

JOURNALS POSTED ON JULY 30, 2017

A Mission Quilt



DAN AND SHARON
BUTTRY

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Sharon and I were honored to be the main speakers at the International Ministries Luncheon at the ABC Mission Summit held in Portland, Oregon. As we faced this daunting assignment the image of a quilt became the theme that “tied” our presentation together.

Sharon and I have a few special quilts. One was made by the young adult fellowship in the town of Ipswich, Massachusetts when we left for our first pastorate after four years in seminary. Sharon is putting the finishing touches on a quilt with squares from the various stories we’ve read aloud over the years. Quilts are very much a part of our lives—Sharon makes them, and I enjoy them whether snuggling under them or putting them up on the wall as art.

Many churches have quilts made to commemorate their church history or special milestones in ministry. As I looked around my home church, Genesis in Royal Oak, Michigan, which had merged with the old First Baptist Church, I found an amazing quilt from Japan sent to First Baptist to commemorate the forty years of missionary service by Ruth Kalling. Much of the quilt was in Japanese as the various folks connected with Ruth’s missionary work expressed their appreciation for her life and ministry.

At the IM Luncheon Sharon and I shared stories as “quilt squares.” We shared stories from Chile, Lebanon, and Indonesia. We were assisted in one of the squares by Lance Muteyo, our peacemaking guest from Zimbabwe. With Lance we told the amazing story of young peacemakers from the Pan African Peace Network including in places such as Zambia, Nigeria, Italy, Central African Republic, and Senegal.

To set up the presentation we provided paper and crayons to all those at the luncheon. We asked them to draw pictures about how they participated in mission, global or local, or how they learned about mission. After they drew the pictures folks shared around the tables. When you put together people from across the American Baptist family there is an amazing missional impact around the world!

I organized about half the drawings into a slide show, and then put a more select group into a shorter slide show. You can link to these musical slideshows and show them before worship, after worship, or in a Sunday School class, perhaps working them into your World Mission Offering campaign. The long one runs about 12 minutes, the sort one about 4 minutes. You can enjoy the visual “Mission Quilt” we created at Portland! ([Click here](#) for the long version; [Click here](#) for the short version.) (By the way, Jan Krist did the music for the slideshows. She has some songs that are incredible for mission among many other things. If you want to get in touch with her, send me an e-mail, or look her up on the web.)

There are new squares still to be made, new stories of mission to be woven into the narrative of what Christ is doing through God’s people around the world. We celebrated the new “mission squares” at Portland bringing up new missionaries IM will be sending to places like Togo, Hungary, Malaysia, Bolivia, and Mexico. Your congregation will also be creating new stories through your own engagement in Christ’s mission locally and globally.

Sharon and I finished our presentation talking about the borders of the quilt that hold everything together. Those borders are the sending community, our American Baptist congregations and individuals who commission us, who pray for us, who give to support us, and who encourage us. Without you the quilt would just be a bunch of fabric. With you the fabric becomes a masterpiece that tells a story inspired, designed, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. So thank you for your part in the mission quilt!

Peace,
Dan