

*Metro Chicago*

## *eWind*

*Suddenly there was...a strong wind blowing, and...  
they were all filled with the Holy Spirit... (Acts 2:2-3, TEV)*

A weekly electronic newsletter of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago  
A patchwork of varied news and announcements  
from our churches, communities, denomination and other organizations,  
covering a wide variety of interests reflecting the diversity of our region

**July 12, 2006**

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### *ABCMC at the General Executive Council (GEC) Meeting*

To: ABCMC Family  
From: Larry Greenfield, Executive Minister

These are exciting times in our ABCUSA denominational life – full of unprecedented challenges and opportunities.

I am pleased and proud that Metro Chicago is a vital participant in the discussions about our denominational future, with the Rev. Francine Stark serving as the president of National Ministries and our ABCMC representative to the General Board, and the Rev. Dr. Alice Davis serving as president of the national Ministers Council, and thereby also a member of the General Board. Both of our colleagues provided excellent leadership at the most recent national meetings in June.

Following the General Board meetings, I was a part of the discussions that took place in the General Executive Council (the GEC is the staff committee to the General Board) that dealt primarily with analyzing issues and developing proposals about our denominational future.

A summary of the GEC meeting is provided below. If you have question, comments, or suggestions about what is reported here, I hope you contact me.

Speaking just for myself, I have a sense of not just hope, but actual enthusiasm for what I believe we as American Baptist can achieve in our shared future.

### *Summary of GEC Meeting June 25-26*

The General Executive Council (GEC) met June 25-26, immediately following the proceedings of the ABCUSA General Board. The primary purpose of the meeting was to examine ways of improving the ministry functioning of the denomination by surfacing and assessing potential modifications and renovations. During an earlier meeting this year, the GEC had identified four areas of concentration for potential transformation within the denomination, namely denominational leadership, denominational structure, representative process, and relevance to local congregations.

The members advanced their previous work by reviewing input from the General Board, new survey data from the grass roots level (from over 2400 respondents), information from a May Summit meeting of ABC Officers and Staff, as well as specific change proposals, authored by the GEC members themselves, in the four areas of concentration. Working in small groups and reporting out to the larger body, the GEC members asked three questions of each proposal: (1) What additional information or clarification do I need to fully understand this proposal? (2) What assumptions underlying this proposal should be/can be challenged? (3) What are the potential unforeseen positive and negative consequences of this proposal? The meeting was facilitated by Dr. Tricia Jones, a communications and organizational development professor at Temple University. Dr. Jones has also worked with the GEC in prior discussions.

During the next meeting of the GEC, scheduled for September 25-27, the GEC members intend to make recommendations to the General Board in the four areas of concentration; the ABCUSA General Board will receive this information after the September meeting, for consideration and processing in its November meeting.

Prior to their September meeting, GEC members who authored proposals plan to rework each proposal using the feedback received at their June meeting. All members of the GEC have agreed to further advance their work over the summer by assessing specific sections of the newly revised proposals looking for synergies that have the potential of becoming proposals at the September meeting. The criteria to be used for evaluating each revised proposal (as well as their component parts) will include criteria surfaced by members of the GEC itself as well as criteria surfaced by the General Board and its Executive Committee at their recent meetings in June. The process may also include further data gathering. Members of the GEC agreed to these future processes by consensus.

This current work of the GEC has been prompted by several factors, including a strong desire to advance the mission that God has given to American Baptists, to build upon the work of the "Seek It" vision, to respond to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century congregations, to attend to financial concerns, and to address current conflicts within the denomination.

The American Baptist General Executive Council is comprised of the Executive Ministers of the Regions; the Executive Directors and two Associate Executive Directors from each of the National Boards (Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board, the Board of National Ministries, and

the Board of International Ministries); the Executive Directors of the Ministers Council, American Baptist Women's Ministries, the American Baptist Historical Society, and the American Baptist Assembly; and the General Secretary and Staff of the Office of the General Secretary.

## *Our Prayer*

To: ABCMC Family  
From: Larry Greenfield, Executive Minister

In the midst of recent meetings of the General Executive Council of the ABCUSA, my long-time friend, Rev. Beverlee Everett, led us in prayer. I want to share this prayer with my ABCMC colleagues.

Creator God,

As we come to the end of this long day, with grateful hearts we thank you for the blessings you have so lavishly bestowed on us...life and rich relationships...meaningful ministries and the beautiful world around us.

We ask your forgiveness for sometimes taking these blessings for granted, for sometimes wasting the treasures entrusted to us, and for sometimes even contributing to the destruction of those treasures and those relationships.

Today we have spent time learning and discussing, grieving and planning, praying and celebrating...trying to discern your will for the ministries we do together. We are humbled by the idea that we might participate in your grace.

May we fulfill your plan for us...reaching out to those who are lost and in need...reaching out to support each other as we move along together... feeling the wind and fanning the flame...seeking to become the best of your vision for us as your faithful people.

Strengthen us for the journey. Help us to see and to celebrate the best of what we are doing together in your name. Grant us the wisdom needed to discern the best solutions to the difficult decisions before us.

And now, as we come to the close of this session of the General Board, grant us a restful night and "joy in the morning" so that we may continue our faithful journey together, claiming our heritage as a people of prayer, purpose, and passion.

In the name of Christ our Center and Savior we pray...Amen.

## *Culto Unido de Las Iglesias Bautistas Hispanas de Metro Chicago*

Culto unido de Las Iglesias Bautistas Hispanas de Metro Chicago  
Fecha: sabado 9 de septiembre, 06  
Lugar: Iglesia Bautista Misionera  
Direccion: 6715 S Hamlin Ave Chicago, IL 60629 tel. 708/288-1351

Nota especial: en este culto unido estaremos celebrando el acto de instalacion del pastor de la Iglesia Misionera, José Nunez. La adoracion y la predicación estarán a cargo de la iglesia local y al final tendremos una cena.

Tanto la iglesia local como su nuevo pastor, el hno. Nunez esperan el apoyo de todos los pastores/as e iglesias hispanas para este importante culto de instalacion. Los esperamos.

Para mas información llame al pastor Almonte: 773/784-2479

### *Joint Worship Service of ABCMC's Hispanic Congregations*

ABCMC's Hispanic congregations will gather for a joint worship service on Saturday, September 6 at Iglesia Bautista Misionera, 6715 S. Hamlin Avenue in Chicago. In this service we will celebrate the installation of José Nunez as pastor of Iglesia Bautista Misionera. The local church will be in charge of the worship and preaching. A dinner will follow. For more information, please phone ABCMC's Hispanic Coordinator, Omar Almonte, 773-784-2479.

### *Reflections on Obama's Speech*

To: ABCMC Family  
From: Larry Greenfield, Executive Minister

Our junior senator from Illinois, Barack Obama, recently delivered a major speech on faith and politics at the Call to Renewal conference in Washington, D.C. The speech has prompted a wide response across the nation.

On the chance that you might be interested in reading a couple of commentaries on the speech, I'm enclosing two essays: one from my pastor at Hyde Park Union Church, Susan Johnson, (her essay is entitled "Naive?") and the other my own analysis ("Some Sense of Proportion").

### *National Council of Churches on Christian Moderates and Politics*

Visit [www.councilofchurches.org](http://www.councilofchurches.org) to read what leaders such as Tony Campolo are saying about faith and politics.

### *Irving Park Baptist Church Update*

On July 30, at 6:30 p.m., Irving Park Baptist Church will welcome Rev. Dr. Joseph Atta-Funn to their pulpit for the next 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Unity Service—Celebrating Diversity. Joseph is the pastor of ABCMC's new Sub-Saharan African church plant. Joseph will be the speaker, and the congregation will celebrate with African music. After the service, they will experience a taste of Africa, with a variety of traditional African foods.

This will be a special service, a fundraiser to help the new church plant get off to a strong start. All ABCMC congregations are invited to attend. The church is at 4401 W. Irving Park Road in Chicago. A flyer about the service is attached to this issue of *eWind*.

Irving Park Baptist Church was recently featured in a June 18 article in the Pioneer Press neighborhood papers on the northwest side of Chicago. Featuring a photograph of their pastor, Rev. Dr. Alice J. B. Davis, the article included the quote, "Our church emphasizes and celebrates the different cultures in our congregation. We want to show the community what it means to live as a church that shines the way to cultural respect and honor."

## *Viewing an Important Film*

*This announcement is from Evelyn Perez-Almonte, formerly a member of the pastoral staff of North Shore Baptist Church, and now on the staff of the faith-based organization Esperanza, USA. Please use this announcement as a bulletin insert.*

Esperanza, USA, the largest Latino faith-based organization in the United States, would like to extend an invitation to our Spanish-speaking pastors and lay leaders, as well as anyone who understands Spanish, to see the movie premier *No Te Rindas*. The movie is a drama, not a documentary. The purpose of this movie is to educate and create awareness of the HIV/AIDS crisis among our churches and community groups. Discussion and feedback will take place after the movie. Rev. Hector Cortez, a former pastor of North Shore Baptist Church, and Esperanza's National Projects Vice-President, will be the host for the program.

Date: Thursday, August 10

Time: 6 p.m.

Place: Marriott Medical District Hotel,  
625 Ashland Avenue, Chicago  
(across from Rush Hospital and junction with I-290)

Cost: Free, including reception with hors d'oeuvres.

RSVP before July 15 to Evelyn Perez-Almonte, 312-731-3858 or [eperez-almonte@nueva.org](mailto:eperez-almonte@nueva.org).

## *Pre-Biennial Ministry Event*

The Ministers Council, the Campus Ministers Association and International Ministries of American Baptist Churches invite you to "MINISTRY IN SUCH A TIME AS THIS," a Pre-Biennial event in DC on Friday, June 29, 2007, from 9 am until noon. The event is being designed to lead clergy in reflection on what it takes to be faithful and effective Church in such a time as this.

Speakers are Diana Butler Bass, who has just completed her work as Senior Research Fellow and Director of the Project on Congregations of Intentional Practice, a Lilly Endowment funded study of mainline Protestant vitality. She holds a Ph.D. in American religious history from Duke University and is the author of four critically acclaimed books. *The Practicing Congregation: Imagining a New Old Church* (Alban, 2004) has been featured in *The Christian Century* and *Sojourners Magazine*. *Broken We Kneel: Reflections on Faith and Citizenship* (Jossey-Bass, 2004) received enthusiastic praise and was excerpted in several publications. She will speak on learnings about practices that build communal vitality. You may access further information about her online at <http://www.practicingcongregations.org> and <http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/resources/?hce>.

Parush Parushav from Prague will also speak that day, bringing wisdom from other parts of the world on how to be Church in postmodernity. He will speak from learnings in a European context that inform our context, because in postmodernity everywhere the Church faces similar dynamics. More information on his background will be available soon.

We believe that their expertise as well as their hopeful, positive spirit will offer great insight and modeling for pastoral leaders of the American Baptist Churches and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

This event is groundbreaking in the bringing together of ABC and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) pastoral leaders for a national event, as well as in the sponsorship by the professional society and ABC clergy, the body of campus ministers, and the international missions organization. We anticipate an attendance of perhaps 1,000 pastoral leaders, since the event will occur at the time of ABC and CBF national meetings.

## Ministers Council News

### *Summer Gatherings*

The Ministers Council of ABCMC will host gatherings of Professional Church Leaders (PCLs) and families in clusters by location of PCL residences. Phone President Doug Harris at North Shore Baptist Church, 773-728-4200, for more information.

### *Ministers Council Dues*

Ministers Council dues may be paid by sending a check to the treasurer, Rev. Dr. Sara Day, 3013 Wolf Road, #324, Westchester, IL 60154.

Dues are:

- \$45 for individuals
- \$60 for clergy couples
- \$22.50 for seminarians

Retired clergy membership is free for retirees who were dues-paying members of the Ministers Council for 3 out of the last 5 years prior to retirement.

### *Supporting SISTA*

Betsy Ritzman, Director of AIDS Pastoral Care Network, sent us the good news about the SISTA ministry, and word of their needs.

As you may well know, the HIV team directs a wonderful program called SISTA (Sistas Informing Sistas on Topics of HIV & AIDS), which teaches African-American women on the Westside of Chicago about HIV/AIDS, empowerment, and personal values. We have had great success with these women and we are looking to you to help us make their transition into the community a positive one! Our goal is to do something special for all of the graduates of SISTA and we are asking for donations of the following products to fill gift baskets for our participants. Most of these women are from the Women's Furlough program, treatment centers, or transitional housing, so your donations will truly be appreciated!

All products donated should be new or unopened:

- Beauty products (Makeup, perfume, etc.)
- Hygiene products (Shampoo, body wash, lotion, etc.)
- Hosiery (Pantyhose, knee highs, etc.)
- Foot ware (Slippers, socks, etc.)
- House wares (Candles, potpourri, etc.)
- Jewelry (Inexpensive or costume)
- Scarves
- Gift certificates

Please contact Brenda Myers-Powell at the Madison Clinic at 773-826-3656 for questions or donations. SISTA appreciates your help!

## *Prayer Requests*

**See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:15-18, NRSV).**

Please hold the ABCUSA and ABCMC families in prayer.

Please pray for Rev. Dr. Craig Jenkins, pastor of Beth Eden Baptist Church in Chicago, as he recovers from successful surgery last week.

## *Calendar*

**July 7**—Children in Poverty Initiative meeting, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Hyde Park Union Church, 5600 S. Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago.

**July 14-16**—ABMen National Conference, Parchment Valley, WV.

**July 17**—Ecumenical Millennium Committee (EMC) Meeting, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m., Archdiocese of Chicago Pastoral Center, 155 E. Superior St., Chicago, 6th Floor Conference Room. This is a special summer meeting to discuss planning for the 2008 National Workshop on Christian Unity (NWCU), currently scheduled for Chicago.

**July 18**—Finance and Property Committee meeting, ABCMC office, 3 p.m.

**July 27-29**—The Center for Parish Development's Missional Church Conference, at the Cenacle in Chicago. Visit [www.missionalchurch.org/pages/seminars](http://www.missionalchurch.org/pages/seminars) for more information and registration.

**July 29-August 2**—American Baptist Campus Ministers Association gathering at Green Lake Conference Center. For more information, visit [www.nationalministries.org](http://www.nationalministries.org).

**July 30**—5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Unity Service—Celebrating Diversity, 6:30 p.m., Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago. Joseph Atta-Fynn, pastor of ABCMC's new Sub-Saharan African congregation, will be speaker. "Taste of Africa" will take place following the service.

**August 10**—6 p.m. premiere of film *No Te Rindas*, sponsored by Esperanza USA, Marriott Medical District Hotel, 625 Ashland Avenue, Chicago (across from Rush Hospital and junction with I-290). Free, including reception with hors d'oeuvres. **RSVP before July 15** to Evelyn Perez-Almonte, 312-731-3858 or [eperez-almonte@nueva.org](mailto:eperez-almonte@nueva.org).

**August 22**—Finance and Property Committee meeting, ABCMC office, 3 p.m.

**August 26**—Family Council meeting, 9 a.m.

**September 9**—Culto unido de Las Iglesias Bautistas Hispanas de Metro Chicago, el sábado 9 de septiembre, 06, Iglesia Bautista Misionera, 6715 S Hamlin Ave Chicago, IL 60629 tel. 708/288-1351. Para mas información llame al pastor Almonte: 773/784-2479

**November 10-11**—Annual Meeting.

**November 21**—Finance and Property Committee meeting, ABCMC office, 3 p.m.

**December 19**—Finance and Property Committee meeting, ABCMC office, 3 p.m.

**June 29-July 2**—ABCUSA Biennial Meeting and Centennial Celebration in Washington, D.C.  
The biennial's theme will be "Arise and Shine."

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The Metro Chicago *eWind* is an electronic communication intended for the people of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. The events publicized herein do not necessary express the opinions of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. We welcome your news, prayer requests and comments. Please email your communications to [abcmchi@aol.com](mailto:abcmchi@aol.com). We will email the newsletter each Wednesday.  
If you spot a typographical error in *eWind*, please let us know at the ABCMC office, 773-695-9791 or [abcmchi@aol.com](mailto:abcmchi@aol.com).