Last month, September 2016, marked the fifteenth anniversary of September 11th, the day that terrorists launched their terrible attacks on our nation. What have we learned since 9/11? Naturally we have learned to be more careful about security. We have learned take terrorism seriously. We have learned, albeit late, the critical importance of emergency and disaster preparedness, coordination, and communication between federal, state, and local authorities. But beyond a range of political, economic, social, psychological, legal, intelligence gathering, and security-related matters, what spiritual lessons can we learn? What is God teaching us in the events of the past fifteen years?

Lisa Beamer, the wife of Todd Beamer, who lost his life battling terrorists aboard United Airlines flight 93 wrote, “Time is said to heal all wounds. Yet, I’m not sure if time alone is enough to bring about healing… If time alone can’t heal us, then what can? Healing comes in many ways and works a little differently for each of us. For me, my faith provides a bridge to the past as well as a hope to the future.” A faith tested, for those committed to Christ, is a faith triumphant (Rom. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 4:16-18).

Of course, none of us can fully grasp God's purposes in the events of the past fifteen years. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts, his ways higher than our ways (Isa. 55:9). As members and friends of WSBC, in terms of our practical theology and global mission outreach, it’s important to reflect on these years of terrorism since September 11th. On this fifteenth anniversary we can draw five lessons from God’s Word. These aren’t new lessons, nor are they easily learned. Still they are noteworthy. They are lessons each of us need to hear and to heed.

Lesson One: Morality is real.

One of the first lessons that we learn is that morality is real. We must realize that good and evil exist—and there’s a real difference between the two. In recent years, a compelling worldview has emerged that differed from the secular, modern, and rational worldviews of the previous decades and centuries. This worldview is called “post-modernism.” While all secular philosophies deny the authority of the Bible as God’s Word, post-modernism goes beyond this by claiming that morality is relative. That is, there is no true, objective difference between good and evil. By this, post-moderns hold: You alone have the right to decide what is right for you. You alone are the sole authority over your life. You alone can decide what, if anything, you want to believe or how you want to act. It’s up to you. Well, many have bought into this post-modern worldview.

(continued on page 2)
Lessons to Learn (continued from page 1)

But on September 11, 2001, the terrorist attacks showed beyond question that such notions are nonsense. How can anyone think that wickedness is no one's fault? The Bible says, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil" (Isa. 5:20). It is evil for terrorists to blow up helpless, unsuspecting people. It is good for brave people to risk their lives to save others. Such moral decisions aren't just matters of opinion or feeling. The difference is real. Woe to anyone who denies the difference!

God calls us, as He did ancient Israel, to seek the Lord and to do good—"to seek justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him as our God" (Micah 6:8). Moral decisions are real. Courage is real. Cruelty is real. Love is real. Hate is real. God is real. Satan is real. Good is real. Evil is real. The difference between good and evil is also real. We must choose between them.

Lesson Two: Life is short. Trust God.

When our country is stable, when our economy is prospering, when we're happy and healthy, we may feel like we're in charge of our future. We make long-term plans and assume things will go pretty much the way we expect. But when mighty buildings are reduced to rubble and thousands of innocent persons are killed, that feeling of invincibility quickly changes. Disaster teaches us that we are fragile and that we need the Lord.

The Bible says, "Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city spend a year here, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that'" (James 4:13-15).

Disaster teaches that we need something stronger than ourselves to protect us. The Bible tells us, "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes" (Psalm 118:8-9). Two of the lessons that we learn from trouble and tragedy are: first, that good and evil are real; and second, that life is short and each of us need a new and right relationship with the Lord.

Lesson Three: Tragedies happen, but God is in control.

Hardships and hard times humble us by showing that we are not in control. But, thankfully, God is. God is still in control. When disaster strikes, we may be tempted to think that the forces of evil have ultimate power. But even the most shocking events do not take God by surprise. Even the most dreadful disasters are known to God, and sometimes allowed by God to unfold for His greater purpose. Know this: God was, is, and always will be sovereign. Yet, God allowed even His chosen people to face untold suffering because of their own unrepentant and unfaithful ways. So in what sense can it be said that God allows disaster? The Bible tells us that it is not God Himself who causes hatred in terrorists or brings about tragedies like 9/11. Given His perfect creation, neither did God intend that natural disasters occur. All of these are the result of human sin in varying proportion and degree.

The Bible tells us, "God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone" (James 1:13). Paul writes in Romans 8 of how the creation itself groans and awaits its redemption, as well. Let us affirm: Our Creator God never does evil, and God never directly causes anyone to do evil. Everything God does is good.

Humans and demons, however, do egregious acts of evil—and bear responsibility for terrorism on all fronts. Nevertheless, God rules and God’s Son is in authority over heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18). The Father and the Son rule and direct all events in the universe in such a way that even the actions of evil-doers will not thwart God’s ultimate plan. Rather, even events of unspeakable evil are used by God in order to accomplish God’s higher purposes.

For example, at the crucifixion of Jesus, God gave His own Son as a sacrificial payment for the sins of all humankind. As wicked persons were doing great evil, God was accomplishing great good. God is in control. God is sovereign over all things. God never does evil, but He often does great good through the actions of those who do evil, and He often accomplishes great good even in the face of disaster.
Lessons to Learn (continued from page 2)

Lesson Four: Sin is costly. I must repent and return to God.

Because God is in control, He can also use any tragedy or terrorist act to get the attention of those who ignore Him, to punish those who rebel against His holiness, and to call persons—individually and corporately—back to Himself. Someone once said this about the destructive and deceptive nature of sin: “Sin will hurt you more than you will ever know. Sin will take you further than you will want to go. Sin will cost you more than you will want to pay.”

When persons and nations turn their back on God, refusing God’s gift of forgiveness, mercy, and grace; when persons and nations refuse to trust and obey God’s Son, there are many sad, tragic, and inevitable consequences. The Bible says, “For the wages [payment] of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

Consider the experience of Israel some 2,700 years ago. The Old Testament prophet Amos lived during the 8th century before the birth of Christ in a small village six miles south of Bethlehem. Amos tended sheep and a grove of sycamore trees. We don’t know if he owned these flocks and groves or if he was simply a hired-hand. We do know this: Amos was a man of wisdom and faith in the Lord. Though he lived in Judah, the southern kingdom, in about the year 750 B.C., he was called by God to announce God’s judgment on the northern kingdom of Israel. Historians tell us that these were years of prosperity, that Israel had reached new political and military strength and security, and that Israel had become spiritually smug. It was also a time of increasing idolatry, extravagant indulgence, immorality, and oppression of the poor. As a consequence, God called Amos to prophecy against Israel about the nation’s unfaithfulness to the Lord and Israel’s blatant disregard for God’s Word.

The heartbeat of Amos’ prophecy is found in chapter 5 where he proclaims God’s desire and purpose for all who love, worship, and serve the Lord: “Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream” (Amos 5:24). Amos called Israel to repent and to return to God, by demonstrating a love for God, by engaging in mission and social concern on behalf of the poor.

Given God’s call to prophecy against Israel’s sins, Amos wasn’t exactly the most popular man of his day. Amos declared that God’s judgment was imminent—and not merely a punitive blow. He warned that the destruction God would allow would be almost unimaginable. Why? It was because Israel was not trusting in the Lord. Israel engaged in empty religious rituals, while chasing after other gods. Israel remained unrepentant and unfaithful to the Lord. For this reason God decided to allow His chosen people to be taken captive by a pagan nation, Assyria, which brought great destruction upon Israel, taking a remnant into captivity in 721 B.C.

God was, is and always will be sovereign. Yet, God allowed even His chosen people to face untold suffering because of their unrepentant, unfaithful ways. Sin carries a cost, which is why we—personally and corporately—must confess our sin and return to the Lord.

Lesson Five: Christ has paid sin’s penalty. I must share this good news!

In addition to Amos’ prophecy, the Bible records many occasions in which God used terrifying attacks and devastating disasters to cleanse His people, to correct their behavior, and turn their hearts back to Him in repentance and faith. Could it be that God desires to do something similar during this period of our history? Is this possible? Is this not, in fact, quite probable?

While God may sometimes use disaster to humble cities and nations, this doesn't mean we should cower before vicious, violent enemies. We must not let terrorists bring us to our knees. But we must let God bring us to our knees. We must bow before God, even as we stand tall in the face of evil. National leaders and military forces have a duty to deal with attackers. At the same time, we have a duty to humble ourselves before the Lord. Though God punished the Israelites and other nations through various defeats and disasters, God also promised, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).
**Lessons to Learn** (continued from page 3)

God sent His only Son to bring us real forgiveness, hope, and healing. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). We must proclaim Jesus Christ as the Son of God, our Savior and Lord, and the only way of salvation for humanity. When that message is muted, the church is in trouble, and so is the nation.

That is why any Christ-centered response to global tragedies and terrorism must include our serious prayer and sacrificial giving to world mission outreach. This is our privilege and opportunity during October as we continue our Board of Missions-led annual World Mission Offering (WMO) emphasis. We’ll learn what God is doing in our post-9/11 world through our American Baptist international missionaries. We will be encouraged to pray confidently and to give boldly in support of this year’s World Mission Offering at WSBC, so that we may reach and exceed our church offering goal of $6,000. In the words of William Carey, the pioneer missionary to India some 200 years ago, “Let us attempt great things for God, and expect great things from God.” Could it be that God has some faith-building lessons for us to learn in the days ahead? What do you think?

Grace and peace,
Pastor Gary Bruland

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**A Message From the Diaconate**

Attributes are not parts of God; they are how God exists. Learning about God is a never-ending story. We are finite; He is infinite. Daily we can learn more of Him for eternity and still not know all about Him! Thus we comprehend that He is incomprehensible! Yet we know a bit. God is Spirit (John 4:24). God is light (John 8:12). In Him, “lovingkindness and truth meet; righteousness and peace kiss” (Ps 85:10). God is love; mercy and justice are fully and always mutually attentive in all that He is and does. He does not change; in Him there is no shadow of turning (James 1:17). Hence He is the same in the Old and the New Testaments and for eternity. He is Holy (set apart from sin); being righteous, He has wrath at sin.

God is one (Dt 6:4); yet there are 3 distinct persons in this one divine being. Tri-unity is found in “Baptize in the [one] name [דָּעַת] of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Faith believes Jesus is the Messiah (John 4:25-26). Faith worships the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 5:23; Rev 5:13-14, 19:10). Faith sees the Son as fully human (Gal 4:4) and fully God (John 20:28).

Catechisms help us learn about God’s characteristics. “God is a spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection; all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” Westminster Confession of Faith Larger Catechism Question 7. “God is a spirit. God is eternal, unchangeable, omnipotent (almighty, all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (present every-
A Message From the Diaconate (continued from page 4)

where); holy (sinless and hating sin); just (fair and impartial); faithful (keeping his promises); benevolent (good, kind, desiring our welfare); merciful (full of pity); gracious (showing undeserved kindness, forgiving).” Luther’s Small Catechism Question 25.

We must let God be God. It is idolatry even to think of Him in ways that He isn’t. God spoke His word and created the good universe. Evil entered in; we call it sin (omission, trespass, anything not of faith). The essence of sin is not doing the will of God - in doing so we set ourselves up as being our own god. Does God not have the right to defend His good creation? Because He is righteous, true, and holy, He will surely bring judgment and eternally punish sinners. If your soul’s journey has not encountered “the fear of the Lord” (what your sin deserves before the Holy God), you are missing the God of the Bible and are setting up some sort of idol. “God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Dt 4:24). God will put “in the lake of fire and brimstone”, the following: “cowardly, unfaithful, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars (those who love and practice falsehood—Rev 21:8 & 22:15). Note “abominations” include religious terrorists (institutions, kings, and warriors—Rev 17:2-6) who “wage war” against Christ and the saints (Rev 17:14). Leviticus 18 lists some unlawful sex between relatives (6-14), in-laws (15-18), neighbor (20), gay/lesbian (22), or with beasts (23). “If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God” (Heb 10:26-27).

Knowing about God is different from knowing God. It is “by grace through faith” (Eph 2:8-9) in God - that counts! “Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him” (Heb 11:6). Believers seek Him and find His grace - by reading His Word, the Bible. We learn how He interacts with us through our prayer life as we keep spiritually tuned to His work in our lives. We find His grace in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Remembering your baptism encourages you to put to death the old nature (Col 3:5-10) and rise up to live in the power of the resurrection. “We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:6). God’s afflatus, His rushing impulsive power, puts His Laws in our hearts and inscribes them on their minds (Jer 31:33; Heb 10:16). Gathering to worship, to hear and respond to God’s word, and to encourage one another in the love of Christ are other ways to stir up your faith and make it lively. So we end, back where we began! “Knowledge of the Holy One leads us to fear Him and gives understanding of the His holy ways” (Proverbs 9:10). “Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy” (Lev 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15). Meditate on an attribute each day, in doing so the Holy Spirit will boost your spiritual life!

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Hebrews 11:6
F R O M  T H E  M I S S I O N  B O A R D

Celebrate New Life in Christ
“on Earth as it is in Heaven”

A great and surprising spiritual awakening is happening in Baptist churches in Cuba!

Since 1990, the number of churches in Cuba has grown by 450%. The number of baptisms has risen by over 500%. And the number of prayer groups and total church memberships have climbed in equally high numbers.

After decades of harsh restrictions, “the church of God has risen from the ashes” says a retired Cuban church leader who witnessed the remarkable change firsthand. “In God’s time, the hearts of so many people have been opened up to the goodness of the gospel”. . . . and WSBC’s support of the World Mission Offering is helping to fuel the growth of the Eastern Cuba Baptist Convention.

The Mission Board has set a goal of $6,000 for the 2016 World Mission Offering and would encourage you to give as you are able. This year’s World Mission Offering will be received through Sunday, October 30. Envelopes for your gift may be found in your offering envelope box, as well as in the pew racks in the sanctuary and Davidson Chapel. May God bless our giving to help people everywhere come to Christ, grow in their relationships with God, and change their worlds through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Christmas is about sharing the gift of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, with the world. You can help share His love with needy children by taking part in Operation Christmas Child.

Operation Christmas Child is an outreach of Samaritan’s Purse, which is being promoted at West Shore Baptist Church beginning on Sunday, October 2.

Your wrapped shoeboxes filled with gifts for boys or girls along with a check for $7 postage (enclosed in the designated envelope) may be placed in the narthex on or before Sunday, November 20. Last year over 8.6 million hurting children in 100 countries experienced the joy of gift-filled shoeboxes like the ones that were prepared, collected, and processed last year by caring people here at WSBC! Your partnership with Samaritan’s Purse in this effort is working to share the Good News with children around the world. Speak with Linda Fleming if you have any questions.

Harrisburg Area CROP Walk 2016

This year’s Harrisburg Area CROP Walk is on Sunday, October 16. The festivities begin on the steps of the State Capitol at 1:00 p.m. CROP Hunger Walks help children and families worldwide — and right here in the U.S. — to have food for today, while building for a better tomorrow. Look for the display table in the narthex to get your registration form or to donate to a WSBC walker. Your support is greatly appreciated!
Note: Scheduled nursery workers and children’s Sunday School teachers are asked to arrive in their designated rooms **10 minutes** ahead of schedule. If you are unable to make your assigned Sunday, please attempt to switch with another volunteer and let the church office know. Contact Dawn Strock, at 796-9257, if you are unable to meet your obligation.
Happenings and Highlights

Advisory Council Meeting
The Advisory Council will meet on Tuesday, October 4, at 6:30 p.m. in Room G-2.

Missions Board Meeting
The Missions Board will meet on Monday, October 10, at 6:30 p.m. in Room G-1.

Board of Trustees Meeting
The Board of Trustees will meet on Monday, October 10, at 6:30 p.m. in Room G-2.

Staff Meeting
The WSBC Staff will meet on Tuesday, October 18, at 9:30 a.m. in the Library/Conf. Rm.

Board of Christian Education Meeting
The Board of Christian Education will meet on Tuesday, October 18, at 6:30 p.m. in G-2.

Diaconate Board Meeting
The Diaconate Board will meet on Tuesday, October 18, at 6:45 p.m. in Room G-4.

Faith In Action
The Faith in Action LIGHT Team will meet on Tuesday, October 4, at 9:00 a.m. to do general building and grounds maintenance. If you would like to join them, contact Ken Whitcomb at (717) 732-0348.

Lady’s Breakfast Fellowship
The next meeting of the Ladies Breakfast Fellowship will be at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 15, at the West Shore Family Restaurant in the West Shore Plaza. Sign up on your bulletin insert.

Men’s Breakfast Fellowship
The next meeting of the Men's Breakfast Fellowship will be at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 15, at Friendly’s on Market Street in Camp Hill. All men are invited!

Deadline for November UPDATE
The deadline for the submission of articles and announcements for the November UPDATE is Friday, October 21. You may forward your input to Bonnie Prior via hard copy or by email to b.prior@wsbc.org.

GriefShare Sessions Continue
The next autumn/winter session of GriefShare will be held on Monday, October 3. The group meets on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Monday of the month, from 7:00—8:30 p.m. in Room G-1. There will be a special church and community outreach on grief entitled, “Surviving the Holidays” on Monday, November 21. If you are interested in joining GriefShare, please contact Pastor Gary or Esther Bruland.

Directory

Address Update:
Eric & Kristin Born
3001 N. 6th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Faith In Action

Deadline for November UPDATE

GriefShare Sessions Continue
Happenings and Highlights

A.B. Women’s Ministries Picnic
Sunday, October 2
12:30 p.m.

The American Baptist Women’s Ministries invites all ladies of WSBC to our annual kick-off picnic at the home of Dottie Lebo on Sunday, October 2, at 12:30 p.m. Beverage and place settings will be provided. Please sign up on your bulletin insert & bring a dish to share. White Cross quotas and upcoming dates will be presented. Join us for a lovely afternoon!

ABCOPAD Biennial Leadership Conference, October 27-29, 2016

ABCOPAD’s 2016 Biennial Leadership Conference will be held at the Blair County Convention Center in Altoona, PA, October 27-29, 2016. The theme of the conference is “Thirsty? Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation.” The keynote speaker will be Dr. Christopher Hall, President of Renovaré. See the bulletin board outside the church office for more information. Registration forms are available at the church’s Welcome Center or on the ABCOPAD website: http://www.abcopad.org/Events/ABCOPAD-Biennial.aspx.

Deadline for 3rd Quarter Reports

Church officers and boards should submit their Third Quarter Reports to the church office no later than Monday, October 10.

“Discovering Church Membership” Workshop

A “Discovering Church Membership” Workshop will be offered on Sunday, October 23, in Room G-1 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Those interested in this workshop are asked to register on their bulletin insert or phone the church by Thursday, October 20. See Pastor Gary with any questions.

Attention

The Third Quarter Business Meeting will be held on Sunday, October 16 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Men’s Bible Fellowship Group Serving at Bethesda Mission

The Men’s Bible Fellowship Group will continue to serve once a month at Bethesda Mission’s Soup Kitchen. This month they’ll meet at the Mission at 4:15 p.m. on Tuesday, October 18. If you have questions or if would like to join the group, call Roland Carpenter at (717) 813-6839.
Happenings and Highlights

All-Church Autumn Retreat

A new DVD-based teaching workshop led by Tom Holladay, with special segments by Dr. Rick Warren, will be featured in Fellowship Hall from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. this autumn:

**Saturday, October 8**—Building a Purpose Driven® Church and Reaching Our Community

**Saturday, October 22**—Attracting a Crowd to Worship and Building Our Congregation

**Saturday, November 5**—Developing Our Committed and Empowering Our Core for Ministry

Attendees will be provided coffee, tea, and a simple snack (cookies, pretzels, fruit, or donuts). Come learn about this proven five-part strategy that enables churches to grow:

- warmer through fellowship
- deeper through discipleship
- stronger through worship
- broader through ministry
- larger through evangelism

Ladies Bus Trip to Annapolis, Maryland

September 9, 2016
**West Shore Baptist Church**

**West Shore Baptist Church** seeks to be a
**L.I.G.H.T. to our Community by**...

- **Loving God** in celebrative worship in order to **magnify** His wonderful name
- **Inviting Friends** and sharing a caring witness as part of our life **mission**
- **Growing Together** in uplifting fellowship encouraging faith and church **membership**
- **Helping Others** and empowering growing disciples to engage in God-shaped **ministry**
- **Teaching Truth** and equipping disciples to develop Christ-like spiritual **maturity**

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**West Shore Baptist Church**

2025 Market Street
Camp Hill, PA 17011

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**SUNDAY SERVICES:**

- Traditional Worship — 9:00 AM
- Christian Education Hour — 9:00 AM
- Coffee Café — 10:00 AM
- LifeHouse Worship — 10:30 AM
- Christian Education Hour — 10:30 AM

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**We’re on the web!**
**Visit:** [www.wsbc.org](http://www.wsbc.org)