

# PCBA Notes

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## PCBA Representatives Participate in "Space for Grace"

November's "Space for Grace" conference in Los Angeles welcomed several representatives of PCBA, including Jesus Portillo, who reported on the "Aspire and Achieve" program Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church carries out with challenged students at Oakland Technical High School together with Holy Names University

The purpose of the conference, sponsored by the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, was to "seek to restore the human connection among all people by gathering intentionally diverse voices committed to exploring different perspectives about contemporary issues that affect congregations and communities across the United States today."

Preachers, speakers, and musical artists from across the country emphasized "bringing God's Gospel of grace to life." The format included opportunities worship, engagement, and reflection. Reports were given on projects supported by American Baptists' Palmer Grants, which included the Aspire and Achieve Program.

Portillo said concerning his experience at the conference, "There were programs all the way from Fairbanks, Alaska to Puerto Rico. The conversations were frank and honest. We were all energized by the drive and dedication of the many program leaders, sharing our joys and frustrations, love and hope." Attending from PCBA churches, in addition to Portillo, were Karen DeWeese, Paul Keener, Sandra and George Lee, Paul Martin, Louann Roberts, and Allison Tanner. Retired ABC President Don Ng was also present.

### **BLT Programs**

*("Baptists Lunching Together")*

Wednesday Luncheons (\$10)

*Grand Lake Gardens - 12:00 Noon*

*401 Santa Clara Ave., Oakland*

**Jan. 20 -**

**Re-Imagining**

**Theological Education**

LeAnn Flesher

*Dean, ABSW*

**Feb. 17 -**

**Gregg Sneller**

ABC International Ministries

*Reservations by Monday*

*pcba.org*

*or*

*510-350-7008 (Joan Thatcher)*

## **From ABC General Secretary Roy Medley**

Roy Medley, Retiring ABC General Secretary, has written a farewell message to American Baptists. In it, he says, "As I write this, my last Christmas greeting to you as General Secretary, my heart overflows in gratitude for you all. As your 'face' to the wider church and to the world, I have had the honor of representing you before presidents and prime ministers, princes, popes, and patriarchs, congress persons and members of parliament.

"Through those experiences I have come to know how respected our witness and role in the world is because of our long history as a voice on behalf of religious liberty, human rights and peace through interfaith dialogue. Thank you for the privilege of representing Christ through you." (His full message is available at <http://www.abc-usa.org>.)

## **Ministers Council Retreat at Redwood Glen**

"Loving Life's Transitions" is the focus of the January 11-12 retreat of the Ministers Council of the Greater Bay Area at Redwood Glen. The leader, John Landgraf, is former Director of Oakland's Center for Ministry and a past President of Central Baptist Theological Seminary.

## **News From Our Mission-Supported Ministries**

***Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy Publishes Arts Booklet*** - "Light Between the Cracks," a booklet containing art, poetry, and reflections by inmates of the Santa Clara correctional facilities, has been published by CIC Ministries. The piece is the outgrowth of a ministry which seeks to connect with the Spirit through the creative arts. Two PCBA-related chaplains serve the ministry—David Robinson, Executive Director; and Louann Roberts.

## ***Berkeley Food and Housing Project Celebrates 45 Years -***

Friends of the Berkeley Food and Housing Project gathered in October to celebrate 45 years of serving homeless individuals and families in the East Bay. "Committed to easing and ending the crisis of homelessness in our community," the program recognizes that each person served requires a unique combination of services and support to enable their return to a stable and productive life. BFHP responds to needs in much of the East Bay.

## ***Dates Announced for Peace Fellowship Conference***

June 27-July 2 has been set for the annual Summer Conference of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. It will be held at Cheyney University in Pennsylvania.

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**To Our Islamic Brothers and Sisters**  
*An Open Letter by the Editor, Dale Edmondson*

*Dear Friends,*

*Many in the Christian community share a grave concern for the liberty and personal safety of Muslim members in our community. Some recent statements by public figures have exploited popular fears and incited anti-Muslim bigotry and acts of hatred toward people of the Islamic faith. Such statements and actions are contrary to the core values of our nation and our best instincts. The whole of any faith cannot be blamed for the actions of a few extremists who have a perverted understanding of their faith. We know that the Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California has condemned recent terrorist attacks and has stated, "We deeply care about Peace, Liberty and Humanity and we stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters all over the world who got attacked by terrorists." To those at this Center in Oakland, we say we stand "shoulder to shoulder" with you!*

*One of the important principles of American life has been the practice of religious liberty and the protection of unfamiliar minority religions. We recognize an understandable anxiety in our land from the threat of terrorist attacks, but we stand against all demagoguery and bigotry that incites hatred against others, making them scapegoats for that anxiety. We share a common heritage about the treatment of "the other." The Christian scriptures state, "You shall not oppress a resident alien; you know the heart of an alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." And the Holy Qu'an calls for the protection of the asylum seeker (or al-mustamin), whether Muslim or non-Muslim.*

*Many concerned Christians want to work for compassion, mercy, love and hospitality. Therefore, we pledge ourselves to the following:*

*• To treat others as we would like to be treated and to challenge members of our own faith community to do the same. • To recognize that all persons are entitled to dignity and respect as human beings and that none should be subject to hostility or discrimination. • To support others who exercise courage in upholding justice for others. • To speak of our own faith without demeaning or ridiculing the faith of others. • To build bridges between the stranger and ourselves and, by example, to encourage others to do the same. • To refuse to keep silent when we see others speaking ill of strangers, judging them without coming to know them, or when we see them being excluded, wronged or oppressed.*

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*From a statement drafted by the Editor at the request of Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church and sent to the Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California*

## Milestones for Baptist Friends

*Compiled by Joan Thatcher*

We warmly welcome four new pastors now serving PCBA churches in the Bay Area. **Jeremy Carlton** is now the Senior Pastor of Shell Ridge Church in Walnut Creek. Married to Sara for 16 years and the father of Adele Rose, he earned his M.Div. degree at Wake Forest University and is a Ph.D. candidate at VU University in Amsterdam. . . At First Baptist in Palo Alto, **Gregory Stevens** is now the full-time Associate Pastor for Faith Formation and Family Life. He is a recent graduate of Claremont School of Theology. . . First Chinese Baptist Church of San Francisco has welcomed **Linda Bergeon** as their long-term interim. She just concluded two years as interim at Alameda First. . . The new interim at First Baptist in Alameda is **Paul Keener**, a long-time member of Lakeshore who is completing his M.Div. as a student at American Baptist Seminary in Berkeley (ABSW).

At First Baptist in Seattle, **Bill Malcomson** is completing nearly three years as Theologian-in-Residence. He and life-partner, **Barbara Bell**, are moving to Port Ludlow, WA to be near family. Formerly the ABSW Dean, Bill was one of the founders of the School of Theology and Ministry at Seattle University. . . Congratulations to **Katie Choy-Wong** on the 35th anniversary of her ordination. She has served in several significant ministries.

**Margaret Cowden**, who retired recently as Treasurer of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, will be the commencement speaker for ABSW on May 21. A Covina graduate in 1975, she will also be awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.

ABSW has expressed deep appreciation to **James Hopkins** of Lakeshore for completing three years of chairing the Seminary Board of Trustees. . . The new chair person is **Marcia Patton**, Executive Minister for the Evergreen Region.

Lakeshore Church also congratulates its member, **Ben Maruca**, for landing safely in Antarctica, where he has been engaged in a scientific endeavor. . . Congresswoman **Barbara Lee** of Oakland is a new member of the Advisory Board of Grand Lake Gardens, where her mother lived for five years. My friend Barbara would probably agree with a recent TV quote from Hillary Clinton, "We need more love and kindness in America." Amen!

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**PCBA Notes** is the quarterly newsletter of Pacific Coast Baptist Association

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