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1 December 2010

Dear Friend of Baptist History:

**“Stunning!” “Extraordinary!”** exclaimed Baptist Archbishop Malkhaz Songulashvili, as he read about pioneer Baptists in Russia and his own Republic of Georgia. Archbishop Songulashvili knew oral traditions about his predecessors in ministry, including one who was assassinated in 1928. At the Historical Society he read a letter from the 1930s explaining “the situation” in Georgia. The letter by Rev. I. V. Neprash illustrated the Baptist troubles by noting, “one of our good workers, Mr. Kandelaki, pastor of the Tiflis church, was shot to death by communists for preaching of the gospel.”

**How was ABHS able to provide such extraordinary sources and services** to someone who had time for only a few hours of research? The reasons include donors who give to the Annual Fund, which in turn pays for an archivist to care for the collections and those wanting to read them. We have been blessed by that past support and look forward to your continued gifts to this ministry of memory.

Other reasons we were able to serve this Baptist leader so well include:

1. Advance research by staff and a volunteer last month, which located where in the six miles of shelving we were likely to find materials about Russian Baptists.
2. Correspondence saved documenting the ties between Russian speakers in the U.S. and Baptists in Russia and its provinces, facilitated by the American Baptist Home Mission Society’s International Seminary, a training school for foreign language-speaking pastors in East Orange, NJ, begun in 1921.
3. A grant in support of better access to missionary correspondence, provided in 1998 by the Stewart Huston Charitable Trust, which allowed ABHS to hire an extra staff person to work with Archivist Betty Layton in the creation of three specialized databases—each enabling quick searches by date, name, state or country.

**Because over so many years, individuals and organizations have helped ABHS collect and preserve Baptist records,** Archbishop Songulashvili could find missing pieces of his history at ABHS. For all these supporters and curators, we are thankful!

**The American Baptist Historical Society again needs your help.** To pay regular bills and continue with our educational outreach programs in 2011, we need to raise \$48,000 before the end of 2010. That’s not an unreachable goal, but it is larger than what we average from our Annual Fund appeal.

**Here's why I think you will want to help us—We've had a taste of the future, and it is wonderful!**

This fall, our annual history celebration hosted by the Board of Managers was the most successful public program we've ever had, with coverage by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* attracting a diverse crowd to the premier of a 1949 film, newly preserved, about the Mather School in Beaufort, SC. A number of Matherites attended the showing and shared stories about their educational experience. They also invited me and President Trinette McCray to attend the 2011 Mather Day at their old campus. (The school closed in 1968.) We are looking forward to the February event, when ABHS will share the film and collect more stories from Mather alums.

**The future of Baptist history is exciting—IF we have the support to undergird our mission.**

The Annual Fund provides us with a portion of the funds we need for the basic ingredients of our mission—such things as salaries, archival supplies and phone services. Your strong support also serves as a witness to our institutional partners and potential grant funders that the American Baptist Historical Society is an enterprise worth supporting.

**Whatever gift you give this year to the ministry of ABHS will make a difference.** We, and future researchers, thank you!

Your minister of memory,



Dr. Deborah Bingham Van Broekhoven, Executive Director

**P.S. Regardless of your ability to give, help ABHS broaden our base of support.** Recruit a new friend for ABHS and share with us that person's name—we'll send that person a welcome letter and free reproduction image from our collections. Or you might ask someone to give in memory or honor of a beloved pastor, friend, or Baptist hero from the past! And if you able, please consider increasing your "usual" donation by \$10, \$25, or more, with our thanks.

[Give online](#) or print this page and send with your check to: ABHS, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851.

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**Thank You!**