

PCBA Notes

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San Jose to Host Evergreen Annual Meeting *Oct. 12-13 - Grace Baptist Church*

"Yes, We Will!" is the theme of the Annual Meeting of the Evergreen Baptist Association to be held at the Grace Baptist Church of San Jose. The meeting will begin with lunch on Friday October 12 and conclude with a service on Saturday evening when Douglas Avilesbernal will be installed as Executive Minister. Mr. Avilesbernal has been actively involved with matters of diversity, including the creation of an immersion program for young adults which involves participation in different cultures around the world for one month at a time. As pastor in the Philadelphia area, he worked with the Montgomery County Commissioners in advising and overseeing resources in ways to take diversity issues into account. He is the author of *Welcoming Community: Diversity that Works*, and has presented the TED talk, "Tolerance, the End of the Beginning."

The guest speaker for the meeting will be Zina Jacque, founder of the counseling and training center at Trinity Church, Boston, a center which has become a leader in providing service to under-served communities. The meeting will include table conversations on several significant issues.

Registration may be made at local congregations or online at www.ea-abc.org/annual-meeting.html.

Grace Baptist is located at 484 East San Fernando Street.

Confronting Gun Violence

The Second in a Series of
"Justice Jams"

Wed. Oct. 3 - 6:30 to 8:00 PM

Gun violence will be addressed by local community, political, and religious leaders in a public "Justice Jam" on Wednesday, October 3, from 6:30-8:00 PM at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, 3534 Lakeshore Avenue in Oakland. An earlier "Justice Jam" on the issue of homelessness brought concerned leaders in the community together to gain factual information about local homelessness and strategies for addressing it.

The October Jam will provide information about the realities of gun violence in Oakland and what is being done (and can be done) regarding prevention and gun control.

Brief Notes

Another “Space for Grace” -

Following on the success of a recent urban retreat developed by the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, called “Space for Grace,” another has been announced for November 14-16 in Philadelphia. Grace, reflection, refreshment, and renewal will figure in the event. Leaders known to PCBA will be among those contributing, including, Lauren Ng, ABHMS network strategist; Molly Marshall, President of Central Baptist Seminary; and Amy Butler, Senior Minister of the Riverside Church, New York City. An online video invitation from Jeffrey Haggray, Executive Director of the Home Mission Societies,

may be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdzXxZ0ALEI&feature=youtu.be>.

BFHP - The community meal offered by the Berkeley Food and Housing Project, one of PCBA's mission commitments, is the longest running meal of its kind in the city. The agency began in 1970 as a meal, and 48 years later the meal is still at the heart of what it does to help people in the community overcome hunger and homelessness. Terrie Light, Executive Director, says, “We see it not just as food, but as a potential point of entry on the path to permanent housing,”

McGee Avenue’s 100th - The McGee Avenue Baptist Church will celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of its founding in September. A highlight event will be a banquet on Saturday, September 22, and a service of celebration will be observed on Sunday morning September 16. Michael Smith is Pastor of the congregation. Information is available at 510.843.1774.

Books to the Philippines -

Another shipment of theological books was sent this summer to the College of Theology at Central Philippine University. This shipment followed the new plan of the Association in which shipment costs for individuals wishing to contribute books is supplied by PCBA. Since its inception more than 15 years ago, the program has now shipped over 10,000 volumes. For information: 510.483.6836.

Great Music Honored - The highly-regarded “Chichester Psalms,” of Leonard Bernstein formed the centerpiece of worship at Berkeley First Baptist Church on August 26, reflecting the one hundredth birthday of this significant composer. A recording made by Bernstein with a chorus from Poland was used. The work provides settings for parts of six well known psalms.

Pilate's Sardonic Question

Comments by the Editor, Dale Edmondson

When Pilate asked, "What is truth?," I sense it was not a sincere inquiry but rather a sardonic utterance, meaning, "How can anyone know what's really true?"

What leads one to such a nihilistic perspective? Is it the spawning of demonstrable falsehoods, contrived lies promulgated to shape public opinion for a certain cause? George Orwell had seen the results of propaganda created by a popular Führer in support of profound evil. In his novel, 1984, Orwell wrote about a government with a Ministry of Truth housed in a building displaying three slogans: "War is Peace," "Freedom is Slavery," and "Ignorance is Strength." Part of the Ministry's purpose was to rewrite history and to change the facts to fit the Administration's doctrine.

How is one to navigate his or her life or how are life-sustaining institutions to be maintained in an environment where there are "alternative facts?" Where there is no trustworthy mooring? No dependable center? A new word added to the dictionaries of the Oxford University Press two years ago was the word, "Post-Truth." It's defined as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." What are responsible citizens to think when, for example, they hear a widely-circulated report that vaccinations cause autism, or that the Sandy Hook shooting was an elaborate hoax staged by the government to promote gun control, or that the former Secretary of State was involved in a child-trafficking scheme operating out of a Washington D.C. pizza restaurant? Disturbingly, research has shown we put up little resistance to deceptions that please us and comfort us, and that when we are fed falsehoods by people of wealth and power they appear easier to accept.

Perhaps even more insidious than being confused by conflicting "facts" is the mentality I find in Pilate—i.e., that there is really no way we can any longer know what is true. The musicologist, Leslie Spellman, once commented about the use of the symphonic cymbal. He said the cymbal is of "indefinite pitch," and when used alone it can wipe out any sense of key. (You hear it and your ear no longer remembers the key you were in.) I am concerned we're being subjected to such a cacophony of ideological cymbals, that even well-meaning people may say, "There's no longer any way to know what to believe." I've never been more thankful for the New York Times, National Public Radio, the Wall Street Journal, and other responsible sources of news. They are guardians of our life and freedom—far from being "enemies of the people."

People

PCBA lost two of its leaders in June. **Alice Edmondson**, the Association's President, died on June 8 at the age of 82 while undergoing treatment for cancer. An educator, she had taught public school in Missouri, Arizona, California, and Minnesota in a career that spanned four decades. She was active in the work of American Baptists including a ministry to the wives of graduate students at the University of California, Berkeley. In addition to working in congregations where her husband was pastor, she served in retirement as President of the Seafarers Ministry of the Golden Gate and as a visiting faculty member at Central Philippine University. She leaves her husband, Dale Edmondson; children, Eric and Karen; and 15 grandchildren.

Andy (D. Andrew) Kille, PCBA's Webmaster, died on June 30, also to cancer. He has been described as writer, teacher, editor, musician, minister, biblical scholar, and interfaith activist. A graduate of both Stanford and American Baptist Seminary of the West, he earlier served as Pastor of the Grace Baptist Church of San Jose. He was founder and director of Interfaith Space in San Jose; held positions with the Society of Biblical Literature; and edited study resources on the Bible, writing or editing three books and contributing numerous scholarly articles. He is survived by his wife, Pamela; two sons, Russell and Jabin; and family members.

AN ORDINATION - Paul Schneider of the First Baptist Church of Berkeley is to be ordained on Sunday afternoon, October 14 at 3:00 PM. Although the ordaining congregation will be the First Baptist Church, the ordination service will be held at the Shell Ridge Community Church of Walnut Creek, 200 La Casa Via. Paul grew up in the Berkeley church and studied at the American Baptist Seminary of the West. Upon graduation, he was recognized for academic excellence. On August 14 he received unanimous approval for ordination by the ordination council of PCBA churches. He now serves as Interim Pastor of Burien Community Church in Burien, Washington.

The Pacific Coast Baptist Association,
emphasizing historic Baptist principles,
is a group of American Baptist congregations,
clergy, and laity in fellowship since 1997.

Members of the Board

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