



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Ann Arbor, Michigan

April 16, 2008

Pastors' Reflections

by Paul Simpson Duke

The anniversaries of two modern-day martyrdoms occur in early April. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated on April 4, 1968; Dietrich Bonhoeffer was executed on April 9, 1945. Only five days separate the anniversaries of their deaths. I've been thinking about how much they had in common, and what their similarities might say to us.

Both men were thirty-nine years of age when they were killed (in fact, the length of their lives differed by only two weeks). Their remarkable influence on the world was made in surprisingly short spans of time. They both were pastors. They both held doctorates in theology. They both made witness to the church, and witness to the public, of God's demand for justice and peace. The witness of each was firmly grounded in Scripture and the deep commitments of Christian faith. Both men were murdered for this witness. Both were despised by many of their fellow Christians.

The greatest disappointment faced by both men was not the failures of their respective nations, cultures, or governments, but the silence, reluctance, and apathy of the church. In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," addressed to "My dear fellow Clergymen," King described his early, dashed expectations that white ministers in the South would rally to the cause of civil rights, and stated that he was less disheartened by the loudly racist preachers who attacked him, than by how "moderate" white ministers, who claimed a belief in racial equality, had been so oddly silent or had spoken mostly to urge patience and caution. As for Bonhoeffer, he not only had to contend with the mainstream German church's capitulation to Hitler; his harshest words were to his own "Confessing Church," which opposed Nazism, for being too cautious and naïve. He finally concluded that the church in his time had nothing relevant to say to the world.

What moves me most about these two men is the inner struggle they faced over their own words and actions. Bonhoeffer understood his decision to join a conspiracy for the killing of Hitler to be a grave sin, and he agonized over it. He also said that to speak out against what we perceive to be injustice may very well be sinful, for we may be inadequately informed. He said we cannot speak out apart from relying on God's forgiveness. As for King, his closest associates knew him to be an extremely self-critical man; and he found that the making of certain moral declarations was deeply, personally troubling. When he preached at the Riverside Church in New York following their statement of opposition to the war in Vietnam, he said: "The calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak."

A vocation of agony. Don't you wish there were a greater sense of *that* among us? Many among us will not speak out at all on issues of justice, righteousness, and peace. Others among us are quite willing to speak out, but with no evident sense of anguish, complexity, or depth. These seem to be the two principle modes of response to the moral crises of our time: silence or dead certainty; acquiescence or arrogance; the failure to speak or the failure to listen; refusing to care or refusing to be self-critical.

I have wondered if this is why Lincoln is regarded as our greatest president: he acted in ways that were morally decisive, yet often in grief and with the gravity and care of a great humility. The world is notably short of such leaders now. The same is true of the church, an odd fact since we've been given, in equal measure, the two truths necessary for living such lives: the truth that God loves the world and commands justice for all; and the truth that *all* of us are sinners in need of forgiveness granted only by the grace of God. In other words, the gospel requires - and bestows - both moral courage and moral humility. It is a vocation of joyous freedom, and it is a vocation of agony.

This is the deep and difficult integration in which Bonhoeffer and King sought to live. It's what I want for my life, and for our life together.

Nursery care is available on the 3rd floor from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

All children are welcome to worship with their families. After the "Time as Children" portion of the worship service, preschoolers may go to the nursery for childcare and their church school class starting at 11:00 a.m. Children in kindergarten - 3rd grade are invited to Children's Worship.

Children and Youth Christian Education

3 and 4 year olds

10:00 - 11:10 Worship w/ family or childcare in nursery
11:00 - 12:30 Church School (room 306)

K - 2nd grade

10:00 - 10:30 Worship
10:30 - 11:00 Children's Worship (room 202A)
11:00 - 12:00 Church School (room 202B)
12:00 - 12:30 Grace Notes Choir (room 202B)

3rd - 6th grade

10:00 - 11:00 Worship
11:10 - 11:50 Jr. Choir (room 102)
11:50 - 12:30 Church School (room 304)

7th grade - high school

10:00 - 11:00 Worship
11:00 - 12:30 Church School (room 107)

Children's Music and Arts Ministry

Jr. Handbells	9:15 - 9:45	room 306
Tiny Grace Notes (preschool)	10:45 - 11:00	room 306
Grace Notes (K - 3 rd grade)	12:00 - 12:30	room 202A, middle level
Jr. Choir (4 th grade and older)	11:10 - 11:50	room 102, lower level

Adult Christian Education (11:30—12:30)

Religion and Peacemaking in the Middle East (Lounge) Ron Gregg and Sarah Heidt, facilitators
This series of presentations by local Arabs, Jews and Christians will examine the possibilities for a peaceful outcome of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict from a variety of perspectives, especially the religious. A time for questions and discussion will follow each presentation.

April 20 Israeli Realities on the Ground/Possibilities for Peace:

Eyal Dolev, an Israeli-American and an officer in the Israeli army talks about his personal experiences, current realities for his family and friends in Israel, and what Israelis can do to work for peace.

April 27 American Arab-Jewish Dialogue:

Zeitouna Sisters, a group of Arab and Jewish women tell how they build connection and trust through dialogue and support for a sustainable future for Palestine and Israel.

Earth Crammed With Heaven (Room 108)

Ron Tipton, leader
Using a book by Elizabeth Dreyer, a laywoman who is concerned about a "spirituality of everyday life," we will follow a small group format. Participants will commit to consistent attendance and preparation each week (reading portions of the book), with group time spent in sharing and growing through spiritual disciplines. The book will be available in class.

Other Adult Learning Opportunities

Wednesday Bible Study (Memorial Lounge, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.)

Rev. Paul Simpson Duke leads an in-depth study of the Gospel of John, chapters 12-21. Join us each week for fellowship, learning and great snacks!

Small Groups (ChristCare) - Centered on Bible study, fellowship, mission, prayer and worship, we currently have two groups: one which meets monthly and the other which meets every other week. See Stacey, Paul or Sue Ellen for more information about joining a group.



FBCA2 News & Happenings

2008 Annual Program Meeting & Potluck Lunch

The congregation's annual program meeting will be held Sunday, April 27 at 12:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will elect officers and board members for the coming year and be updated on activities and work of various groups within the church. We will also act on a constitutional proposal from the Board of Evangelism to change its name to the Board of Outreach. The members of the Board believe that this more inclusive term better reflects the work of the board. Childcare will be provided for the meeting and the annual report will be available at the Information Counter this Sunday, April 20 for review before the meeting the following week.

The format for the annual meeting lunch will take the form of an old-fashioned pot-luck. Everyone please bring a dish - main dish, salad, vegetable, dessert, bread or rolls - and **your own table setting** (dishes and flatware). By not providing a main dish we save money, and by not having paper and plastic we not only save money but reduce the amount of trash. We will have paper/plastic available for those not "in the know" or who forgot to bring their own settings, but we would like to work on reducing the amount of those throw-away items. No need to sign up for the dish you plan to bring. We hope the buffet table will balance out.

Author Coming to Men's Book Club

Next Tuesday, April 22 at 7:00 p.m. the FBC men's book club will discuss *When Asia Was the World* by Stewart Gordon, an Ann Arbor resident. The author will be attending the discussion and adding to the usual lively discourse. The group will meet at the home of Scott Diels at 1414 Iroquois Pl. Please contact Scott (sdiels@aol.com, 747-8131) for more information or for directions.

2008 Directory

The new edition of the church directory will be available for pick up at the Information Counter Sunday mornings the next couple of weeks or from the office during the week. If you aren't able to make it to church but would like a copy mailed to you, please e-mail (office@fbca2.org) or call the office at 734-663-9376.

MacGregor-Stitt Circle

The next meeting of the MacGregor-Stitt Circle will take place Thursday, April 17 at 1:00 p.m. at the home of Bonnie Bates. The program will be "Story Telling" by Lyn Davidge.

Summer Sextons Needed

The church is in search of a couple students to work and live here at the Campus Center this summer (and possibly into the fall). If you are aware of a hard-working student who is in need of housing this summer, please have them e-mail Carey at office@fbca2.org. Thank you!

Communion Servers and Greeters

If you are interested in greeting folks Sunday mornings before worship and/or serving communion some future Sunday, please visit the Information Counter where sign-up sheets reside. Filling both of these roles is an on-going need and the Board of Worship very much appreciates everyone who participates.



Dear friends,

As you may or may not have heard, I am about to embark into the Wonderful World of Motherhood ... full-time! And as much as I look forward to my next role as stay-at-home mom, it is with mixed emotions that I leave my post here at FBC, especially at such an exciting time of growth and change.

The baby isn't due until June 6, however my last day here is Friday, May 2. You are more than welcome to stop by and say farewell, as well as meet the new Administrative Assistant, Katherine (Kat) Becker, who I will be training over the next two weeks. As of Monday, May 5 the office hours will return to 9-5, Monday–Friday. And on that note, I sincerely appreciate the assistance of office volunteers Annabel Erskine and Beverly Inbody who've covered the office Monday afternoons for the past year and a half as well as at various times throughout the week to allow for my flexible schedule. Thank you to Ginny McKeachie and Edie Hurst who help with the newsletter distribution as well as many other behind-the-scenes tasks. And I also want to thank David Robbins, Graham Miles, Anna Moyer and Joyce Arnn for their help with the myriad of building and grounds issues that crop up throughout the week.

I am thankful to all of you for the opportunity to serve here, especially with the likes of the fabulous FBC staff who I will miss tremendously. I am especially grateful to Stacey, Paul and Sue Ellen for their guidance, support and friendship these last few years. I've learned from them more than they'll ever know.

I plan to visit with the baby during fellowship time some Sunday in the near future when we're ready to get out and about. Please say a prayer for a safe delivery and healthy baby. I wish all of you much peace, love and happiness.

All my best,

Carey

Carey Viviano
Administrative Assistant

Scholarship Money Available

Money from the Chester and Violet Loucks Memorial Scholarship Fund is available for those pursuing post-secondary education or continuing education.

"Scholarships may be granted to supplement the cost of achieving these goals:

- To obtain a post-secondary education, i.e., at the college or post-graduate level.
- To develop or improve skills, obtain training or enrichment through camps, conferences, or continuing education experiences that relate to and enhance the work and ministry of First Baptist Church Ann Arbor."

Money from the Robert L. Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund is available to provide support for those wishing to attend conferences at Green Lake.

Applications for both scholarships will be available at the Information Counter or from Mary Davis via email (madrad@umich.edu). Loucks Fund applications are due by May 11. Please give or send applications to Mary Davis, 1414 Iroquois Pl, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

~ The Scholarship Committee



Special Mission Project to Commemorate FBC's 180th Birthday!

On Sunday May 11, our congregation will celebrate the 180th birthday of our church! The church school families are doing a special mission project to commemorate this birthday and invite all of you to join in. Friendship House Director, Linnea Berg, mentioned a fun project that means a lot to their clients who cannot afford a birthday party for their children: a "party-in-a-bag." Here's how we get involved - we provide several big party bag (labeled "boy" or "girl" and age range) each including a cake mix, frosting, candles, party hats, napkins, plates, favors and a toy.

I think it would be significant if FBCA2 could provide 18 of these parties-in-a-bag for our 180th birthday. Cupcake tins, cake pans and a generous check that will underwrite the costs of at least 10 bags have already been donated to get us started! You could provide one complete party-in-a-bag, or you could donate several individual items such as candles or napkins or toys. Your donations can be dropped off on the tables in the Christian Education wing across from the office anytime in the next month.

~ Sue Ellen Glover, Director of Christian Education



Interfaith Round Table of Washtenaw County



"DINNER THEATRE: SACRED STORYTELLING" Sunday, May 18, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.

The Interfaith Round Table invites you to the final performance of the original interfaith play, *Sacred Storytelling*. Based on conversations with over a hundred high school students from ten local faith communities, this play is designed to stimulate interfaith dialogue and understanding. In addition, enjoy a delightful Indian meal prepared by our Hindu friends at the Chinmaya Mission. Tickets: \$15, \$30, \$50, \$75 / children under 12, \$8 (charitable contribution receipt with \$30, \$50 & \$75 tickets). Location: The Chinmaya Mission, 4760 Packard, Ann Arbor (between Carpenter and Golfside). For more information or tickets, call 734-424-1535, email gbrides@umich.edu or go to <http://www.irtwc.org/>.

First Baptist Church
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The Reverends Paul & Stacey Simpson Duke, Co-Pastors



Next
newsletter &
May calendar
deadline:

Sunday, April 27, 2008

CONGRATULATIONS!!

Several of our university students are graduating on Friday, April 25th. **Tom Barron, Chantalle Brock, Danielle Jarvis**, along with sextons **Ryan Madis** and **Brent Schedeler**, will all be graduating with their bachelor's degrees. Congratulations! We're so proud of you.

Former member **David Moehring**, who successfully defended his dissertation last summer, will receive his Doctorate in Physics on the 25th as well. David, who is currently doing post-doctoral work in Munich, will also be here to accept a Distinguished Dissertation Award in his field.

And we are so proud of **Carole Ott**, who successfully defended her dissertation last month and will be receiving her Doctorate in Musical Arts on Friday the 25th. Congratulations, Dr. Ott!