

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
covering a wide variety of interests reflecting the diversity of our region.

June 27, 2007

Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
Hebrews 12:14

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ABCMC NEWS

Email for ABCMC Staff and Office

We are phasing out the email address abcmchi@aol.com as the general email box for ABCMC. Beginning immediately, please send emails to ABCMC staff members individually. Staff email addresses are as follows:

Larry Greenfield, Executive Minister	larry@abcmc.org
Tony Rake, Office Assistant	tony@abcmc.org
Jesse Smith, Bookkeeper	BookkeeperJesse@aol.com
Lynne Kelley, Communication Coordinator	lynne@abcmc.org
Lowell Young, Mission Support Associate	lowell@abcmc.org

If you're not sure which staff member to contact, you may use the general office email address, office@abcmc.org.

Please note that the bookkeeper's email address is at aol.com. Email to other staff members goes to abcmc.org.

Saturday! Co-operating Church Annual Report -- Due June 30th!

Your church should recently have received from Valley Forge the 2006 Cooperating Church Annual Report form. This annual survey of all American Baptist churches is a very important tool for the ministries of both our denomination and our region, and we strongly encourage every church to complete and return the form. The due date is June 30th.

Your church's completed report should be mailed or faxed to Valley Forge. The address and fax number are included on the form, and a return envelope should have been included with the mailing you received.

If you don't want to or cannot readily provide some of the information requested on the form, just skip those sections. We would much rather have you submit a report with partial information than no report at all.

The report also can be completed on-line; directions for that option are included on the paper form you received. If you have questions, feel free to contact Lynne Kelley at the ABC-MC office, 773-695-9791, or T.J. Litwiler, ABC-MC Treasurer, at 312-252-1508. Many thanks for your help on this important process.

Illinois Health Care Action Requested

ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield is a part of the Faith Caucus of the Illinois Campaigns for Better Health Care. Recently the Campaign sent out a letter to Faith Caucus members. Larry drafted that letter for the Campaign. Larry would be delighted for friends and colleagues to join him in the communication

Faith Caucus issues Statement on IL Budget

Dear Faith Caucus Member,

Thanks to all who were able to join our Faith Caucus Conference Call Monday! Many religious leaders discussed their frustration with the failure of the legislature to pass a fair and sustainable budget that funds health care, education and other services. With the failure of the legislature during the Spring Session to pass a fair and sustainable budget, we resolved to issue a joint statement to all legislators during this overtime session urging substantial steps toward adequate funding for the needs of all Illinoisans. Please read the statement [here](#) and consider adding your signature. You can sign on electronically [here](#). The minutes of the meeting are available as a pdf [here](#).

COMMUNITY NEWS

Northern Seminary and Judson College Resolve to Explore an Expanded Partnership

This article is from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Wednesday, June 27, 2007

LOMBARD, IL--The Board of Trustees of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary (Northern) located in Lombard, Illinois, at its meeting of May 31, 2007, adopted a resolution to make the Seminary more responsive to the needs of the 21st century church. That resolution reads, "The Board of Trustees of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary resolves to implement a bold vision for the preparation of leaders for the Church of Jesus Christ by creating a new model for theological education using creative methods and new venues."

The resolution goes on to state Northern's intention to explore expanded partnership with Judson College (aka University) located in Elgin, Illinois. A similar resolution passed by the Executive Committee of the Judson College Board of Trustees commits the College to "actively participate in the discussions to assist our mother school in their efforts to implement and expand [their] vision for the preparation of leaders for the Church of Jesus Christ by creating a new model for theological education using creative methods and new ventures."

This decision has history on its side. Judson and Northern were one institution, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. Founded in 1913, it was both a graduate and undergraduate school. In 1963 the undergraduate school, named Judson College, separated from Northern and moved to its current Elgin, Illinois campus.

The current resolution by Northern's Board reflects its desire to move to a model of seminary education which is responsive to the needs of the 21st century church. This means having less of the seminary's assets in land and buildings. It makes it possible for the seminary to respond innovatively and promptly to fulfill its mission of preparing pastoral leaders. It further underscores the view of Trustees that education must be delivered to students where they are, both geographically and technologically, and at a cost that reverses the current trend pricing seminary education out of reach of many who are called to serve the Church.

The Board further affirmed its commitment to continue holding classes in the Lombard area. People who have chosen to come to Northern because of its location in Lombard will continue to be served. In the fall of this year Northern plans to launch a satellite in Rockford, IL. It is the prototype for establishing multiple regional teaching sites. Because the Board specifically wants Northern to provide seminary training in the urban context, at least one of those sites is planned for the city of Chicago.

Northern will also offer the first of a planned series of on-line courses this fall. It will start with a not-for-credit offering of "Seminary Success," a popular introduction to the skills and background needed in doing graduate level work in theological education.

Implementing the Board's resolution will require careful planning and prayerful execution over time. The final result will be a Seminary that will more effectively carry out its mission "to educate leaders for the churches who will be personally whole and spiritually mature, biblically grounded and theologically competent, pastoral, evangelistic and prophetic."

All inquiries should be directed to the Office of the President, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 660 E. Butterfield Road, Lombard IL, 60148.

Oppose Immigration Reform Compromise Unless Improved

This article is from Interfaith Worker Justice.

The U.S. Senate is set to resume debate on immigration reform this week. [Interfaith Worker Justice](#) believes that the current bill is mean-spirited, punitive and provides few worker protections for guestworker programs. Although there are some proposed amendments that would slightly improve the bill, many would make it worse. If passed, the bill would:

- * Create a huge guestworker program with inadequate worker protections.
- * Alter the core principles of immigration from a system meant to keep families intact to one that favors immigrants with money and education.
- * Spend billions of dollars on building fences while doing nothing to address the root causes of immigration (poverty and war).
- * Establish a needlessly difficult, lengthy and expensive path to citizenship.

Interfaith Worker Justice knows the U.S. needs immigration reform. Having 12 million undocumented immigrants in the country places immigrants themselves in vulnerable positions, and undermines working conditions for all U.S. workers.

Because U.S. economic and political policies are serving the rich better than working families, many in the society are angry about jobs that have moved overseas with no regard for communities, wages and benefits that have stagnated or declined, and schools that don't prepare young people for tomorrow's jobs. Immigrants are not the cause of the nation's lack of economic and political policies that serve working families.

All our religious traditions call for welcoming the immigrant. This Senate bill does not welcome the immigrant.

[Please send a letter to your Senators](#) early this week opposing the current Senate immigration bill unless it is changed to create a reasonable and speedy path to citizenship for large numbers of immigrants, unify families and reaffirm family-based immigration, and offer strong worker protections and enforcements. You can send a letter from the IWJ website using the sample letter. Also, please forward this alert to friends and family. Now is the time for action.

Thinking Theologically

ABCMA's Executive Minister pens a fortnightly column for Protestants for the Common Good. His latest column, "Persistence and Consistency," is attached to this issue of *eWind*.

ABCUSA NEWS

Cleveland Baptist Association

Elects Rev. Dr. Leonard Thompson, Sr. as Executive Minister

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 06/21/07) -- The Reverend Dr. Leonard Thompson, Sr. was extended a call to serve as the eighth executive minister of the Cleveland Baptist Association by a unanimous vote at a special meeting of the Board of Trustees on June 19. Currently, he is a hospice chaplain with Vitas Healthcare Corporation, the nation's largest hospice organization, in South Chicagoland, Illinois.

Rev. Dr. Thompson is a native of Philadelphia, Pa, and an ordained minister of the American Baptist Churches, USA.

He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Bible/Social Work from the Philadelphia College of the Bible, a Bachelor of Divinity degree in Theology from the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church, a Master of Divinity degree in Parish Ministry from the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Master of Sacred Theology degree in Practical Theology from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and a Doctor of Ministry degree in Parish Ministry from the Lancaster Theological Seminary.

He served as the Cross-Cultural Ministries and Missionary Recruitment Manager with the American Missionary Fellowship, and as a short-term foreign missionary in Tanzania, East Africa. Leonard was the dean of students and director of the Evening School of the Manna Bible Institute and an adjunct faculty member at the Center for Urban Theological Studies. He has served as the assistant pastor of the Wayland Memorial Baptist Church in Philadelphia, PA, Pastor of the Galilee Baptist Church, Philadelphia, pastor of the Union Baptist Church in Hartford, CT, and pastor of the Zion Baptist Church in Cincinnati, OH, where the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss also pastored and where the Rev. Dr. Dennis E. Norris is currently serving as interim pastor.

He served as associate executive minister for Regional Outreach with the Philadelphia Baptist Association. He was responsible for managing and developing the "home mission" ministry of the association, including community outreach, evangelism, new church planting, and leadership development. In addition he served as area minister to a number of local churches, offering personal and professional support to pastors and congregations. Later, he served as the executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago, where he provided personal and professional support to 66 churches and pastors in the region.

Leonard is married and he and his wife, Carolyn, have two sons: Leonard, Jr., 22, and Shir-Ami, 18.

Dr. Thompson's call follows a nine-month nationwide search conducted by the CBA Executive Minister Search Committee, chaired by Deacon Francine Watt of Pathway to Christ Church. The other members of the Committee were Elaine Krassowski, Columbia Baptist; Rev. Dr. William Noyes, Lakewood Baptist; Rev. Dr. Earl Simpson, Cornerstone Baptist; Rev. Camille Brown, Grace Tabernacle; Joanne Hornak, Fairview Community Church; Rev. Dr. Andrew Edwards, Fellowship Baptist Church; Rev. William Sanders, Lee Road Baptist Church; and G. Michael Skerritt, First Baptist of Greater Cleveland. The committee was unanimous in its action at every step of the search process, including its final recommendation that Dr. Thompson be called as CBA's next executive minister.

Dr. Thompson will begin his tenure on or after September 1. He succeeds the Rev. Dr. Dennis E. Norris who retired in 2005 after 15 years of service in the position. The Rev. James T. Oldham has served as interim executive minister since that time and will continue to serve in that capacity until Dr. Thompson begins his term of service.

Supreme Court Ruling Disappointing

This article is from the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty.

June 25, 2007

Supreme Court Limits Challenges to Administration's Faith-Based Initiative



WASHINGTON — In a 5-4 opinion, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that citizens do not have standing as taxpayers to sue the government over portions of the President's Faith-Based Initiative.

In this case, the Freedom from Religion Foundation challenged aspects of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, specifically several conferences designed to increase the participation of religious groups in providing social services. The Foundation claims the conferences were vehicles for proselytization and violated the Constitution's protection against government establishment of religion. The government argues that the plaintiffs lack standing to sue. The issue of "standing to sue" requires plaintiffs to show they are appropriate parties to a lawsuit, including that have been injured by a defendant's action. In *Flast v. Cohen*, the Supreme Court recognized that taxpayers may satisfy standing requirements when challenging government spending in violation of the Establishment Clause.

In *Hein*, the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty filed an amicus brief with other organizations supportive of church-state separation. In it, BJC General Counsel K. Hollyn Hollman argued that the Court's previous decision in *Flast v. Cohen* "is consistent with, and remains vital to, [the Supreme Court's] standing jurisprudence."

"When taxes levied and appropriated by Congress are spent in violation of the Establishment Clause, a taxpayer may constitutionally challenge such expenditures because he suffers a direct and concrete injury that is caused by the illegal expenditure and that would be redressed by enjoining it," the BJC brief states. BJC Executive Director J. Brent Walker expressed disappointment in the decision, but said there was some good news in it, as well.

"Justice Alito's plurality opinion expressly declines to overrule *Flast*," Walker said. "When combined with the dissenters, seven justices embraced *Flast*, with only Justices Scalia and Thomas voting to overrule it. "It will be more difficult to challenge discretionary executive branch spending under the Establishment Clause. Nothing has changed when it comes to challenging the exercise of Congress's taxing and spending powers to promote religion," Walker said.

The BJC's amicus brief is available online at www.BJConline.org. The case is *Hein v. Freedom from Religion Foundation*.

"Call Senators Right Now," Says CWS:

"Make Sure Immigration Reforms Are Just and Humane"

June 26, 2007

New York--Just minutes after the U.S. Senate voted to reopen debate on the immigration bill, Church World Service has issued a call to its constituents to phone their senators asking them to support provisions the global humanitarian and refugee assistance agency believes are key to a fair and humane policy.

"We're asking people to take just five minutes, right now while they can still influence their senators, to make a couple of calls that could help the millions of families in America whose lives would be affected by reforms in this country's immigration laws," said Joe Roberson who heads CWS's immigration and refugee program.

After today's Senate vote to resume debate on the Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Reform Act (S. 1639), the Senate will consider a series of amendments and could take final action on the bill on Friday.

"Church World Service is especially concerned that our lawmakers in Washington support amendment provisions that embrace family unity, a safe and fair worker program, and a purposeful, rather than punitive, earned legalization program," Roberson explained.

The agency is asking people to urge their senators to support several reform provisions, including protections of family unity; a safe and fair worker program; a purposeful, rather than punitive, earned legalization program; smart, targeted enforcement; a mandate that police ensure the safety of all, not serve as immigration officials; and safeguards for asylum seekers.

People wishing to respond to the CWS call to action can read and download the full action alert at www.churchworldservice.org. Callers can also reach their senators through the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

New York-based Church World Service is one of ten agencies the State Department works with to resettle refugees in this country.

Medley Urges American Baptists to Go Forward from Centennial

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 06/25/07) -- American Baptist Churches USA, preparing to celebrate the denomination's centennial, opened its annual General Board meeting here this week with a celebration of its history and current mission work.

General Secretary A. Roy Medley told the board's first plenary session that "on the occasion of our centennial celebration, God is calling us to 'arise and shine' and be the hands and feet of Jesus."

Medley addressed about 100 board members and staff on Sunday night in Washington's historic Shiloh Baptist Church, before the denomination's Biennial convention and its "Centennial Day" next weekend.

"It is an awesome thing to recall," he said, "that 100 years ago, here in Washington, our spiritual predecessors gathered to create the Northern Baptist Convention. Here at this century mark, we gather to recall God's faithfulness, and a century of ministry that has been expansive, prophetic and evangelistic."

Other speakers described the church's response to Hurricane Katrina and to the tornado that leveled Greensburg, Kan., earlier this year. Board members also looked to the future by honoring pastors and congregations of a new group, the American Baptist Congregations of the Southwest and Hawaii.

Medley traced briefly the history of American Baptist Churches USA, noting that, awaiiHa "Over the years we have been instrumental in planting and strengthening congregations. We have been in the forefront of welcoming immigrants and planting churches among them, and offering needed ministry and advocacy, whether they be Scandinavian, German, Italian, Haitian, African, Asian or Latino.

"We participated in founding the Baptist World Alliance, the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches, and most recently Christian Churches Together, because we believe in the unity of the church and cooperative ministry with other Christians.

"At this beginning of the second century of this body, this movement, this denomination, this family, this band of sisters and brothers, this community of disciples, we look to a future that will be marked by significant opportunities for ministry and that will call for ongoing significant change."

Medley also described his visit in April to the Republic of Georgia, and noted that there are now about 60 Baptist congregations in that country. Worship there “was rich,” he said, “whether in the cathedral, in a chapel, in the ruins of an ancient church, or on a mountaintop.”

He concluded by thanking the board members “for your commitment to the body of Christ and its expression called American Baptist Churches. Thank you for the gift of your talents, wisdom, resources, skills and prayers in leading us into this second century of our life.”

The honoring of pastors and congregations in the new group marked the denomination’s effort to encourage congregations that chose to remain American Baptist following the withdrawal of the Pacific Southwest region a few months ago. Pastors honored with their congregations were Dr. Alonso A. Cooper, University Avenue Baptist Church, San Diego; the Rev. Stanley A. Crews, Monte Vista Baptist Church, Phoenix, Ariz.; Dr. Joseph H. DeRoulhac, First Baptist Church, Redlands, Calif.; Dr. William E. Godwin, University Baptist Church, Palm Desert, Calif.; the Rev. José T. Guerra and the Rev. Chuck Shawver, Living Hope Baptist Church, Bakersfield, Calif.; the Rev. W. James Kilinsky, One in Christ Church, National City, Calif.; and Dr. Warren H. Stewart, Sr., First Institutional Baptist Church, Phoenix.

Board members also voted to commend Coach C. Vivian Stringer of Rutgers University for her Christian witness during the controversy over remarks about her basketball team by radio personality Don Imus.

American Baptist Churches USA traces its origins to a split with churches in the South before the Civil War. Northern churches continued in an informal association for more than half a century through their societies for publication and for home and foreign missions. A call in 1906 by the Chicago Baptist Association “for more denominational unity” led to the formation of the Northern Baptist Convention in Washington’s Calvary Baptist Church on May 16-17, 1907. Many of this week’s board meetings are being held at Calvary.

The denomination’s first president was New York Gov. Charles Evans Hughes. It later renamed itself the American Baptist Convention and then American Baptist Churches USA.

American Baptist Churches Gather for Biennial/Centennial Celebration June 29-July 2 in Washington, D. C.

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 06/21/07) -- American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) will celebrate the centennial of its founding at the Convention Center in Washington, D.C. starting at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, June 29. The event will open with a historic joint worship session that includes thousands of Baptists not only from ABCUSA, but also from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Progressive National Baptists and the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention. The last two groups based in Washington, D.C.. The rest of the weekend includes a series of uplifting events and ends on a spiritual high at Monday’s great commissioning evening service.

Pre-Biennial Events Offer Special Training and Education

Special training and education sessions precede ABCUSA’s Biennial/Centennial, including Thursday’s “Seeing the Children – Transforming the Church,” at Howard University Divinity School in Washington, DC. The aim of this program is to discover creative ministry models that meet the needs of children living in poverty, especially important after Hurricane Katrina. There will also be special training for ministers on Thursday. Nationally known author and consultant Dr. Gil Rendle, author of Behavioral Covenants in Congregations, will lead training: “Telling a better story: shaping the hopes and fears of the people.” Another event will be aimed at ministers interested in learning about the dynamics and tasks of intentional interim ministry.

Press Conference Set for Friday

An historic joint press conference is set for 4 p.m., Friday, June 29, in Room 209-A of the Washington, DC Convention Center. This is the day of overlap scheduling by the American Baptist Churches, USA and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

100 Years of Living and Loving

Saturday is ABCUSA Centennial Day. It begins with Bible study at 8:30 a.m. with Tony Campolo, perhaps the best known American Baptist preacher. This will be followed by a 10:00 a.m. service of worship, praise, thanksgiving and commitment. Our presenters will be “emerging voices” – young American Baptists calling us into our future.

The highlight of the three-day event is the celebration of the denomination’s 100th anniversary. This event will take place at 4:00 p.m. Saturday, June 30, at the Washington, D.C. Convention Center.

Lauran Bethell, world-renowned for her work in stopping human trafficking and winner of the Baptist World Alliance Human Rights Award presented in 2005 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter in England, will close the event on Monday evening with a powerful talk that urges American Baptists to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit in taking on causes for social justice.

American Baptist Churches of the USA (ABCUSA) is a uniquely diverse gathering of believers that cuts across all of societies’ groups. Among our 1.5 million members, who are spread across 5,800 churches, American Baptists have no racial majority. We believe this remarkable diversity is the result of decades of working together to overcome our differences to truly become the hands and feet of Christ in service to society.

ABCUSA Board Continues “Adaptive Change” Process

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 06/25/07) -- The General Board of American Baptist Churches USA, meeting here this week, took another step in discussing an ongoing process of “adaptive change” to better position the denomination for the future.

General Secretary A. Roy Medley told board members that the process is designed “to help us become more nimble and effective in how we carry out the work of this great denomination as we move into our second century.”

He noted that more than a year ago the General Executive Committee identified four areas of special concern—leadership, structure, the representative process and relevance. At a meeting last November, the General Board discussed the early draft of a reorganization proposal and returned it to a writing team for refinements.

At its Monday session here, board members raised questions, concerns and positive points about the plan, which focuses on the church’s “missional” nature and reaffirms the importance of local congregations. Some speakers urged that the latter point be addressed further to show how that reaffirmation would take place.

In considering the reorganization issue last year, the General Executive Committee agreed upon a number of priorities, leading with “protecting and securing the local church as the fundamental unit of mission.” Other major points of consideration included: respect for diversity and inclusiveness; improving the ABCUSA’s financial position in various ways; enabling better oversight of ministry and mission outcomes; committing to clear accountability in all circumstances; determining how best to provide central office functions; and resolving or at least moving the denomination forward on the issue of homosexuality.

The additional feedback from the current General Board meeting will be factored into a process that envisions a formal vote a year from now by the board on an “adaptive change” plan and a second vote before the proposal is presented to the denomination’s 2009 Biennial meeting.

Shareholder Resolutions Challenge Corporations on Global Warming

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 06/21/07) -- In recent weeks, National Ministries participated in presenting and voting on shareholder resolutions at a spate of corporate annual meetings where boards of directors were asked to detail their companies’ plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The historically high vote tallies on these advisory resolutions indicate a growing recognition among investors that reining back harmful emissions is not only environmentally responsible but also a wise move to ensure a company’s long-term financial well-being.

National Ministries works in concert with more than 250 other faith-based investors at the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), for which global warming has been a priority since the early 1990s. Establishing the reality of “climate risk” in a landmark 2000 report was one way the ICCR opened the eyes of many corporate leaders and investors to companies’ self-interest in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Companies that move too late to reduce their contribution to global warming may be penalized by expected stricter legislation and may miss out on the opportunity to invest in renewable energy sources that are sure to become more economically important in the future.

Building on their history of studying, educating, and advocating change, ICCR members at the organization’s annual meeting in June 2006 adopted a strategy of introducing shareholder resolutions calling for greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, taking action company by company. National Ministries participates in such shareholder actions in the companies in which it owns shares.

The Rev. Margaret Cowden, Ph. D., National Ministries’ treasurer and chief financial officer as well as the treasurer of ICCR, is encouraged by the increasing support and concern shown by corporate shareholders. “We consider this to be very important justice work,” Cowden said. “We are delighted at the widespread support we are beginning to see at shareholder meetings.” Similarly-worded shareholder resolutions were introduced at several recent corporate annual meetings where National Ministries had votes to cast. These resolutions called on each board of directors to publicly adopt quantitative goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The number of votes cast in favor of these resolutions was significant in each case.

- April 25: nine percent of votes at the annual meeting of the oil company Chevron
- May 10: 14 percent of votes by shareholders in the automaker Ford Motor Company (translating to 23 percent of the vote if you take out the bloc of votes from the Ford family)
- May 23: nine percent of votes by investors at the annual meeting of the Southern Company, a large utility company
- June 5: 26 percent of votes by shareholders in the nation’s largest automaker, General Motors

The biggest success for the strategy came on May 30 at the annual meeting of Exxon Mobil, considered to be the world’s largest company in terms of market value as well as one of the companies most hostile toward scientists’ alerts about global warming. Leaders of the oil giant were put on notice when 31 percent of votes were cast for a resolution that read, “Resolved: Shareholders request that the Board of Directors adopt quantitative goals, based on current technologies, for reducing total greenhouse gas emissions from the Company’s products and operations.”

National Ministries and the ICCR intend to continue pressing leading producers of greenhouse gases to face the problems they are helping to create. The most effective dimension of the work takes place in corporate dialogues. The support from some of the largest shareholders in the

world offers additional pressure on the management and directors of the companies. These approaches give hope for mitigating the damaging effects of global warming now and in the decades to come.

Sister Patricia Daly, OP, who represents National Ministries in filing shareholder resolutions and in dialoguing with corporate executives, states, "There is, surprisingly, tremendous support for such a new strategy pressuring companies to develop the business plans to reduce emissions. We're involved in one of the most profound moral challenges of our day. I believe these successes indicate that people understand that we have a very limited amount of time to deal with global warming, the deadly effects on poor people throughout the planet, and the impact on God's creation itself."

American Baptist Women's Ministries Launches Podcast Series

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 06/21/07) -- American Baptist Women's Ministries announced today the launch of its new podcast production, Real Women, Real Leaders: The Podcast Series. The strategic plan for AB Women's Ministries calls for an increased emphasis on leadership development for women and girls. Real Women, Real Leaders: The Podcast Series continues what was begun with leadership training materials published by the organization in 2003, Real Women, Real Leaders: Dynamic Leadership for Women's Ministries.

The podcast series will cover such foundational topics as understanding oneself as called to serve, exploring one's gifts, discerning needs in the community, and expanding one's creativity. It will also include episodes addressing practical needs of recruiting volunteers, planning retreats and events, ideas for mission projects, etc.

Hosted by Rev. Sandra Hasenauer, associate executive director of AB Women's Ministries, future podcast episodes will include interviews with well-known American Baptist women such as Rev. Dr. Molly T. Marshall (president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary), Rev. Dr. Luran Bethell (global consultant, International Ministries), and Rev. Lisa Harris, (executive director of Bethel Neighborhood Center, Kansas City, Kansas). In addition, the series will include panel discussions, episodes written and recorded by girls and women in American Baptist churches, and much more.

"We recognize that podcasts are an important information source to more and more persons today, particularly younger generations," said Virginia Holmstrom, executive director of American Baptist Women's Ministries. "While there are many podcasts available on women's spirituality issues, there are few devoted to developing leaders for ministries with women and girls. This is our opportunity to fill a needed niche on leadership development, a topic in which AB Women's Ministries excels."

To listen to the introductory episode of Real Women, Real Leaders: The Podcast Series, visit <http://www.abwministries.org/resources/resource.cfm?ResourceID=629>. To subscribe directly to the podcast, the RSS syndication can be found at <http://abwm.libsyn.com/rss>. You may also subscribe through iTunes. Just search for "Real Women Real Leaders."

IM's Xtreme Team Mission Adventure Program

The Xtreme Team Mission Adventure Program has trained two teams of young adults to do mission outreach in Mexico and the Czech Republic this summer, International Ministries (IM), American Baptist Churches USA, announced.

Both teams participated in orientation in Philadelphia, PA, from June 23 through June 26, before departing for their mission destinations. Teams travel from June 26 to July 17. After debriefing

sessions, they will share their experience at the Xtreme Mission Xtravaganza at Six Flags Great Adventure theme park in Jackson, NJ on Saturday, July 21. It will be a day of Xcitement in the park as youth and young adults connect with the returning Xtreme Team participants. For more information, visit www.abcnj.net.

IM Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Reid Trulson, said "For the past 10 years Xtreme Teams have literally proven to be life changing for young adults xploring mission in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. No one could have predicted the surprising ways that God was going to use these Xtreme Team xperiences! The best we can do is to xpress our amazement and praise the Lord with one word – 'xcellent!'"

This summer marks the tenth anniversary of the Xtreme Team. Since 1998, 18 teams and nearly 200 young adults and leaders have been engaged in seeking where and how God may use them in global mission.

"Young adults on Xtreme Teams learn to Xercise their faith, Xtend their hands in friendship and service, Xpand their world view, Xamine their values and Xplore God's Word and world," said Jonathan Hilsher, IM's coordinator of Volunteers in Global Mission. Hilsher said the Xtreme Teams provide many opportunities for team members and their hosts to witness God at work.

During their travels, team members deepen their relationship with God while seeking where He wants to use them in the world. Team members are "Xpected to Xpress" what they have seen and heard when they return to their home churches and regions. "It was an incredible month; learning, seeing, touching, smelling, hearing and tasting what Bulgaria had to offer us and the rest of the world," said Craig White, a member of 2004's Xtreme team in Bulgaria.

Angela Sprock, member of the 2005 Xtreme Team to the Republic of Georgia called her experience in the Republic of Georgia "life changing!" She said "The Xtreme Team opened my eyes in understanding that the call to Christian discipleship is a call to change, to dare to be different, to live life to the fullest...to the Xtreme!"

Team members post regular online journals, photos and slideshows to highlight their Xperiences throughout the trip. To follow the adventures of this year's teams online, visit www.xtremeteamonline.org.

IM is a Baptist mission agency, established in 1814, which serves the more than 5,800 churches of the American Baptist Churches USA. Globally, IM relates to more than 500 educational institutions and 125 hospitals and medical facilities. Missionaries work in partnership with some 15,000 trained national workers, who serve about 22,000 congregations and nearly 3,000,000 baptized members.

Church Representatives from Six Continents Launch Forum for Peace in Palestine/Israel

This article is from the World Council of Churches.

June 21, 2007

(A WCC Update)-- A new ecumenical advocacy initiative launched at the culmination of a World Council of Churches (WCC) conference in Jordan this week, is to help churches worldwide work for a just peace in Palestine/Israel.

Called the "Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum," the initiative intends to be an instrument to "catalyze and co-ordinate new and existing church advocacy for peace." While aimed at "ending the illegal occupation in accordance with UN resolutions," it will be an expression of churches' "commitment to inter-religious action for peace and justice that serves all the peoples of the region."

In his closing remarks to over 130 representatives from churches and Christian organizations from six continents attending the 18-20 June conference "Churches together for peace and justice in the Middle East," WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia said the forum will be a "participatory group of churches and organizations meeting, interacting and cooperating in order to further a common cause..

"We expect churches worldwide to speak out with a clear voice and to stand by us in active solidarity in face of a tragic conflict that keeps Palestinians suffering and Israelis living with fear and that can only be solved with a just peace," said Bishop Munib Younan, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, speaking to journalists at the end of the conference.

As a "journey to seek peace," Kobia said, the forum ultimately "depends on everyone here and on the many churches looking with expectation to what we have begun in their name." The promise that the forum encompasses is that "wherever it is made, a united and credible witness of churches together changes the course of events."

The Amman Call

"The Amman Call," the forum's founding document adopted by the conference, acknowledges the fact that in Palestine/Israel "children of God--Christian, Muslim and Jew--are imprisoned in a deepening cycle of violence, humiliation and despair." But it also affirms that "the role of the churches is to heal and to bring all sides to reconciliation."

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum is to be guided by three fundamental imperatives: the ethical and theological imperative for a just peace; the ecumenical imperative for unity in action; and the Gospel imperative for costly solidarity.

Among the forum's top challenges is the need to "liberate all peoples of this land from the logic of hatred, mutual rejection and death, so that they see in the other the face and dignity of God," the document says.

A series of premises for the forum's action are based on WCC policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: pertinence of UN resolutions and Geneva conventions; two-state solution with self-determination, viability and legitimate security needs guaranteed to both; Palestinian refugees' right of return; open and shared Jerusalem; rejection of all violence whether perpetrated by Israelis or Palestinians; illegality of Israeli settlements and "separation barrier" in the Occupied Territories; and the centrality of the local churches' life and witness for worldwide church advocacy.

Next steps



Conference participants plant an olive tree offered by Palestinian Christians.

Photo: WCC

The WCC will convene a "core group" to begin implementing the conference recommendations, and to report to the next WCC executive committee meeting in September. The core group will base its proposal of an action plan on the outcomes of six working groups that deliberated during the Amman conference.

These groups made a number of recommendations about theological and biblical perspectives that need to inform the work of the forum; the impact of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and the responses of the churches; justice and reconciliation; models of church solidarity in action; economic measures that could help to advance the cause of peace; and international church advocacy.

The work of the groups was informed by the experience of churches affected by other deeply rooted conflicts in such countries as South Africa, Sudan, Colombia, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, as well as by the Armenian genocide.

The conference received a welcome message from the Jordanian government. The WCC general secretary and a small delegation met with Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad and discussed the churches' historic place in Jordanian society as well as Muslim-Christian dialogue and cooperation.

An olive tree offered by Christians from Palestine was planted on the banks of the Jordan River at a place traditionally considered as the site of Jesus' baptism, to mark the launch of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum. Greek Orthodox Bishop Benedictus, of Amman, led conference participants in a vespers service conducted at the site church.

The full text of **The Amman Call** is available.

Wright-Riggins among Curriculum Writers for Pan-Baptist Gathering

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 06/21/07) -- The curriculum prepared for next year's New Baptist Covenant Celebration prominently features a focus on biblically-mandated economic justice written by National Ministries' Executive Director, Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III. "God's Acceptable Economy" is part of the Luke 4 Project sample student and leader guides that are now available as an online, eight-lesson Bible study to prepare for and support the pan-Baptist gathering to be held Jan. 30 to Feb. 1, 2008 in Atlanta.

The New Baptist Covenant, convened by former President Jimmy Carter, is seeking to unite Baptists from across the country as participants in "Jesus' moral agenda" as expressed in Luke 4:18-19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

According to Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, "Our hope is that Baptists across North America will use these lessons in preparing their hearts, minds and hands to pursue Jesus' mission statement."

Wright-Riggins' perspective considers Jesus' recasting of the proclamation recorded in Isaiah 61—"the year of the Lord's favor"—as a call to embrace the prophetic concept of Jubilee and its foundation of economic justice and compassion. Living out Jubilee today, he maintains, means confronting the plight of children living in poverty, ending discrimination, advocating for a decent living wage for all, and challenging the excessive compensation of top corporate executives.

"While standing in the gap and being a repairer of the breach is not the most comfortable place to do ministry, it is the place where we most consistently experience the power and presence of Jesus," Wright-Riggins told EthicsDaily.com, the pan-Baptist news and commentary Web site.

"The Luke 4 Bible study project and the New Baptist Covenant provide us an opportunity to see Jesus in the faces of those whom we previously viewed with the hermeneutic of suspicion," he said. "Baptists are turning toward each other rather than on each other. As a result, our congregations, communities and culture are being transformed by the commitments we are making to each other and to the world for which Christ died and lives."

More information about the New Baptist Covenant, the 2008 celebration in Atlanta, and the preparatory curriculum is available at www.ethicsdaily.com.

Ministers Council

September Meeting in Metro Chicago

The Ministers Council of ABCMC will meet on Thursday, September 27 at North Shore Baptist Church, 5244 N. Lakewood Avenue, Chicago. The meeting, scheduled to take place from noon to 2 p.m., will feature guest speaker Douglas Sharp. Douglas, a professor of theology at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, is the author of *No Partiality: The Idolatry of Race and the New Humanity*. Racism will be his topic at the Ministers Council meeting.

If you would like to purchase a copy of his book, it is available from www.amazon.com, BUT you can get it from him for less. He has copies of the book that he sells for \$14 plus \$3.49 for shipping. His price is considerably less than what people pay on Amazon - \$23. Please contact Douglas at drs217@yahoo.com. A discussion guide is available at www.nopartiality.net.

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

Please pray for world peace.

Please pray for the ABCUSA General Board and other denominational leaders meeting in Washington, DC this week.

Please pray for ABCUSA's Biennial Centennial taking place in Washington, DC this coming weekend.

Please pray for ABC missionary Betsy Perkins as she carries the Dean of Students responsibilities at Kodaikanal International School in Kodaikanal, India. Those duties include getting 2 new dormitories opened in time for the start of school on July 17th.

Please pray for ABC missionaries Ed and Miriam Noyes as they give leadership and minister in rural development and literacy ministries with the believers in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Please pray for ABC missionary Annie Dieselberg in Thailand, for the women who minister with her at NightLight, for the women who have escaped from their life of slavery to prostitution and for those who have yet to be reached.

Calendar

June 27-28—“Seeing the Children—Transforming the Church” pre-Biennial event, Howard University Divinity School, Washington, DC.

June 29—Religious Liberty Council Luncheon, 12:15 p.m. to 1:45 p.m., in the Independence Ballroom A of the Grand Hyatt Washington, DC. Tickets are \$40. To register and pay online, visit the [online registration page](#). To register by phone, contact Phallan Davis at (202) 544-4226 or pdavis@BJCOnline.org.

June 29—Deadline for applying for The Retirement Research Foundation’s Accessible Faith Grant Program. Please see www.rrf.org for more information.

June 29— “Ministry in Such a Time as This: Adaptive Change for Faithful and Effective Leadership” pre-Biennial event, 9 a.m.-noon, Washington Convention Center, Washington, DC. This event is sponsored by the Ministers Council, the Campus Ministry Association, and International Ministries. Visit www.abc-usa.org to register.

June 29-July 2—ABCUSA Biennial Meeting and Centennial Celebration in Washington, DC. The theme will be “Arise and Shine.”

SATURDAY! June 30—ABCUSA Cooperating Church Annual Report due.

July 1—Lynne Kelley preaches at Irving Park Baptist Church.

July 17—Finance and Property Committee meeting, 3 p.m., ABCMC office.

July 21—Family Cabinet meeting, ABCMC office, 9:30 a.m.

July 21-28—National Gathering for Girls, Green Lake Conference Center. The conference fee is \$485 per person, and includes conference registration fee, housing, and meals; scholarships are available. Further information may be found on the American Baptist Women’s Ministries’ website at www.abwministries.org.

August 6-10—Mediation Skills Training Institute. For more information and registration, please visit www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

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

August 21-23—Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation. For more information and registration, please visit www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

September 15—ABCMC Stewardship Seminar

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

September 21—International Day of Prayer for Peace

September 21-22—Lombard Mennonite Peace Center's *Healthy Congregations* Workshop, Christ Community Mennonite Church, Schaumburg. For more information and registration, please visit www.LMPeaceCenter.org.

September 22—Family Cabinet meeting, ABCMC office, 9:30 a.m.

October 16—Finance and Property Committee meeting, 3 p.m., ABCMC office.

October 20—Family Cabinet meeting, ABCMC office, 9:30 a.m.

November 10—ABCMC Annual Meeting

November 20—Finance and Property Committee meeting, 3 p.m., ABCMC office.

December 15—Family Cabinet meeting, ABCMC office, 9:30 a.m.

December 17—Finance and Property Committee meeting, 3 p.m., ABCMC office.

January 30-February 1, 2008—New Baptist Covenant Celebration, Atlanta, Georgia. Please visit www.newbaptistcovenant.org for more information.

February 21-23, 2008—Gathering of Baptist Bodies from across the U.S. for a celebration of a new Baptist covenant, Dallas, TX.

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

June 21, 2008—ABCMC's Third Annual Disciples' Dinner, Lindner Conference Center, Lombard. Aidsand Wright-Riggins, Executive Director of ABCUSA's National Ministries, will be our keynote speaker.

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 lynne@abcmc.org. We email the newsletter each Wednesday.

If you spot a typographical error or other mistake in *eWind*, please let us know at the ABCMC office, 773-695-9791 or lynne@abcmc.org.