

PCBA Notes

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James A. Donahue - "BLT" Speaker *President of Graduate Theological Union* *to Speak at March 21 Luncheon*

President James A. Donahue of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley will be the guest speaker at Baptists Lunching Together (aka, "BLT") on Wednesday, March 21 at 12:00. He will talk about the challenges of that institution in the early 21st century.

The GTU is the largest and most diverse partnership of seminaries and graduate schools in the United States, pursuing interreligious collaboration in teaching, research, ministry, and service. Nine seminaries along with centers for Jewish and Islamic Studies, programs in Asian Religions and Women's Studies in Religion, and several affiliate programs offer students from around the world the opportunity for an ecumenical and interfaith education. The GTU endeavors to prepare leaders to serve in a world in which differences are acknowledged and respected.

As the seventh president of the GTU, Dr. Donahue also serves on the faculty as Professor of Ethics. He came to his present position from Georgetown University. President Donahue has been committed to the public role of ethics and theology throughout his career. He holds degrees from the College of the Holy Cross, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the GTU.

ABSW was one of the three founding seminaries of the GTU. American Baptists on the GTU Board of Trustees include Paul Martin, Richard E. Ice, and Robert Wilkins.

BLT Reservations

Contact Joan Thatcher

510.350.7008

Deadline: March 19.

*BLT program lunches are held
at Grand Lake Gardens
401 Santa Clara Ave, Oakland.*

Looking Ahead

*April 18 - Allison Tanner will talk
about her study of preaching on
social issues by American
Baptist pastors.*

People of the Book? Comments by the Editor

Baptists often define themselves as *People of the Book*. Indeed, some of their forebears called the Bible “the all-sufficient guide for faith and practice.” Baptists intend their message and mission, both in its call to faith and its work for justice in society, to be rooted in the thrust of scripture.

Yet (a question), how adequately is our commitment to scripture expressed in how we structure worship? I was taken aback by the question put to me by someone from a liturgical church after attending a Baptist service. “Where was the scripture?,” she asked. Quite a question to put to a “person of the book”!

There had been scripture in the service, of course—a few verses read before the pastor preached on them. But in my questioner’s tradition, scripture was given a more commanding place. Each Sunday a passage was read from the Hebrew scriptures, a psalm (sung or read responsively), a passage from an epistle, and then—with worshipers standing to honor Christ—a reading from the Gospels. No matter how good (or bad) the sermon, no matter how well (or poorly) the music was sung, words of scripture were heard in substantial portion, these tied to their place in a Christian Year by which the congregation followed the life, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus and the

formative life of the church.

Baptists, on the other hand, are “free church” people—free of obligation to order their worship in this way. But (another question): Has our “freedom” sometimes led us to jettison something for which we once contended—i.e., the central place of scripture in our communal life?

John Skoglund, preeminent authority on the history of free church worship, suggests acts by which scripture can be given greater importance, such as the entrance of scripture at the start of worship, its reading from the lectern, and the reclaiming of the Christian Year.

A further question, if I may: Shouldn’t people who once contended forcefully for putting the Bible in the hands of the laity ask that lay people be readers in worship? Recently, I was in the home of a Roman Catholic who had been chosen as a “lector” (a reader) in worship. Her guide and a class accompanying its use emphasized the sacred nature of the Book, the need to communicate respect through the way scripture is read, and practical elements for clear, understandable delivery which would enable the message to be communicated.

I hope Baptists will take the public reading of scripture with equal seriousness and reclaim their full identity as *People of the Book*.

ABC Initiative to be Presented
"Transformed by the Spirit"

Two events in March will introduce the American Baptist endeavor, "Transformed by the Spirit." Described by national Vice President Don Ng as a journey of discernment helping churches to find "fresh ways of journeying with the Spirit into new mission and ministry." Alan Roxburgh, leader in "adaptive change," will guide an event for professional church leaders, Fri. Mar. 30, 6:00-8:00 PM at ABSW (register: 510.841-1905; mmholmes@absw.edu), and for all people on Sat., March 31, 9:00-12:00 at FBC, Alameda (register: 510.522.9243; liliana.davalle@gmail.com).

San Leandro Community Church to Conclude its Ministry

Completing 68 years through various forms of ministry, the San Leandro Community Church has decided to close as a worshipping community and is extending an invitation to all to join them in celebrating their ministries and legacy at a special worship service and reception on Saturday, March 24 at 2:00 PM. RSVP by March 15 at the church office, 510-483-1811 or slccoffice@gmail.com.

PCBA Spring Conference
Announced for Sat., May 12

PCBA's annual Spring Conference will be held on Saturday, May 12 at the Alameda First Baptist Church. The keynote leader will be Jennifer W. Davidson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Worship and Theology at ABSW. She will explore the theme "Why Worship Matters," as will leaders in five workshops.

Events to Note

East Bay Area Spring Rally for AB Women's Ministries, April 28 (9:30-12:00) Alameda FBC. John Sundquist, of ABC International Ministries. Contact: Sally Gregory, 37 Purcell St., Alameda 94502; purcell37@sbcglobal.net.

Alliance of Baptists 25th Year Convocation - April 13-15, Austin TX. Contact Jim Hopkins, 510-893-2484; jim@labcoakland.org.

PCBA's second "Overview Series," was well-received by lay people who registered for the three sessions in January and February led by PCBA President James Chuck on church history, Christian faith and world religions, and the life and mission of the local church.

The Pacific Coast Baptist Association is a group of American Baptist congregations, clergy, and laity in fellowship since 1999 and emphasizing Baptist principles: The Priesthood of all Believers, Soul Competency, Biblical Authority, Autonomy of the Local Church, and Separation of Church and State. *PCBA Notes*, the Association's news sheet, is published four times a year. Editor, Dale Edmondson, 14234 Outrigger Dr., San Leandro, CA 94577 edmondsons@comcast.net, 510.483.6836.

People and Churches

Compiled by Joan Thatcher

Congratulations to **Roy Medley**, General Secretary of ABC, USA, who has become President-elect of the National Council of Churches. BLT was pleased to have Dr. Medley and **Sumner Grant**, Executive Director of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board, speak us Feb. 6. . .

J. Brent Walker, Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee, Washington, DC surprised **Richard E. Ice** by presenting him with the J. M. Dawson Religious Liberty Award. Established in 1986, the Dawson Award recognizes Baptists who have made outstanding contributions to the defense of religious liberty and who support the BJC. Previous recipients include Bill Moyers, Jimmy Carter, Gardner Taylor, and James Dunn. Dr. Ice served on the BJC Board for 41 years, missing only one meeting, and chaired the endowment committee.

Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church of Oakland received the **Lighthouse Award** on Feb. 4 from the Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate. Pastor Jim Hopkins said the award recognizes the decades Lakeshore has provided volunteers and generous contributions to the Seafarers. . .

Dean LeAnn Snow spent a week in February in Seoul, South Korea where she contributed to ABSW's Doctor of Ministry Program. It is directed by **Prof. Sangyil Park**, who also serves as translator. . .

Michael-Ray Mathews will lead Bible study at the summer conference of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, July 30-Aug. 4, at St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN.

In Sympathy

We mourn the loss of **Grant W. Hanson**. His death at age 90 was recognized on January 21. He greatly treasured family and friends. A graduate of Berkeley Baptist Divinity School in 1945, Grant's life was invested in communicating the idea of "the teaching church." This emphasis began while Minister of Christian Education at the historic First Baptist Church of Oakland, continued for 12 years on staff of the Northern California Baptist Convention, and concluded with 12 years in executive leadership in the Division of Christian Education for ABC, USA.

We share in the sorrow at Grand Lake Gardens in the unexpected death of their executive director, **Adnan Hasan** at age 43. (GLG has hosted BLT since it began in 1996.) A celebration of Adnan's life is set for March 24, 2:00 PM at Lakeshore. . . **Tom Hutson** died Dec. 16 in Richland, WA. Following his ordination in 1955, he led churches in Yountville, Orland, and Carson City, and, in retirement had several interim pastorates.