

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

August 9, 2006

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Family Council Meeting Rescheduled

The ABCMC Family Council meeting originally scheduled for August 26, 2006 has been rescheduled for Saturday, September 23, 2006. It will take place at Montrose Baptist Church,

4411 N. Melvina, Chicago. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Please phone Tony Rake at 773-695-9791 with your attendance plans no later than September 20.

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New Home for Normal Park Baptist Church

Recently, Normal Park Baptist Church, where Dr. Gregory S. Hardaway is the pastor, completed the purchase of a new facility, located at 10700 South King Drive. God has blessed them richly, and they ask that their American Baptist Family pray for them as they “march” into their new church home. This momentous occasion will commence on Sunday, August 13, at 11:00 am.

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Cooperating Church Annual Report

By now your church should have received a form for completing the annual report. The report can be completed on line. Instructions are included with the form. Has your congregation filed its annual report with ABC? Please check. If your church has not completed its report, please make sure the report goes in ASAP. If the form has been misplaced, please contact Lynne Kelley at ABCMC, 773-695-9791, for a fresh copy. If you need assistance with completing the report, please contact Maureen Morrissey at ABCUSA, 800-222-3872 (800-ABC-3USA).

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World Mission Offering

By this time your church has received materials for the World Mission Offering, to be collected in September and October. If not, please let ABCMC know at 773-695-9791, and we will be sure to forward the resources to you. Also, if you need additional packets, let us know.

Thinking Theologically

Protestants for the Common Good has a biweekly electronic newsletter, *The Common Good Network*. It is filled with useful material, including a column by ABCMC’s Executive Minister Larry Greenfield. Larry’s latest column, “Bread Preferences,” is attached to this issue of *eWind*. To subscribe to *The Common Good Network*, just go to www.thecommongood.org, and follow the instructions.

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Children in Poverty

Friends and Colleagues,

If for only a minute we thought we could minimize our concern for children in poverty as a dimension of our Christian faith, please take that minute to read the summary of the recent report (below) from the National Center for Children in Poverty, reporting that nearly half of the dramatic increase in child poverty since 2000 has occurred in the Midwest.

Larry Greenfield

In 2004, approximately 18 percent of all children in the United States lived in poverty. Over the last five years, child poverty has risen substantially, increasing by 12 percent. After hitting a low of 12.1 million children in 2000, more than 1.4 million children have been added to the poverty rolls, becoming members of this country's "new poor." Children who grow up in poverty experience significant hardships that can have lasting effects well into adulthood.

At the national level, family characteristics have had little relationship with whether children experienced increasing poverty between 2000 and 2004. Overall, increases in U.S. child poverty did not vary by parents' employment status, parents' education level, or parents' nativity. These national statistics mask varying economic realities across regions.

This report examines regional differences in the family characteristics of children who have seen the greatest rise in poverty. During the last five years, children living in the Midwest experienced the biggest increases in child poverty, accounting for 43 percent of the national rise in the number of poor children. At the same time, poverty did not increase among children living in the West.

Chuck Armstrong

The Reverend Chuck Armstrong, associate executive director for strategic relationships of National Ministries, is recuperating well from recent brain surgery. Your prayers for his continued recovery are greatly appreciated. You may send cards and expressions of care and concern to his attention to P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge PA 19482-0851.

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Accad Promotes Complex, Informed Christian Engagement of Middle East at WMC

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 8/4/06)—Dr. Martin Accad, the academic dean of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut, told hundreds gathered at the World Mission Conference of International Ministries (IM) the issues of the present war between Israel and Hezbollah are complex, but informed Christians can engage the region with hope.

"From a human perspective there is no hope, but this is the strength of what we can do in Christ," Accad said in an interview before his presentation Friday, Aug. 4. Accad said he desired to provide another perspective to the Western church and called for Baptists and the universal church to be engaged in the current conflict.

In a workshop presentation to this annual gathering of American Baptists, Accad highlighted five action points for Christians in America:

- In times of conflict such as this, we are able to demonstrate the love of Christ to conventional enemies.
- The church in America can pray that this time of conflict could heal intercommunal strife in Lebanon, which resulted in 16 years of civil war, as Christian communities in particular are helping to meet the needs of hundreds of thousands of displaced Muslims.
- While acknowledging political and theological differences, the universal church can stand in solidarity against the humanitarian disaster that is happening in Lebanon.

- A call that churches and Christians everywhere would leave behind any kind of hatred, and acceptance of injustice, based on political biases.
- The church can focus on an ethic of God's kingdom, centered on the concrete needs of human beings, as opposed to some eschatological view where the end justifies the means, and where suffering is therefore justified.

As a practical matter, he said American Christians should continue to pray, and that many of the emails he has received of just prayers are very encouraging. He also encouraged American Baptists to continue to support agencies like Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, which is housing nearly 1,000 displaced Lebanese, mainly Muslims, at the seminary and its partner, Beirut Baptist School. Accad noted almost all missionaries have left the region, and so the decision of IM's missionaries, [Daniel and Sarah Chetti](#), to remain and minister has greatly encouraged the school, fellow Lebanese Baptists, and other Christians.

Rev. Reid Trulson, IM's Area Director for the Middle East and Europe, said he was greatly moved by Accad's comments that the followers of Jesus were not fully transformed until they saw a wounded, but Resurrected Lord. "It's not, we will help you when it's no cost to us, or from a position of power; rather it's experiencing the wounding, but in God's power still reaching out."

Trulson encouraged American Baptists to continue to support the Chettis, or provide relief donations through the upcoming World Mission Offering. He also challenged people to "write the White House, and call for our government to actively push for a cease fire, because it's only once there is a cease fire that conversation can begin."

Accad, who self-describes himself as a conservative Evangelical, and was raised in a Lebanese Church of God, Anderson (an American Wesleyan/holiness denomination), continued to criticize his American counterparts whose faith and politics, he says, leads to unilateral support of Israel and continued demonization of Arabs.

"Theologically and biblically, their unquestioning equation of the modern state of Israel with Biblical Israel is the starting point of an erroneous reading of the Bible," said Accad. Most important to Accad is that such readings of the Bible cause American Christians to see those on the bad side of these interpretations as less than human.

"It's very easy for North Americans who have not lived in a context of conflict to take very lightly the massacre of Palestinians for the sake of fulfillment of prophecy. If we see Middle East events as leading towards the second coming of Christ, then we can justify the massacre of people, we can justify injustice being repeatedly done to whole peoples." Accad said this perspective is challenged when conservative Christians come to do mission, as many were doing at ABTS, when the war broke out in Lebanon.

"Suddenly, we find ourselves stuck in conflict," said Accad about several short-term Baptist groups who were at the seminary when the conflict erupted. "We realize what it means to live in fear, to be under bombing by air, sea, and land." Accad said these conservative, Evangelical, American Christians had been involved in relief work among Muslim Shiites who have been displaced by the hundreds of thousands. "These American Christians have taken food and mattresses and covers, and have provided entertainment and times of worship and sharing with the very people their own government is calling terrorists, and that is what I mean by demonstrating love to conventional enemies. That is one of the most positive things that could happen."

Accad is hopeful that American Christians will continue to inform themselves and look at the root causes of the conflict, which he places not with terror, but the ongoing question of a Palestinian state, and the history of partition in the region. Accad issues these challenges as one who studied for his master's and Ph.D degrees at Oxford University, specializing in nearly 1,500 years of

Muslim-Christian relations. He is currently finishing a book that seeks new ways to engage in Muslim-Christian relations.

Accad emphasizes a new approach to dialogue, which moves beyond exclusivism or relativism. "I do not do the sort of dialogue which claims we are each on different tracks leading to the same purpose. For me, what God has brought to us in Jesus is good news, and good news doesn't need an excuse to be good news," said Accad, adding, "I don't need to destroy the other to be good news." The problem to be confronted, according to Accad is "Some Evangelical Christians believe they must destroy Islam before they can preach."

Accad formed the Institute for Middle East Studies at ABTS, which has held several dialogues between Evangelical Christians and Muslims for three years. He said just three weeks before the war, ABTS had held its most recent dialogue, and he asked one of the seminary's leaders to call two Muslim Shiite clerics who participated, to see if they were safe, after bombing in their neighborhood. School officials were able to reach one of the clerics who admitted his surprise at the call. Accad said the cleric remarked, "You are different."

Unexploded Ordnance a Threat to Returning Lebanese Civilians and Aid Workers

This article is from Church World Service

August 7, 2006

Beirut-Action by Churches Together (ACT) member Christian Aid has warned that displaced Lebanese civilians returning home when a ceasefire is agreed should be on their guard against unexploded cluster bombs and other munitions fired by Israeli forces.

According to experts, Israeli forces have been firing around 3,000 rockets, artillery shells, cluster bombs, and other artillery into Lebanon each day, for the past 27 days of the conflict. It is estimated that around 10 percent of these munitions have not exploded, so it is likely there are more than 7,000 unexploded munitions across the conflict zone.



Family in a center for displaced people in Lebanon.

Photo: Hege Opseth/NCA-ACT

Speaking from Beirut, Christian Aid's security manager, Kiruja Micheni, said: "If there is a ceasefire, the 900,000 people believed to have fled the fighting will want to return home. But there is a danger that they could be injured or killed by unexploded ordnance, including cluster bombs. Aid workers too need to do proper risk assessments before setting up operations in the south. This ordinance will slow down the relief effort, but proper precautions must be taken."

Andrew Gleeson of the UK-based Mines Action Group (MAG) said this ordnance would be highly unstable and could detonate easily if moved. Mr Gleeson, a former British army bomb disposal expert, said: "The explosive material will deteriorate over time. Heat and rain will make the material less stable."

The Lebanese government is working with the UN and MAG on a 12-week emergency action plan to deal with the worst of the problem, once a ceasefire is agreed. In another development today, the UN warned that there were only seven to eight days' worth of fuel left in Lebanon.

In Beirut, Dominic Nutt, Christian Aid's emergencies specialist and member of the ACT International Coordination Assessment Team, said: "If fuel runs out this will have a major effect on the displaced Lebanese population. Many are living in cramped conditions, in schools and other public buildings and rely on clean water which is brought in daily by trucks. If the fuel runs out, the water and food supply to these people will be cut resulting in the quick onset of disease."

There are three ships anchored off the Lebanese coast laden with fuel - two are government ships and the third is a UN ship with fuel to supply the UN aid effort. But the Israeli government has so far not given permission for them to offload the fuel. "This is not acceptable," said Mr Nutt. "The Israeli government is morally and legally obliged to allow this fuel into the country."

Humanitarian Situation Worsens for People of Lebanon

This article is from Church World Service.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to get aid out to those in need in Lebanon. Local ACT member and long-time Church World Service partner, the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), reports that its warehouse now only contains enough relief supplies to last another three days.

By Hege Opseth

Beirut-Heavy bombardments that crushed bridges and parts of the main road between Syria and Lebanon in the early morning hours of Friday (August 4), have put enormous pressure on aid agencies and churches trying to meet the needs of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people.

"The goods we have are being distributed quickly," said Shad Hajj Nassif, MECC-ACT's emergency coordinator. "With the isolation of Beirut, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get what we need."

The basement of a building of a faculty of theology has been turned into a 'relief warehouse'. People displaced by the Israeli offensive are volunteering here, helping organize the emergency parcels that contain food and hygiene items.

The last 27 days have seen people's lives changed forever. Many who fled the bombardment of their villages and the southern suburbs of Beirut, lost all their belongings. Only a few managed to bring extra clothes. Their independence has been stripped away, forcing them to rely on relief efforts by local and international relief organizations, including the churches. "Some people cry when they get their emergency rations," a local volunteer in one of the centers supported by ACT International member MECC said.

As for the relief items, MECC's Nassif explained: "We have supplies for another 2,000 emergency packets. That is enough for some three days. When our warehouse is empty we will manage, but it is going to be expensive. Being limited to suppliers in Beirut, prices are going up every day."

Because of the deterioration in security, truck drivers in Lebanon are afraid that they may be a potential target for the Israelis when they move on the roads. MECC-ACT's solution has been to use smaller trucks when distributing aid. "It means that we have to go back and forth three or four times to distribute aid. But, we continue working and are trying to find solutions," said Nassif. Dwindling supplies of fuel, other basics, and [lack of] a safe corridor to bring in aid are causing deep concern, as is the lack of access to those in need.

Lebanon: Humanitarian Situation Worsens

This article is from Church World Service.

August 9, 2006

Lebanon -- Local Action by Churches Together (ACT) member and long-time Church World Service partner the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) reports that four weeks into the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, Lebanon continues to bear the brunt of the fighting. "It was another black day and bloody night for Lebanon, filled with the smoke of fires caused by Israeli attacks from land, sea and air," Guirgis Saleh, MECC's general secretary said on in an update to the global alliance Action by Churches Together International today.

The destruction caused by the offensive is massive. In the area of Chiah in the southern suburbs of Beirut, MECC reports that ten people were killed, 30 injured and two buildings completely destroyed. Two villages in the south have also issued distress calls for assistance: for food, water, and medicine. MECC says that Rmeish and Debel are being threatened with disaster if relief does not reach them. Also of concern is the fact that the Qasmieh Bridge and the makeshift bridge between Saida and Tyre in the south were destroyed a few days ago, leading to the isolation of the city of Tyre.

Meanwhile, the ACT International, through its members in the country, continues to respond to the crisis in Lebanon.

MECC through its Inter-Church Network for Development and Relief (ICNDR) are in the process of distributing 500 food and non-food parcels in Saida and Jezzine in the south of the country. MECC's ICNDR and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) continues to assist with water and sanitation support in centres the displaced. The water and sanitation teams have so far completed the installation of showers at two schools in Ashrafieh, the Laure Moghayzel School and the Public Secondary School, with additional support to the Laure Moghayzel School after problems were experienced with the water systems.

MECC's ICNDR and NCA have also completed three assessments of the Joint Christian Committee School (JCCS), the Mar Severius Schools in the Museitbe area of Beirut, and the National Evangelical Church Secondary School in Ras Beirut.

JCCS needs more water, as well as showers and support with basic hygiene items. People at the Mar Severius School also need water and showers, as well as basic hygiene items. And again at the National Evangelical Church Secondary School, water and showers are in short supply. ACT member International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) has been distributing food and hygiene parcels in centres set up to house people displaced by the conflict, as well as in schools. Distributions have focused on the regions of Chouf (Semkanya), Metn (Bhersaf, Beitmery, Bikfaya, Mansourieh, Jal el dib and Zalka) and Bhamdoun-Aley. So far, 695 families have received support from IOCC, with the rest of the parcels to be distributed by week's end to meet the goal of assisting 892 families.

Mr Saleh says that MECC continues to receive other requests from Saida and Jezzine for food and non-food relief, including water. One of these requests has come from the Union for the Disabled in Saida, which needs special medical assistance for people with disabilities. Meanwhile, the coordinator of MECC's Service to Refugees, Displaced and Migrants (SRDM),



CWS partner, the Middle East Council of Churches, is delivering food and non-food packages to displaced families in Lebanon. Photo: Hege Opseth, NCA-ACT International

Mona Abu Jamra, reports that MECC's relief work in cooperation with UNHCR and Caritas is ongoing.

World Ecumenical Bodies Call For an End to Violence

Larry Greenfield writes, "As the destruction and killings continue unabated in the Mid-East, here is another principled, faith-based stand for our own inspiration."

This article is from the National Council of Churches.

Geneva, Switzerland, August 8, 2006 – Three world ecumenical leaders, representing millions of Christians around the globe, have appealed to Hezbollah and Israel to end the fighting in Lebanon.

The leaders – two of whom are American – also called upon the United States, the European Union and Arab states to use their influence to bring the hostilities to a close.

Bishop Mark Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and president of the Lutheran World Federation, the Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick, stated clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, also called upon the Israeli government, the Palestinian Authority and Hamas to end the conflict in Gaza.

The leaders noted that "the number of Lebanese deaths approaches 1,000, one third of them reportedly children under 12, and the number of Israeli deaths moves toward 100."



Nearly 175 Palestinians, many of them civilians, have been killed since Israel began military operations in the Gaza Strip, they said.

"Whatever the reality of the alleged provocations by both sides of the conflict," the leaders said, "the spiral of violence serves no end but the devastation of Lebanon and the inflicting of wounds of terror in Israel."

Issuing their statement "in the name of Jesus Christ," the leaders said their organizations and churches are eager to help "work for a compassionate order that will lead to a lasting peace." They said: "The task is great and the way is hard, for fear must be overcome with faith, hate with trust, enmity with reconciliation, and injustice with justice. But it is a task worthy of our efforts and it is the way that leads to life."

The full text of the statement follows:

A CALL TO END THE VIOLENCE

As followers of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, and as leaders of the World Council of Churches and the worldwide fellowships of Lutheran and Reformed churches, we are shocked by the relentless violence, death, and devastation occurring in Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine. We mourn the loss of life. We abhor the untold human costs of this conflict, especially its impact on innocent people. We deplore the destruction of infrastructure and property. In the face of tragedy of such magnitude, we affirm that God calls us to do justice, reconcile with our enemies, and live together in peace.

We call upon Israel and Hezbollah to end the fighting in Lebanon, and we call upon the United States, the European Union, and the Arab States to exercise their influence toward this end.

We call upon the Israeli government, the Palestinian Authority, and Hamas to end the conflict in Gaza.

The number of Lebanese deaths approaches 1,000, one-third of them reportedly children under 12, and the number of Israeli deaths moves toward 100. Whatever the reality of the alleged provocations by both sides of the conflict, this spiral of violence serves no end but the devastation of Lebanon and the inflicting of wounds of terror in Israel. Neither the terror of Katyusha rockets nor the destruction of Lebanese homes, schools, and villages can contribute to a lasting peace in the region. Such acts will lead to even deeper hatred between the parties than that which has fueled the current violence.

The Israelis have declared that they will continue military operations in Lebanon until there is a "peacekeeping force" on the ground. Hezbollah, in return, declares that they will not stop fighting until all Israeli military presence has left Lebanon. It is time for this intransigence by both parties to end. Israel must withdraw speedily from all the Lebanese territory, and Hezbollah, at the same time, must cease its actions against the Israeli people.

Close to 175 Palestinians, many of them civilians, have been killed since Israel began military operations in the Gaza Strip. The devastation of the infrastructure of Gaza brings added hardship to people who already have nothing. The people of Israel know the terror of random rockets launched day and night.

While it is true that terms for a lasting peace cannot be reached in a brief time frame, the world cannot wait for signs of "a new Middle East" to stop the killing. It is time for the leaders of the nations, working through the United Nations, to bring to bear the full force of their influence. A cease-fire is an imperative first step to end the violence. As people of faith, we implore all parties, in God's name, to agree to this, lest violence spread further through a region already stained with the blood of innocents.

When a cease-fire is achieved, we call the leaders of nations and other parties to begin the work for a compassionate order that will lead to a lasting peace. Our organizations and our churches are eager to share in that endeavor. The task is great and the way is hard, for fear must be overcome with faith, hate with trust, enmity with reconciliation, and injustice with justice. But it is a task worthy of our efforts and it is the way that leads to life.

In the name of Jesus Christ,

Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia
General Secretary
World Council of Churches

Rev. Dr Clifton Kirkpatrick
President
World Alliance of Reformed Churches

Bishop Mark Hanson
President
Lutheran World Federation

Photo from the Web site of the Middle East Council of Churches, headquartered in Beirut.

Prayer of Mourning

Below is a prayer by Rabbi Arthur Waskow of the Shalom Center in Philadelphia. He wrote it as a version of the traditional "Mourner's Kaddish in Time of War." Though the kaddish is, of course, a Jewish prayer, the Shalom Center offers this prayer in the hope that it may be spiritually helpful for people of other traditions. We include the rabbi's prayer so that you may adapt it and use it in devotional or liturgical settings.

MOURNERS' KADDISH IN TIME OF WAR

[The Jewish prayer that is used to mourn the dead is the Kaddish, though it has in it only one word - "nechamot, consolations" - which hints at mourning. In this version, changes in the last line of the Hebrew text specifically include not only peace for the people Israel (as in the traditional version) but also for the children of Abraham and Hagar through Ishmael (Arabs and Muslims) and for all who dwell on this planet.

[The interpretive English addresses the meaning of "shmei rabbah," the "Great Name," which is interpreted as that name which includes all the names of all beings in the universe and which is also present within all beings; it suggests why in the midst of saying we cannot praise, celebrate, or sing to God enough to meet the Reality, we also say we cannot CONSOLE (nechamot) God enough -- that for the killing of one human, bearing the Image of God, by another -- for this, God is inconsolable; in the next-to-last verse it focuses on preserving life for those of our own [Jewish] "family," the Godwrestlers, and then in the last verse it prays for shalom for us [those immediately present], for all the Godwrestling folk (Israel), for all the children of Ishmael, and for all peoples.]

May the Great Name, through our expanding awareness and our fuller action, lift Itself to become still higher and more holy;

May our names, along with all the names of all the beings in the universe, live within the Great Name;

May the names of all whom we can no longer touch but who have touched our hearts and lives, remain alight within our memories and in the Great Name;

May the names of all who have died in violence and war be kept alight in our sight and in the Great Name, with sorrow that we were not yet able to shape a world in which they would have lived.

May the Great Name, bearing ALL these names, live within each one of us;

(Congregation: Amen.)

May Your Great Name lift Itself still higher and more holy throughout the world that You have offered us, a world of majestic peaceful order that gives life to the Godwrestling folk through time and through eternity. And let's say, Amen.

(Congregation: Amen)

So therefore may the Great Name be blessed, through every Mystery and Mastery of every universe.

May the Great Name be blessed and celebrated, Its beauty honored and raised high; may It be lifted and carried, may Its radiance be praised in all Its Holiness. Blessed be!

Even though we cannot give You enough blessing, enough song, enough praise, enough consolation to match what we wish to lay before You,

And though we know that today there is no way to console You when among us some who bear Your Image in our being are slaughtering others who bear Your Image in our being.

Still we beseech that from the unity of Your Great Name flow great harmony and joyful life for the Godwrestling folk;

(Congregation: Amen)

You who make harmony in the ultimate reaches of the universe, teach us to make harmony within ourselves, among ourselves -- and peace for the Godwrestling folk, the people Israel; for our cousins the children of Ishmael; and for all who dwell upon this planet.

(Congregation: Amen)

Prayers, Hymns and Spiritual Songs

The National Council of Churches is encouraging religious communities to engage in prayers for peace, and has launched a new website providing prayers, litanies, scripture texts, poems and other materials, from a variety of traditions, to aid in these prayers. The web site is <http://ent.groundspring.org/EmailNow/pub.php?module=URLTracker&cmd=track&j=89832462&u=838922>.

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 9 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.

Hundreds Surprised by God at World Mission Conference in Green Lake

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 8/4/06)—Nearly 500 people gathered at Green Lake, Wisc, from Saturday, July 29 to Friday, Aug. 4 to receive information and inspiration at International Ministries' (IM) annual World Mission Conference.

With a theme of "Surprised by Prayer: Mission and the Untamed God," attendees experienced God at work in prayer, preaching, worship, and workshops led by 32 missionaries, IM staff, and 13 partners or other special guests from around the world.

Acting Executive Director Rev. Charles Jones said, "This year, our conference truly lived out its theme. This event from the planning to the execution was bathed in prayer. And our untamed God responded in ways that surprised us with both blessings and challenges from our missionaries, partners, and staff." Jones continued, "The workshops, Bible studies, worship, and other activities have all provoked a sense of greater sacrifice to remain committed and focused on the global impact American Baptists have through International Ministries."

"There were many rich and spiritually gratifying moments during this WMC, and participants and presenters will take away many useful tools to help them in their various ministries," said Dr. Leo Thorne, Associate General Secretary of American Baptist Churches (ABC). Thorne, who leads Mission Resource Development for the denomination, added "The week was truly inspirational, and IM represented Christ and ABC's mission and ministry very well."

The conference has highlighted the surprises of God as career missionaries and their national partners in various countries work to share God's word and do good works in substantive ways. Missionaries from countries as diverse as Belgium, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nicaragua, Japan, and Thailand, as well as partners from Hong Kong and Jamaica told stories of how God has surprised in mission. In one particularly moving moment, a Brazilian international guest shared his experiences of working with an indigenous people group in a remote part of the Amazon. He made six trips, with several members of the team he was travelling with dying each time, before he effectively made contact with the people group. He persevered despite being forced to go on alone, suffering from malaria, and being tied to a post for 40 days.

Although other sessions were not so dramatic in their outcomes, they were equally surprising. Malkhaz Songulashvili, bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Republic of Georgia, shared in a moving sermon on Sunday how members of his Cathedral Baptist Church decided during one Christmas to support Muslims from Chechnya, who were refugees in Georgia, despite a long history of Chechen atrocities against Georgians. Songulashvili also surprised American Baptists with his culturally relevant and contextually reclaimed forms of Orthodox worship among Georgian Baptists, leading attendees in communion and an anointing service.

"When Bishop Malkaz spoke of 'truth-ing,' he gave us all the insight that there is a 'doing' dimension to truth," said Thorne.

Another surprise was the ability of IM to bring in Dr. Martin Accad, academic dean of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut, to the conference. Accad has been stranded in the U.S. since conflict and war broke out between Israel and Hezbollah in mid-July, with Lebanon being caught up in the conflict.

"From a human perspective there is no hope, but this is the strength of what we can do in Christ," Accad said, adding he desired to provide another perspective to the Western church and called for Baptists and the universal church to be engaged in the current conflict.

Accad said he hopes American and other Western Christians will change some of their theological and Biblical views as they are challenged to minister to those who are hurt in the war. "American Christians have taken food and mattresses and covers, and have provided entertainment and times of worship and sharing with the very people their own government is calling terrorists, and that is what I mean by demonstrating love to conventional enemies. That is one of the most positive things that could happen," said Accad.

Young adults also played an active role in this year's conference, leading worship one night and sharing testimonies from two Xtreme Team trips to Bolivia and Brazil. [Xtreme Team](#), which is a month-long mission immersion experience for young adults ages 19 to 29, took more than a dozen young adults, alumni leaders, and career missionaries into remote areas of the two South American countries. The teams were exposed to the lives of people living in garbage dumps, those forced into prostitution, or people living in remote areas that are almost impossible to reach.

Asian Ministries Retreat and Convention Support

Asian Church Leadership

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 8/8/06)—Asian American Baptist church leaders anticipate they will gain renewed vision for their ministries during events in Seattle, Wash., August 17 to 19. A retreat for pastors, seminarians and young adults will be held first, leading into the First Asian American Baptist Convention, which begins August 18.

"We want to help Asian churches build strategies to reach their missional goals within varied contexts," says Rev. Florence Li, National Ministries' Asian churches strategist and National Coordinator for Intercultural Ministries. "The backdrop is transitions among American Baptist churches, as traditional approaches to church mission face contemporary issues."

Both events provide opportunities for representatives of Asian churches to hear perspectives from leaders of American Baptist Churches USA. General Secretary Dr. A. Roy Medley will address the gathering, as will Executive Director Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, from National Ministries, and Acting Executive Director Dr. Charles Jones, from International Ministries.

At the convention, Dr. Sam Chetti, executive minister of the Los Angeles Baptist City Mission Society, will share his experiences in that region from 30 years of service. Other events include interest group sessions on National Ministries' Children in Poverty Initiative and International Ministries' country-specific mission possibilities, in addition to sessions on effective church planting efforts and reaching the younger generation.

The convention offers a question to consider: "How then shall we serve?" The retreat will be guided by another question: "How then shall we live?"

This year's retreat highlights the need to recognize diversity in the group called "Asians" as a whole. From within that cultural framework, facilitators will engage participants in dialogue with specific mission objectives related to American Baptist Churches USA. Groups will form during the retreat for spiritual refreshment and connectedness, which will include enjoying the tranquility of a traditional Japanese tea ceremony and journeying in prayer on a labyrinth walk.

Rev. Donald Ng, senior pastor of First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco, Calif., who served many years in Christian education at the national level, will be speaking at the retreat. Rev. Zau Ya Lahpai, pastor of the Burmese Christian Community Church of Silicon Valley in San José, Calif., will offer his ministry gifts in a Bible study.

Holy Relationships for All People

On Sunday, August 27, 2006, from 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. at Grace Baptist Church, 5253 N. Kenmore, Chicago, Rev. Rich McCarty and team members of the Holy Relationships movement will facilitate a discussion group on the qualities of holy relationships for all people, with a particular focus on gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, and transgender relationships. "Holy Relationships" is an ecumenical movement that began in 2003 in New Brunswick, NJ, and is now coming to the Midwest. Story-telling and guided discussion will make for an enriching afternoon of conversation.

Information will also be presented on the upcoming Holy Relationships Midwest Regional Conference (see www.holyrelationshipsmidwest.org). Please make your reservations for Grace Baptist Church's event by Thursday, August 24. RSVP to 773-334-9003 or pastor@gracebaptistchicago.com.

For a map or further information about Grace, please visit Grace's website, www.gracebaptistchicago.com. The church is located 2 blocks east of the Red Line's Berwyn stop, at the corner of Kenmore and Berwyn Avenues (in the Epworth United Methodist Church building). The parking lot is 1/2 block north of the church on the west side of Kenmore Avenue.

Healthcare Sabbath

Over 100 faith communities across Illinois are making plans to observe a "Healthcare Sabbath" on September 17. Toolkits (34 page PDF document) from the Campaign for Better Health Care (CBHC) are available online at www.cbhconline.org/hcjc/toolkit.htm.

In the toolkit, you will find one option for congregational advocacy called 'Calls of Conscience'. CBHC is inviting congregations and organizations to help them make Health Care the number one domestic issue in the Fall Elections. Using our collection of health care stories and personal testimony from recent hearings, CBHC is creating listserves that show the injustice of health care disparity and ask the reader to phone candidates with the message that we want health care justice in Illinois. Health Care Justice MEANS Everybody In, Nobody Out! Your congregation can participate with bulletin inserts following the Health Care Sabbath. Contact Jessica Palys at jpals@cbhconline.org if you would like to sign up.

Healthcare Sabbath Speakers

Betsy Ritzman, Director of AIDS Pastoral Care Network, has let us know that she personally and her staff as well are available to do pulpit supply or guest preaching in observance of the Healthcare Sabbath. You can reach Betsy at 773.257.6770 or betsyritz@comcast.net.

Faith and Health Conference

A Faith & Health Conference will take place on Saturday, August 26. Attend this exciting event with moving speakers, educational workshops and exhibitions at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Student Center West. The conference is free. Register in advance at www.cityofchicago.org/health. Click on the icon of the outstretched arms.

Healthy Congregations Workshop

The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC) will offer a "Healthy Congregations" workshop on September 22-23, 2006 in Glen Ellyn, IL.

With churches of all denominations experiencing **rising levels of anxiety**, the content of the workshop is highly relevant for all serving in leadership roles. LMPC wants to make all clergy and lay leaders aware of this valuable learning opportunity.

The Friday night and Saturday workshop will help participants:

- Learn how to **keep anxiety from being infectious**.
- Learn how to put limits on invasive behavior, **manage reactivity**, and overcome sabotage.
- Discover how leaders can function as the **congregation's immune system**.
- Learn to **focus on strengths**, resources, options and the future.

The workshop focuses on helping to foster healthy congregations. **Clergy cannot take on that task alone**; they need the support of wise and committed lay leaders. Pastors who work in isolation trying to implement ideas gleaned from the workshop will inevitably run into resistance. Pastors who have attended the workshop in the past with a group of lay leaders have found that they can depend on others to back them up in challenging the church to grow in health and wholeness. In order **to encourage teams of clergy and lay leaders to attend the workshop together**, you will find enclosed a discount coupon to be used when four or more people are attending from the same congregation.

Here are some comments from past attendees:

"I've attended a lot of workshops that were not the best use of time. This one was very, very valuable"

"It was a highly well-presented program with an incredible amount of useable information that can help both our church and ourselves towards a more effective ministry to each other and to our community."

"It was a great workshop to take a look at how to deal with anxiety within the congregation."

"It was very helpful to learn this systems approach."

"It was a great help to me. I would encourage church members and pastors to attend."

The pre-registration deadline is September 8. The registration brochure and group discount coupon are both available on the LMPC website (www.LMPeaceCenter.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.

Together in Ministry

Together in Ministry 2006 evaluation forms have been for some time posted on the web <http://www.ministerscouncil.com/TogetherInMinistry/> under 2006 Forms to Submit, along with the 2007 application form. Please take note, any TIM groups that have current grants and/or might wish to apply for 2007 funding.

Practicing Our Faith Grant

For the second time, the Ministers Council of Valley Forge has been awarded a \$10,000 Valparaiso Project Practicing Our Faith grant. The grant will fund a year-long program for national leaders on the faith practice of testimony. The series will be shaped around monthly luncheons for prayer, reading and conversation about experiences of God in daily life and how God strengthens for mission.

The Valley Forge Ministers Council convenes pastoral leaders called to positions of national denominational leadership and based in the Mission Center. The previous Valparaiso Project grant in the 2002 and 2003 program year funded monthly luncheon gatherings for leaders who manage numerous responsibilities and heavy travel schedules, on the faith practice of honoring the body.

The philosophy of practices opens the possibility of new ways of being through communal conversation and sharing of stories and struggles, alongside the wisdom of our faith. Further information is available at <http://www.practicingourfaith.org/>.

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.

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 in prayer the people of Lebanon and of Israel, as well as other parts of Palestine.

Please pray for Emma Justes, newly retired from the faculty of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. Emma was recently hospitalized, and is now back home.

Please pray for Chuck Armstrong as he recovers from brain surgery, and for his wife Cathy, as well as for the medical and health care professionals caring for him.

Please pray for all children living in poverty.

Please hold in prayer Francis Cardinal George of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago as he continues to recover from surgery for bladder cancer.

In the aftermath of this summer's sizzling heat, please join the Federated Church of Wauconda and the Community Church of Wilmette in prayers of thanksgiving for recent gifts making it possible to air condition their sanctuaries.

Calendar

August 17-19—Asian Ministries Conference, Seattle, WA.

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

August 26—Faith and Health Conference, University of Illinois at Chicago. Go to www.cityofchicago.org/health for more information and registration.

August 26—Family Council meeting. **RESCHEDULED to September 23.**

August 27—Holy Relationships for All People, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m., Grace Baptist Church, 5253 N. Kenmore Avenue, Chicago. RSVP by August 24 to 773-334-9003.

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.

September 10—Installation of Rev. George V. “Tripp” Hudgins, III as pastor of the Community Church of Wilmette, 1020 Forest Avenue, Wilmette.

September 16—ABCMC Family Cabinet meeting, 9:30 a.m., ABCMC office, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Suite 240, Chicago. Please phone Tony at 773-695-9791 with your attendance plans.

September 17—Healthcare Sabbath

September 22-23—“Healthy Congregations” workshop, Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC), Glen Ellyn. Register by September 8.

September 23—ABCMC Family Council Meeting, Montrose Baptist Church, 4411 N. Melvina, Chicago. Registration 8:30 a.m. Please phone Tony at 773-695-9791 with your attendance plans no later than September 20.

November 10-11—ABCMC Annual Meeting.

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

December 7-9—“The Call to an Ancient Evangelical Future” conference, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Lombard, at the Lindner Conference Center. For cost and registration information go to www.growcenter.org.

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.”

April 14-17, 2008—National Workshop on Christian Unity.

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 necessarily 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. We 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.