

2011 notable deaths

December 23, 2011

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP) - Here is a list of notable deaths in 2011 that were reported by Associated Baptist Press.

— **Morris Ashcraft**, 88, who taught at three Southern Baptist Convention seminaries before serving as acting president at the launch of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond in 1991, died Jan. 29 after a long illness.

— **Richard "Dick" Brogan**, 73, a white Baptist who spent a career as a teacher and missionary to African-American Baptists in the Deep South, died of a heart attack April 25 at Baptist Hospital in Jackson, Miss.

— **Ardelle Clemons**, 93, a founding board member of Associated Baptist Press, died Nov. 26 after a long illness. She joined the first ABP board in 1990 and was the longest-serving board member when she rotated off in 2004.

— **Ross Coggins**, 83, author of the missionary hymn "Send Me, O Lord, Send Me," died Aug. 1 at his home in Annapolis, Md., after an illness.

— **Alan Day**, 62, pastor of First Baptist Church in Edmond, Okla., for more than 25 years, died Feb. 16 from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident.

— **Benjamin Easler**, 6, was killed March 19 when a miniature train at Cleveland Park in Spartanburg, S.C., left the track and tipped over while carrying 15 children and adults from Corinth Baptist Church in Gaffney, S.C. His father, Dwight Easler, is the church's pastor.

— **Edwin Gaustad**, 87, died March 25, in Santa Fe, N.M. A Baptist historian, he was one of America's leading experts on America's colonial

period, particularly in areas of religious liberty, pluralism and dissent.

— **Former Sen. Mark Hatfield**, 89, an Oregon Republican whose Baptist faith helped shape his political views during nearly half a century in public office, died Aug. 7 after several years of declining health. The five-term senator and former Oregon governor was a long-time supporter of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.

— **John Jonsson**, 86, an emeritus professor of religion and former director of the African Studies program at Baylor University, died May 26 at his home in South Africa after an extended illness. A native South African, Baptist pastor and scholar, Jonsson openly protested the South African system of apartheid from the pulpit, the classroom and in other public forums, including a run as an anti-apartheid candidate for the South African parliament.

— **Bill Junker**, 83, longtime Baptist journalist who worked at the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board until he retired in 1992, died June 8 after a long illness.

— **Jack McEwen**, 84, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tenn., and academic dean at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., from 1980 until 1983, died Dec. 5.

— **Eugene Nida**, 96, a Bible translator who pioneered a groundbreaking approach that led to most Bible translations in the 20th century, died Aug. 25 in a Brussels hospital. Rather than translating Hebrew and Greek biblical languages literally word for word, Nida's "dynamic equivalence" or "functional equivalence" method seeks to convey the thoughts the biblical writers intended to convey.

— **Gustavo Parajón**, a medical doctor and pastor who was a leading voice for peace and justice ministry in Nicaragua for more than 40 years, died unexpectedly at his home March 13. He was an active supporter and

participant in the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America and a former American Baptist missionary.

— **James Pleitz**, 82, pastor of prominent churches including Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas and First Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla., and active in denominational leadership, died May 15 after an illness.

— **Cecil Ray**, 88, a long-time denominational worker who directed Planned Growth in Giving, a 15-year challenge for Southern Baptists to dramatically increase their financial support for world missions, died Aug. 23.

— **Fred Shuttlesworth**, 89, the last of the "Big Three" of the civil rights movement with Ralph Abernathy and Martin Luther King, died Oct. 5.

— **Evelyn Stagg**, 96, a trailblazer for Southern Baptist Women in Ministry, died Feb. 28. She co-authored the book *Woman in the World of Jesus* with her husband, longtime Southern Seminary professor Frank Stagg, and in 1983 was one of 33 women to help found what is today known as Baptist Women in Ministry.

— **Oeita Theunissen**, 87, known professionally and in church leadership as Oeita Bottorff, died Feb. 25 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. She was a key organizer of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2011.

— **Ed Vick**, 76, a prominent Baptist layman and supporter of moderate causes including Associated Baptist Press, died May 13, seven weeks after being diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. He served as a director of ABP from 1994 until he resigned May 3 due to his illness, and was a former board chair.

—*Bob Allen is managing editor of Associated Baptist Press.*