith-based organizations.

If you'd like to learn more about Ed Noyes or support his work, visit his [profile on the IM website](#) for more information.

American Baptist International Ministries (IM) asked the missionaries for prayer requests from their fields of service.

Dan Buttry – Global Consultant for Peace, Justice and Conflict Transformation

1) Pray for Kenya to have a peaceful election on March 4 and in the weeks before and after. I've been working with Central Baptist Theological Seminary's Wilson Gathungu and others for the last two years in conflict transformation training. In April we will do follow-up trainings and strategy sessions to continue the work for peace.2) Pray for all of Africa, me and Wilson Gathungu of Central Baptist Theological Seminary, as we put together a 10-day Training of Conflict Transformation Trainers in September that will shape key Christian leaders in Bible-based peacemaking skills. Registrants so far are from Zimbabwe, Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya.3) Pray for the members of the IGNITE team who will be in the Republic of Georgia in May and June, exposing emerging Christian leaders from the U.S. and Georgia to the challenges and opportunities of mission.**Lauran Bethell – Global Consultant for Anti-Human Trafficking**1) Pray for those who are walking the streets of Europe, meeting victims of human trafficking/prostitution as they meet together in April in Waterloo, Belgium. Pray that they learn information that strengthens their ministries. Pray for me as I help plan the meeting and also speak in one of the plenary sessions, that the Holy Spirit will speak words of truth and power through me. 2) Pray for the European Baptist Federation's Anti-Trafficking Network, as they meet together near Barcelona, Spain in April. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide them to know more effective ways of ministering to victims of trafficking from Africa and Eastern Europe.**Ingrid Roldán-Román missionary in Panama & Costa Rica:**1) Pray for students of the School Tutoring Program in Changuinola, Bocas del Toro, Panama so they can continue to acquire skills that will help them in their learning process and that through me they will know God. 2) Pray for the membership of the Baptist Church in Sixaola, Costa Rica that can remain faithful to God and sharing the gospel with others.3) Pray for my return to the mission field after my time at home for Puerto Rico & US visitations.**Dan and Sarah Chetti missionaries in Lebanon:**1) After 7 years of ministry among imprisoned maids in Lebanon, I (Sarah) am launching INSAAF – an Integrated Center for the Ministry among the Maids. Please pray that the harassed, discriminated, suffering maids from several Asian and African countries will find a safe haven where someone listens to their stories and ministers to their needs. Please pray for people to help me, to convert the building creating counseling and work stations, and for money for the renovation work.2) Lebanon right now is overwhelmed by more than 200,000 refugees due to conflicts in neighboring Syria and Iraq. Families are

living in difficult situations including unfinished buildings open to the elements in this cold winter season. Many refugees are Christian minorities, and the students of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (where we work) identify with the refugees and are deeply disturbed by these changes in society. Join us and our students in praying that Lebanese churches will reach out to the refugees and minister among them, and for churches & donors in the US who would like to participate in this ministry. **Kit Ripley missionary in Thailand:**1) Please pray for the ministry of the New Life Center Foundation. We work with tribal girls who have experienced labor exploitation, domestic violence, sexual abuse or human trafficking, and girls who are "at risk". We are in a period of structural change and staff transitions, and are seeking God's guidance as we consider how we can be best equipped to meet the changing needs of tribal girls in the upcoming years.2) Insufficient access to citizenship continues to be a challenge for minority people groups in Thailand. Please pray for the government to open up channels so that minority people can access legal Thai citizenship.

Wendy Bernhard missionary in the Democratic Republic of Congo:1) Pray for our seminaries and Bible institutes as they prepare pastors for ministry in today's turbulent world.2) Pray for the young people of Congo, that they would learn and follow Christ's way in their lives.

Deb Mulneix – development worker in India and Nepal:1) Making strangers into friends is the goal of all of our Partners in Ministry in India and Nepal. This week, I received news about the weddings of two new friends. Not long ago, these women were selling alcohol, drugs, and sometimes themselves. Then they were introduced to Christ. Today, they understand the difference between loving someone and using them. Their new husbands show them respect that they have never experienced before. Now that's a Welcome to a Stranger! Please keep these new families in your prayers, as well as the shelter and the women and staff who work there.2)

Education in India is a very high priority. Our early missionaries were aware of the need and established many schools around the country. Today, Christian schools are well respected, and many non-Christian children are enrolled in them. The residents of a small, remote village approached their Christian neighbors to open a school. Even though they had no funds, no teachers, and no buildings, these believers began a school. The first year there were 75 students, and today, three years later, they number around 350, with less than 10 of these students from Christian homes. Like this one, many of our schools are in remote areas, and funding is not easily available. Please keep the students, faculty, staff, and parents of our Christian schools in your prayers.**Mike Mann – Global Consultant for Rural Development:**1) Many villagers in China, Burma and Thailand live in extreme poverty and do not have access to clean water, proper sanitation and micro-loans. Pray for the mission projects that will address these challenges giving villagers hope for a healthier life and stronger economic future.

Madeline Flores-López missionary in the Dominican Republic:1) Pray for our economy which is directly affecting many families in the DR – a basket of basic supplies has gone up from 16% to 26%. Food and basic needs are now more prohibited and unaffordable for poor families. 2) Pray for our college students who are the future in the DR. They face expensive transportation, no school supplies, and limited opportunities making an education nearly impossible. Please pray for more opportunities and scholarships for college students. To read journals by the missionaries, global consultants and development workers, click on their name under PEOPLE at the top of the IM website.

To see mission projects that support their ministries, click on ALL PROJECTS under PROJECTS at the top of the IM website. You can filter the list of projects by country. Or go to a missionary's profile page, and click on PROJECTS to see just those projects submitted by that missionary.

American Baptist International Ministries (IM) was organized in 1814 as the first Baptist international mission agency in America. It began its pioneer mission work in Burma and today works in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas serving more than 1,800 long-term and short-term missionaries. Its central mission is to help people come to Christ, grow in their relationship with God, and change their worlds through the power of the Spirit. It works with respected partners in over 70 countries in ministries that meet human need.

1.800.222.3872 www.internationalministries.org

RAVI ZACHARIAS

Ravi Zacharias will be speaking in Mercer County on April 5, 2013 at 7 pm. The Topic will be "Christianity: A Reasonable Choice". April 5, 2013, join for a fascinating time of lecture and questions and answers with one of the greatest religious thinkers of our time.

Although tickets to the live event at Princeton Alliance Church have sold out, there is still room to register for tickets to watch Ravi Live at the satellite campuses! **Those tickets are free of charge**, please see the link below for details. Please contact the location you choose for specific tickets, reservations, and information.

For locations, go to <http://ravilive.com/satellite.html>

YOUTH RETREAT

A two day retreat is planned for Karen and Karenni youth on Friday and Saturday during Spring break. All youth are invited. The retreat will be held in Fellowship Hall during the days of April 5 and April 6. The focus is on "Growing in All Things Into Christ," Ephesians 4:15.

BAPTIST CAMP LEBANON REGISTRATION NEEDED

Baptist Camp Lebanon registration forms are available. If you are interested in applying for a scholarship to cover the cost of one week at camp please complete the registration form and give it to Pastor Liz by Sunday April 7.

WE ART TOGETHER AS ONE RECEPTION

Please join us for a reception 6:00 pm at Artworks on Friday, April 12th in celebration of the art created and the artists who created it at our We Art Together As One in March.

Artworks is located at 19 Everett Alley in Trenton.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR MOVIE NIGHT
AT THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF TRENTON**

Join us at 7:00 pm on Saturday, May 4, 2013 for movie night at church.
Everyone is invited! Enjoy the **Lion King** with us.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR
THE NJ COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ANNUAL DINNER MAY 9, 2013**

The Rev. A. Roy Medley will be the keynote speaker at the NJ Council of Churches Annual Dinner being held at the Trinity United Methodist Church, 1985 Pennington Road, in Ewing, NJ 08618 on Thursday, May 9, 2013 at 6:30 pm.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Keeve and Lauren Kase are expecting their first child and ask for our prayers.



"About my loaves and fishes . . .
could I get a receipt for tax purposes?"

APRIL 2013

SUNDAY EVERY SUNDAY: 9:00am Karen Karenni Worship 9:00am Children's Worship 10:00am Sunday School, All Ages 11:00am Worship 12:15pm Fellowship	MONDAY 1 10:00-12:00 ESL 4:00 STSK	TUESDAY 2 4:00 STSK	WEDNESDAY 3 4:00 STSK 7:00 Poetry Group	THURSDAY 4 6:30 Choir Practice	FRIDAY 5 YOUTH RETREAT	SATURDAY 6 YOUTH RETREAT
7 Communion 12:30 CEB CAMP FORMS DUE	8 10:00-12:00 ESL 4:00 STSK	9 4:00 STSK	10 4:00 STSK	11 6:30 Choir Practice	12 6:00 pm WE ART TOGETHER RECEPTION At Artworks	13 9:00-12:00 ESL & Tutoring
14	15 10:00-12:00 ESL 4:00 STSK	16 4:00 STSK	17 4:00 STSK 7:00 Poetry Group 7:00 STARS	18 6:30 Choir Practice	19	20 9:00-12:00 ESL & Tutoring NEWSLETTER INFO DUE
21 Trustees	22 10:00-12:00 ESL 4:00 STSK	23 4:00 STSK	24 4:00 STSK	25 6:30 Choir Practice	26	27 9:00-12:00 ESL & Tutoring
28 Deacons	29 10:00-12:00 ESL 4:00 STSK	30 4:00 STSK				



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