



...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

COMING HOME TO PROVIDENCE

2001 AMERICAN BAPTIST BIENNIAL

"This Biennial is an historic moment for American Baptists," says Linda Bonn. "This is the first Biennial in the new millennium and in the place where Baptists were birthed. We're coming home—together. We're going to honor our heritage and celebrate our present ministries and envision our future."

The 2001 Biennial Meeting of American Baptist Churches USA will be held in Providence, Rhode Island, June 22-25, 2001. As Biennial Coordinator, Linda Bonn oversees the planning of a Biennial and the thousands of details that result.

Linda meets with the Biennial Program Committee, which starts their work 18 months ahead of time. Six members are selected from the general board and six from local ABC churches. The denominational president and the vice president also serve. This year's co-chairs are Donald Shuler and Philip Brown.

The 1999 Biennial piloted a regional youth representatives program. The Biennial Program Committee and the Regional Executive Ministers Council cooperatively sponsored selected youth to serve in leadership roles and participate in business sessions. Sixty-three young people from 23 regions participated.

"These young people gave a sense of energy and life to the Biennial," smiles Linda. "They sat together—without chaperones—in front and cheered on everything." Fifty-five



YOUR PARTNER IN GENERAL MINISTRIES

Linda Bonn Biennial Coordinator

youth from 25 regions will participate in the 2001 Biennial.

Because the committee meets only three times, a staff advisory group meets regularly to flesh out what the committee envisions. "The group's agendas are unbelievable," marvels Linda, "and we work nonstop to plan a Biennial that has something for everybody."

For the first time, this year's Biennial will be held over a weekend. No business will be held on Sunday and fees will be waived that day so everyone can attend free.

"This will just be a grand day of celebration," says Linda. "During Sunday worship we will pray for every American Baptist church. The Hall of Ministries will be the place where our mission is communicated and people can learn about what is happening throughout American Baptist Churches USA."

Linda's first "professional" Biennial experience was in Pittsburgh in 1987. Her pastor at First Baptist Church, Pasadena, California, Harold Lang,

was serving as Biennial program chair and nominated her to serve as music consultant. She has been working on Biennials every since.

Linda and her husband, James Bonn, design and lead worship for denominational and ecumenical conferences. She is the author of the book, **The Work of the Worship Committee**.

After twenty years of ministry in two local American Baptist congregations, in 1995 Linda became director of Special Services for American Baptist Churches, and then in 1999, Biennial coordinator. The office of Special Services handles all the logistics, housing, and transportation for General Board, Biennial and other denominational meetings. "They are the invisible ministries that make the machinery work," explains Linda. "Registration, travel, accommodations, and food quality can make it or break it for attendees. Good arrangements guarantee good times."

Linda tells about a 92-year old woman who told her how much she appreciated the "door-to-door service" so that she could be with her ABC family. "That kind of conversation is important to me," says Linda, "and makes it worthwhile."

ADVOCATE ACTIONS:

- Register now to attend the 2001 biennial.
- Talk to your pastor about setting aside a time of prayer for American Baptist churches during your worship service on Sunday, June 24, 2001.
- Encourage youth to come as regional youth representatives to the 2003 biennial to be held June 27-30 in Richmond, Virginia.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

**From
his fullness
we have
all
received,
grace
upon
grace.
John 1:16**

What happens when a crisis becomes a way of life? The media reports on natural disasters and the ravages of war, and we often are moved to respond by giving to a special appeal or even volunteering for hands-on service.

Sometimes we forget about people trapped in limbo, but the gifts we make to One Great Hour of Sharing remember. Relief and rebuilding ministries continue to proclaim the hope and grace of God's love. Through projects funded by American Baptist generosity in cooperation with other relief agencies, our hands continue throughout the years to reach out to people who need to hear a voice of hope.

Shelter from the Rain, Shade from the Heat

Robert Lamp had it all: a loving wife, Mary; two children he adored, Destiny and Robert Jr.; and a good job in construction that provided for his family. But when he injured his back, he was unable to keep that job. A skilled employee, he secured a series of construction and warehouse jobs, but lost them all due to his back injury, which left him unable to perform his duties. Rent was due; bills were piling up. The momentum was too strong. Evicted, Robert, Mary, and the kids first lived with Robert's sisters. After that, they lived in a tent in Robert's mother's backyard. Finally, with nowhere left to go, they lived in their car.

This was no life for two young children—Robert and Mary knew that. Rather than allow their children to grow up with nothing, Robert and Mary wrestled with the heart-rending decision to give Destiny and Robert Jr. up for adoption. At least then, they reasoned, the kids would have a chance.

But Robert and Mary found another chance—in the form of a homeless shelter, supported in part by funds from One Great Hour of



Sharing. With the blankets, meals, and sanctuary provided them, Robert and Mary began to rebuild their lives. It took time, patience, and faith, but today Mary is a restaurant manager, bringing in enough money to support the family in their new apartment. In this hard-won home, Robert cares for his children, his treasure.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, of God, "You have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat." As God saw the Israelites in hunger and showered down manna, God recognizes individual joy and pain, seeing each complex person, each unique need—instead of grouping us into categories like "the homeless" or "the poor." In ancient stories and in our times, God's vast provision wears each person's name. Moses. Sarah. Esther. Paul. Robert. Listen to those names. You'll hear your own.



**From his fullness
we have all received,
grace upon grace.**

John 1:16 NRSV

**One
great hour
of sharing.**

ADVOCATE ACTIONS:

- Make sure your church has received a box of 2001 One Great Hour of Sharing resources and has planned how to use them. If your church does not receive a standing order of resources, call Matthew Brown, **800-ABC-3USA x2159** to be placed on the list. For additional resources, call Customer Service, **800-458-3766**.

- Read this story as a "minute for mission" during a worship service in June. A children's version of this story is in the 2001 One Great Hour of Sharing leader's guide.

- One Great Hour of Sharing sticker sheets are a new item this year. Offer to help your offering coordinator utilize them in fun ways. See page 18 of the leader's guide for ideas.

- Make sure the offering evaluation form is returned. Church ideas are needed to create worthwhile new resources.



DISCIPLESHIP MATTERS

BIENNIAL EVENTS PLANNED FOR YOU!

*... in all
Judea
and
Samaria...*

EXHIBITS GALORE!

In the ABC Hall of Ministries, you'll find the Judson Bookstore and the Educational Ministries exhibit together this year. Stop by and browse—you'll find all of our newest books and resources for disciple-making leaders and churches. Our staff will be available to offer professional expertise in all areas of discipleship. We'll be serving coffee every afternoon, and hope that you'll stop by our canopied café to talk about discipleship and enjoy some special performances and book signings throughout the weekend.

EM LUNCHEON

The Educational Ministries Biennial Luncheon on Monday, June 25, will feature Rev. Dr. Bruce H. Wall issuing a stirring challenge for "Caring for Community Children and Youth." Wall, senior pastor at Dorchester Temple Baptist Church, Dorchester, Massachusetts, has initiated exciting ministries to reach at-risk youth in the Boston area.

ABC Educational Ministries is working toward a decade-long goal to identify 1,010 American Baptist congregations engaged in caring ministries with children and youth in their communities. More than a hundred churches have let us know about their community ministries, often done in partnership with schools, courts, social service agencies, and other community partners. American Baptists are



Resources, curriculum, and practical help abound in Educational Ministries' exhibit area at the ABC Biennial.

making a difference as they reach out, care, and bring hope to young people who often have had little or no contact with a church. And we're learning that the excitement of changing lives is transforming those congregations!

At the Educational Ministries Luncheon, we will honor four outstanding American Baptists for distinguished service in ministries of discipleship and education:

- Dr. David H. Swinton, president of Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina, will receive the Luther Wesley Smith Award for distinguished service in higher education.
- Ms. Linda R. Isham of Suffield, Connecticut, will receive the Kenneth L. Cober Award for outstanding service in regional ministry.
- Dr. Howard G. Ness will receive the Newton C. Fetter Award for his service as campus minister for more than 20 years at Purdue University.
- Rev. Julius C. Herrin of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, will receive the Richard Hoiland Award for his work in encouraging hundreds of black students to pursue a college education.

The Biennial will also feature practical workshops and mission tours on Saturday and Sunday afternoons.

ADVOCATE ACTIONS:

If you're coming to Providence, take advantage of the many Biennial opportunities to learn more about American Baptist mission!

Can't make it to Providence in June? You can still create some mission excitement in your church on Biennial weekend. Here's how:

- Hook up a computer in the fellowship hall and invite the congregation to surf the ABC websites. They are all linked from www.abc-usa.org. Leave your name and a message for other Biennial attendees in Educational Ministries' guest book!
- Host your own "Meet Your Missionaries" workshop at church. Invite several individuals in your congregation who are engaged in mission in your church and community. Ask them to each share about their ministry (7 minutes max!) and invite questions. Close the session with prayer for each one.
- Plan an awards banquet at church and honor Bible teachers and Sunday school leaders who have made a significant difference in the lives of children, youth, and adults through the years.



A
NEW LIFE 2010 PROJECT—

YOUTH TRAINED TO TELL THE GOOD NEWS

A dozen youth in Denver are discovering the Good News and making some of their own through an American Baptist mission partnership that presents the Gospel and offers training in digital storytelling. The New Life Youth Media Project, a biblically based media awareness and skills course, was launched this spring at Curtis Park Community Center, a Neighborhood Action Christian Center related to National Ministries.

New Life Youth Media provides junior- and senior-high school students with an opportunity to explore God's story and their place in it. Students obtain a basic background in scripting, shooting, and editing before being deployed as digital journalists to tell



stories related to NEW LIFE 2010 in their region.

National Ministries is sponsoring the experiment as a NEW LIFE 2010 project. "The advent of the Internet, broadband technology, and the accessibility of media hardware and software is transforming how stories are told and received," says Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, National Ministries executive director. "Even more important is the change in who tells stories. We see New Life Youth Media as a way to use technology for both empowerment and evangelism."

Curtis Park staff and its executive

director, James Willis, recruited a diverse group of youth for the experimental project and to coordinate the week-to-week meetings and intensives. "We are excited to have this opportunity," said Willis. "The project gives us resources to do what we have dreamed of doing in this area."

Led by Denver-based media professionals, the students are producing a video news magazine that will be available in several formats, including streaming video on National Ministries' website. Rev. Gordon Salsman, associate executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains, is helping to develop story ideas.

In June, the Curtis Park youth and sponsoring adults will travel to the American Baptist Biennial Meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, to share their experiences and cover the "new life" they encounter there.

NEW LIFE 2010 is the American Baptist vision to plant 1,010 new churches, reach 1,000,010 new believers, vitalize a multitude of caring ministries, and so transform congregations by 2010.

... in all Judea and Samaria...



YOUR PARTNER IN NATIONAL MINISTRIES
James Willis

Executive Director, Curtis Park Community Center, Denver, CO

"Just pull yourself up by your own bootstraps!" That's no answer to the complex problems of the poor, says James Willis.

"When we see a young child living in poverty, we need to ask, 'If I were a young child in that setting, how would I ever improve my situation without help?'"

Curtis Park Community Center extends a helping hand in four different locations in Denver. "We are a multi-faceted agency, serving infants to seniors," Willis explains. A unique day care program for families in domestic abuse and homeless shelters allows parents to receive counseling and search for employment. After school programs and a junior high employment project involving computers reach children and youth.

Curtis Park is a Christian Center related to National Ministries Neighborhood Action Program. In one year, the Center served more than 36,000 people.

ADVOCATE ACTIONS:

- Visit National Ministries exhibit at the Biennial to learn about mission opportunities, find resources for your congregation, and meet American Baptist home missionaries.
- Pray for the New Life Youth Media project.
- For information on the mission needs at National Ministries-related Christian Centers, call **800-ABC-3USA, x2382**, or visit www.nationalministries.org/mission/cbm/centers.cfm.

SEIZE THE DAY! VOLUNTEER!

**... and
to the
ends
of the
earth.
Acts 1:8**

Ask anyone who has gone on a short-term mission trip, and they will almost certainly tell you that it is one of the most intense experiences of their life, a turning point in how they view themselves, their church, the world, and ultimately, how they understand who God is.

Are you considering God's call to mission? There are many ways that you can serve—diverse gifts are needed to fill the ever-growing number of volunteer positions available. Volunteers come in all shapes, sizes and ages, and they come from all walks of life. God has given each person unique gifts and talents. But what all volunteers have in common is a desire to love and serve God and their brothers and sisters in prayerful, productive partnerships in every corner of the globe.

You can learn about the different volunteer opportunities by visiting the International Ministries website www.internationalministries.org. For a more personal experience, visit the International Ministries exhibit at the Biennial where there will be daily presentations about different volunteer opportunities. If you wish, you may talk to a volunteer, a missionary, or an International Ministries staff person about volunteer possibilities.

A GUIDE TO HELP YOU PLAN

Is your church interested in sending a short-term mission team but just isn't sure how to go about it? A new resource is available to help groups prepare for a short-term mission experience. The Short-Term Mission Team Training Guides provide a



Members of a mission team pray with their Haitian partners at the site.

curriculum for the mission team, helping them before, during, and after their mission experience. The Pre-Trip Preparation and Training Guide walks the team through all the facets of preparation: Bible study, teambuilding, cross-cultural ministry skills, and logistics. The On-Site Devotional and Reflection Guide is spiral bound, so it's easy to toss in your suitcase. It contains ten devotionals with space to record and process your thoughts and experiences. The Post-Trip Debriefing and Action Guide contains three sessions and information to help the team through reentry and determine how to apply what they learned to their current situation.

BEING SERVANTS OF GOD

The guides are built on the foundation of "GOD'S Principles for Successful Short-Term Mission Trips." GOD'S stands for:

- God is the head of the program.
- Open heart, open hands.
- Doing is less important than being.
- A Servant's heart.

These principles underline how the team should go about any mission experience. Ann Borquist, author of the training guides and former International Ministries missionary, shares her experience with short-term

mission teams, which led her to write these guides. "As missionaries in the Philippines, my husband and

I hosted a number of short-term mission teams as well as individual volunteers. The best, most effective teams were those that came with an attitude of 'we want to serve and learn' rather than 'we know what's best and so we're going to do it for you.' They had some ideas about how to help, but they looked to our Filipino sisters and brothers for guidance on how and where best to share their skills and experience."

Ann sought to create a resource through which volunteer teams can prepare so that the team and partners in the host country can have the best possible experience.

TO ORDER GUIDES...

Call 800-ABC-3USA x2196 or email BIM.Literature@abc-usa.org. Leader's Guide \$25 each, team member's notebook and journal \$8 each.

ADVOCATE ACTIONS:

- Visit the International Ministries exhibit at the Biennial in Providence, Rhode Island.
- Encourage members of your church to seek out volunteer opportunities.
- Go to the International Ministries website to find out the latest volunteer opportunities: www.internationalministries.org
- Purchase the Short-Term Mission Team Guides as resources for your church.



ARE YOU READY FOR CHANGE?

DON'T BE LIKE THE PEOPLE OF THIS WORLD, BUT LET GOD CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK. THEN YOU WILL KNOW HOW TO DO EVERYTHING THAT IS GOOD AND PLEASING TO HIM.
ROM 12:2
CEV



Change happens whether we want it to or not. And sometimes it's hard to do everything that is good and pleasing to God while caught in the whirlwind of a changing world. New American Baptist resources to help you plan a stewardship program were mailed to your church in May. "Let God change the way you think" as you respond to the American Baptist vision of New Life 2010 by becoming Stewards for NEW Life.

CHANGE The second booklet in the stewardship series, "Stewards for NEW Life," **Change** features an article on "Fund Raising or Funding Ministry," ideas for an "Exchange of the Month," and a one-Sunday financial commitment worship service.

GIVING Volume 3 of this magazine published by the Ecumenical Stewardship Center features articles by John H. Westerhoff and Pamela York Klainer and includes a complete plan for an annual stewardship emphasis, **Dessert First**.

DESSERT FIRST SAMPLES Look over these resources that complement the **Dessert First** program and purchase quantities to use during your church's annual stewardship emphasis.

STEWARDSHIP RESOURCES Look through the 2001-2002 catalog for stewardship ideas. For expert advice on the program best suited for your church, contact your regional minister of mission support. Regional names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and websites are available at www.abc-usa.org.

MISSION ADVOCATES BREAKFAST

JOIN US IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND
Monday, June 25, 7:00 – 8:30 am

HOSTS Kathy Brown, ABC Central, & Campbell Singleton, ABC Metro NY
STORIES Mission Advocates share what they're doing
PRIZES Which table will know all the answers?
MUSIC Heartstrings, a piano & violin duo from West Virginia

Don't miss the only national gathering of MISSION ADVOCATES IN PARTNERSHIP!

Register for #48 on the "ticketed meals/events" form on page 20 of your Biennial program book or call 800 ABC-3USA.



ABC WORLD WIDE WEB SITE:

WWW.ABC-USA.ORG





**Sunday
July 1, 2001
is Baptist World
Alliance Sunday**

THE BAPTIST WORLD OFFERING

As we enter the 21st century, Baptists around the world have discovered that as we work together in Christ more can be accomplished. One of the important ways we can do that is through the Baptist World Alliance. This world fellowship of Baptists ministers in 200 countries. With 43 million baptized believers, representing the community of 110 million, the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) leads in evangelism, unites in fellowship, serves the needy, and defends human rights. More than 150,000 Baptist churches around the world are members of the Baptist World Alliance through 196 national Baptist groups.

Once every quinquennium, that is, every five years, every Baptist church in the world has an opportunity to give an offering for the Baptist World Alliance.

When you give to this offering, you support the total ministry of Baptist World Alliance.

UNITE BAPTISTS WORLDWIDE:

- Scholarship assistance for world Baptist leaders
- Baptist regional fellowships in Asia, Africa, Latin America
- Networking of worldwide Baptist leadership

LEAD IN WORLD EVANGELISM:

- Reach unevangelized people
- Fund indigenous evangelists
- Conferences in the developing world

RESPOND TO PEOPLE IN NEED:

- BWAid, the relief and development arm of BWA
- Emergency funds for disasters in times of war and catastrophe
- Bring together worldwide Baptist concerns for feeding the poor and aiding the destitute

DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS:

- Defend religious freedom worldwide
- Fund BWA reconciliation/peace teams
- BWA representation in the United Nations and world conferences

For American Baptist Churches USA, Sunday, July 1, 2001, is Baptist World Alliance Sunday. Please prayerfully consider a generous gift.

You can touch the world through the Baptist World Alliance when you give to this Baptist World Offering.

BWA exists to bring Baptists together to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As you give, please:

- Pray for Baptists around the world.
- Pray for the Baptist World Alliance.
- Learn more about BWA.



For more information contact:

Baptist World Alliance

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www.bwanaet.org.



*...in
Jerusalem,
in all
Judea...*

