

*Metro Chicago*

# *eWind*

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

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

September 17, 2008

Seek good and not evil, that you may live;  
and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said.  
Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate;  
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,  
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Amos 5:14-15

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## **ABCMC NEWS**

### ***ABCMC Annual Meeting***

2008 Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago  
 Disparity and Difference  
 New Testament Perspectives and Imperatives  
 November 8  
 Morgan Park Baptist Church  
 11024 S. Bell Avenue  
 Chicago

### ***Thinking Theologically***

ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield writes a bi-weekly column for Protestants for the Common Good. His column is called "Thinking Theologically for the Common Good." His latest column, "Imitation," appears at the end of this edition of *eWind*.

### ***Children's Sabbath***

Children's Sabbath this year will be observed on the weekend of October 17-19. ABCMC congregations are encouraged to observe Children's Sabbath in their worship services on Sunday, October 19.

Excellent resources are available for use in observing Children's Sabbath. "When Will We Hear Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's Call to End Poverty in America?" is the title of the manual with educational and worship sources for this year. It can be obtained by calling 865-457-6466 or by visiting [childrensdefensefund.org](http://childrensdefensefund.org) >Programs >Religious Action Program.

## **Save the Date**

Hold the dates October 3-5 for a spectacular spiritual renewal weekend.



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Metro Chicago,

We are asking you to pull out your calendars, or smart phones, or PDAs – however you reserve important dates – and enter “Holy Spirit Renewal Weekend” for October 3-5.

This will be a time to give concentrated attention to how the Holy Spirit can operate in our personal lives, our church lives, and, yes, our regional life.

We will be lead by a bilingual and international team from across the country and here close to home.

Topics will include on Friday, October 3:

“The Holy Spirit in the History of Christian Spirituality”  
“The Study of the Spirit Today”  
“Keys for Opening the Doors of the Spirit in Your Congregation: A Practical Guide”  
“Tending the Spirit-Filled Life: The Personal Dimension”  
“Tending the Spirit-Filled life: The Ecclesial Dimension”

On Saturday afternoon and evening, October 4, we will be focusing on:

“Called to High Adventure: Living the Spirit-Filled Life”  
“How the Holy Spirit Can Impact Your Church”  
“How the Holy Spirit Can Impact Our Region”  
  
and a worship service centering on  
“Opening Ourselves to the Holy Spirit for God’s Kingdom”

On Sunday, October 5, we are asking churches of the Metro Chicago region devote their worship and education to the work of the Holy Spirit in their life together.

Friday and Saturday’s program will be held at North Shore Baptist Church, 5244 N. Lakewood in Chicago.

Let us make our life in Christ be empowered anew by the Holy Spirit.

In Christ and the Spirit,

Pastor Keith Cerk, First Baptist Church of Waukegan  
Pastor Rony Reyes, North Shore Baptist Church  
Pastor Larry Greenfield, American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago  
Pastor Gonzalo Palacios, First Baptist Church of Waukegan

## ***Christian Financial Stewardship in Difficult Economic Times***

TO: Clergy and Lay Leaders of ABCMC  
FROM: Larry Greenfield, Executive Minister  
RE: Stewardship Seminar

I hope you are making plans to attend our Third Annual ABCMC Stewardship Seminar on Saturday morning, September 20, at Third Baptist Church.

There's an announcement about this Stewardship Seminar in this edition of e-Wind, and again you can download an attachment of the poster for posting in your church.

Our theme this year is extremely relevant: **CHRISTIAN FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP IN DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES**. I don't think there is any doubt about the conditions we face in our economy, whether we are individuals, families, churches, or church-related organizations. The question we have to face is, how do we continue to sustain our ministries in these circumstances.

I am pleased that we have such terrific leaders in the field of stewardship to help us address that question. Let me introduce two of them to you briefly:

Lawrence E. Wilson III is the Executive Vice President of the American Baptist Foundation of our denomination. With a degree in economics from Drew University and an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and a successful career in marketing and public relations in some of the country's largest corporations and significant cultural and educational institutions, he brings an unusual set of gifts to our seminar this year. Besides that, he is a person of vision for our ABCUSA ministries.

Larry Robinson is one of our own in Metro Chicago. He has a deep dedication to the church and its ministries. And in recent years, drawing on his experience at Second Baptist Churches of Wheaton and other congregations, he has developed an amazing set of resources for churches who are committed to Christian stewardship, which are now being used across the country and around the world. Entitled "More Than A Gift," the program Larry has developed is based on a rich array of biblical teachings that are made applicable to everyday life of faith.

I hope you and members of your congregation will be sure to take advantage of this timely and important opportunity.

Please print, post and share the poster that is attached to this issue of *eWind*.

## **Stewardship Seminar**

CHRISTIAN FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP  
in  
DIFFICULT ECONOMIC TIMES

Third Annual Stewardship Seminar  
American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago

Saturday, September 20, 2008  
9:00 a.m. – Noon  
Heritage Plaza Center  
1500 W. 95<sup>th</sup> Street  
Chicago, IL 60643

How can the ministries of Christ's church *not* suffer when members of congregations are themselves hurting financially in tough economic times?

Attend the Third Annual Stewardship Seminar of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago to be equipped for:

Church Budgeting in Lean Years  
The Annual Stewardship Campaign  
Stewardship Education for the Whole Year  
Gift Planning and Planned Giving  
Giving to Those Who Need Our Help  
Preaching and Teaching Stewardship

A free seminar designed for church leaders who accept the challenge of securing resources to support the opportunities for ministries and missions of congregations.

Make reservations by calling (773-804-1655), faxing (773-804-1656), or e-mailing ([office@abcmc.org](mailto:office@abcmc.org)) the ABCMC office.

(Free parking at Third Baptist Church, 1551 W. 95<sup>th</sup>, east end of the parking lot.)

A flier is attached with this issue of *eWind*. Please print, distribute and display the flier. Above all, please come to the event.

## **Celebrate ABC Christian Education Sunday September 21**

"Teach your children well"—and youth and adults, too!

This month's Christian Education Sunday, September 21, is an excellent opportunity to focus your congregation, whatever their age, on the importance of learning and growing in the faith from birth to old age. Christian education doesn't have to mean only Sunday School - in fact, if it does, your congregation is probably missing out on some excellent opportunities to challenge people to open their minds and let a fresh wind of the Spirit blow in (and perhaps even blow some cobwebs away)!

Celebrate faith formation this month in whatever form it takes in your congregation:

- an ABW group learning about a need in the world and taking action;
- your youth group traveling to the National Youth Gathering or working with Habitat or a food pantry;

- the church council studying how the Bible informs a decision they are laboring over;
- a study group learning about various ways of praying as they practice *lectio divina* on Tuesdays; and, yes, Sunday School and study groups of all sorts for all ages!

This might also be the perfect time to pick up some resources that will help your church's Christian educators assure that curriculum materials align with your congregation's understanding of Christian life and faith formation. The Judson Press book, *Christian Educators' Guide to Evaluating and Developing Curriculum* will do just that. This highly practical resource includes reproducible worksheets along with workshop designs and questionnaires that help identify educational goals and match materials to your purpose. Why not order it for your Christian ed folk today?

Have more questions? Remember that ABC-MC congregations receive consulting in Christian education at no cost! Contact Rev. Denise Janssen, Christian Education coordinator, to take advantage of this service (phone 708-955-8913 or email [revdlj@att.net](mailto:revdlj@att.net)).

## NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS

### ***Joy at the South Church***

Rev. Rick Kesler will be formally installed as pastor of The South Church in Mount Prospect on Sunday, September 21, 2008, during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. The Rev. Kim Keethler-Ball will be the guest speaker. A luncheon will follow in the fellowship hall at 11:30 a.m. All are invited to attend. The South Church welcomed Rev. Kesler as pastor in May 2008. He and his wife, Angela Nicolosi, reside in Mount Prospect. The South Church, located at 501 S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect, is a community church with a denominational link to the American Baptist Churches USA. Inside is a community of people that is open, inclusive, and committed to the mission of caring for others. All are welcome at The South Church. For more information about our activities and programs, please visit [www.thesouthchurch.com](http://www.thesouthchurch.com).

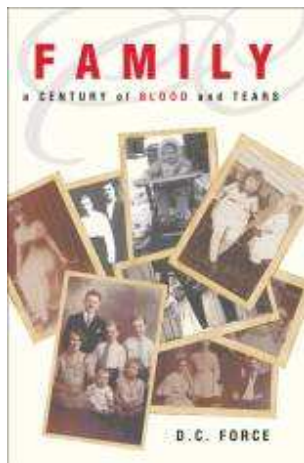
### ***Revival at Original Providence***

We are all invited to the Annual Revival September 22 - 25 (Monday - Thursday) 7:00 p.m. at Original Providence Baptist Church, 515 N. Pine Avenue, Chicago. The revival preacher is Rev. Dr. L. Bernard Jakes pastor of West Point Missionary Baptist Church. Come and join us for a spirit filled time in the Lord.

### ***Blonde Wood Pulpit Available***

Christ Community Church, 602 E. Geneva Road, Wheaton, has a large wooden pulpit for which the church has no use. It is available for no charge. It is blonde wood, has a cross in relief in front, a microphone holder, and two shelves for notes. The dimensions are 46" tall, 32" wide. If you are interested, please phone the church at 630-665-2259, and speak with pastor Mary Lou Codman-Wilson.

### ***D.C. Force Book Reading Event***



We are all invited to attend the upcoming book reading by author Dolly Force on Tuesday, September 16, from 7 to 9 p.m., at North Shore Baptist Church, 5244 N. Lakewood Avenue, Chicago, in the Nambu Chapel. Ms. Force would love for you to come and show your support to be part of this event. Even if you already have a copy of *Family*, now would be the perfect time to purchase a copy for a gift. For more information, please go to [www.dcforsce.com](http://www.dcforsce.com). If you can't make the event, you may wish to go to the publisher's web site, [www.tatepublishing.com](http://www.tatepublishing.com) to visit their online bookstore to purchase a copy of the book.

## **The South Church Craft & Vendor Showcase**

The South Church invites all crafters to participate in their Craft and Vendor Showcase. This year's event will be on Saturday, November 15, 2008, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at The South Church, 501S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect, Illinois. 847-253-0501.

The church will furnish 6-foot or 8-foot tables with two chairs for each crafter/vendor. Electrical outlets will be available on a limited basis. If you would like to participate, please confirm your space by October 25, 2008, by sending the form below and a check for \$50 for one table or \$100 for two tables. Please make your check payable to THE SOUTH CHURCH and mail it to The South Church, Attention: Melissa Ciske, 501 S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect, Illinois 60056. Tables will be available on a firstcome, first-served basis, with completed form and payment. It is our goal to limit 1-2 tables per type of craft/product such as jewelry, food, ceramics, knitted items, or makeup.

Set-up time will be from 8:30-9:45 a.m. on the day of the event. The doors will open at 10 a.m. If you would like to donate one of your items for our raffle, please indicate that on your form. Your contributions will benefit the programs of The South Church and are greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please call the church office at 847-253-0501. Melissa Ciske is chair of the event.

### **THE SOUTH CHURCH CRAFT & VENDOR SHOWCASE**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME OF BUSINESS (IF APPLICABLE) \_\_\_\_\_  
TYPE OF PRODUCT/BUSINESS \_\_\_\_\_  
TABLE SIZE PREFERRED (not guaranteed; based on availability) \_\_\_\_ 6-foot \_\_\_\_ 8-foot  
ELECTRICITY NEEDED? Y \_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_ RAFFLE PRIZE DONATION? Y \_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_  
PAYMENT RECEIVED (office use) \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Blessing of the Animals***



At 3:30 on the afternoon of Sunday, September 28, the Federated Church of Wauconda will hold a brief worship service in the back yard of the parsonage, and thank God for their animal companions. Each pet will be introduced and blessed with prayer. Water and treats for cats and dogs will be served.

## ***Clay Ford to Preach in Waukegan***

Folks at the First Baptist Church of Waukegan are excited about the upcoming Holy Spirit Renewal Weekend at North Shore Baptist Church October 3-5. Workshop leader Dr. Clay Ford will preach at First Baptist in the morning worship service on October 5, and lead a workshop during the Sunday school hour.

## ***175th Anniversary Year Celebrations***

*This invitation is from the First Baptist Church of Chicago.*

The First Baptist Church of Chicago will be celebrating its 175th Anniversary during 2008. Please join as we celebrate.



Our Anniversary Sunday, October 12 at 11 a.m. Dr. Michael Thomas, the Director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary will be our guest speaker. On that Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m. our guest speaker will be Rev. Reginald Bachus, Pastor of the historic Friendship Baptist Church of Chicago.

Dr. Roy Medley, the General Secretary of ABCUSA, will be our guest speaker on December 14 at 11 a.m.

## ***Morgan Park to Install New Pastor***

On Sunday, October 26th, at 3 p.m., the Rev. Dr. Thomas Aldworth will be installed as Pastor of Morgan Park Baptist Church. The speaker for the afternoon will be Dr. Larry Greenfield. All are invited. A reception will follow the service.

## **COMMUNITY NEWS**

### ***Pray for Christians in India***



Violence against and by Christians is continuing in India. One organization understood to be involved is Bajrang Dal, which is the youth organization of VHP, an extremist Hindu group. In some places, Christians have been forced to convert to Hinduism, and then attack the churches of which they have been members. This past Sunday, 9 churches were attacked in the state of Karnataka in southern India. Bajrang Dal activists are suspected in these attacks, the reason for which is understood to be a Bajrang Dal protest against missionaries forcing Hindus to become Christians. For the latest news, please visit <http://chicagorevival.blogspot.com/>. For a television news report about violence in Karnataka, please go to <http://in.trueveo.com/Karnataka-Christian-prayer-halls-attacks/id/663301491>.

## ***A Better Day 2008***

Treat yourself on September 20 to a day of lively interaction on topics that are vital to creating “A Better Day” for our world. Come to this one-day “fest” to identify, connect, and support learning and collaboration among groups and individuals working on peace, justice, and ecological sustainability issues.

We are faced with serious national and global problems: violence and militarism, social and economic injustice, and challenges to environmental sustainability. At this event we can share ideas and forge connections with each other to fuel our hopes and strengthen our effectiveness.

Hear how peace, justice and the environment are shaping our future on a global level; gain insights into our health care system; and learn about remarkable “green” initiatives being done right in our local community. The guest speakers will make us think, start dialogues that matter, and help us consider ways we can take action on the big issues that challenge us. In addition to speakers, the day will include exhibits and advocates from a number of different community organizations.

The event will take place 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, 1025 Smith Street, Palatine. Lunch will be available on-site for a modest fee. The suggested donation for attendance is \$10. For more information about speakers, schedule and registration, please visit [www.better-day.info](http://www.better-day.info), or email [info@better-day.info](mailto:info@better-day.info). The event is sponsored by the Adult Faith Development Council of Countryside Church. Everyone is welcome.

## ***McCormick Freedom Museum Event***



On Tuesday, September 23, from 6 to 8 p.m., the McCormick Freedom Museum’s Free Thinkers Speaker Series, in partnership with the Chicago Public Library, will welcome guest speaker author Naomi Wolf. Wolf is a Rhodes Scholar and author of *Give Me Liberty: A Handbook for American Revolutionaries*. Wolf suggests that the practice of democracy has become a lost art and that Americans are increasingly desperate for a restored nation. In her book, she illustrates the breathtaking changes that can take place when ordinary citizens participate in the democratic system the way our founding fathers intended.

The program will take place in the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium at the Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State Street, Chicago. Admission will be free, and no reservations are necessary. For more information, please visit [www.freedommuseum.us](http://www.freedommuseum.us), or call 312-222-7871.

## ***NBTS Founders Day 2008: A Dynamic Calling***

Northern Baptist Theological Seminary will host Founders Day on Thursday, October 02, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. the event will take place in the Lindner Conference Center on the seminary’s campus at 610 E. Butterfield Road, Lombard.

## ***Faith Summit for Criminal Justice Reform***

Community Renewal survey data indicate that a solid majority of Illinois voters believe the best criminal justice policies are those that seek to reduce and prevent crime through education and rehabilitation, such as job training and treatment for substance abuse. Conducted by political scientist Tari Renner, Ph.D., for Community Renewal, the survey mirrors results of recent national surveys that indicate overwhelming public support for rehabilitation and other options for prisoners both during and after release from prison.

People of faith in Illinois are calling for a justice system rooted in the principles of restoration, rehabilitation, and healing. On October 5 there will be a faith summit for criminal justice reform in Illinois. The Faith Summit for Criminal Justice Reform is an initiative of communities of faith in Illinois and the Civic Action Network of Community Renewal Society. The Community Renewal Society (CRS) urges you to attend. The purpose of the Faith Summit is to more fully engage Illinois' religious community in a strong show of support for significant reform of our criminal justice system.

At the event CRS will:

- Unveil a statement of shared values as a blue-print for ongoing criminal justice reform
- Demonstrate broad and deep support and a growing constituency for change
- Secure commitments from policy-makers and leaders to advance specific criminal justice reforms

#### TAKE ACTION!

Call for a Criminal Justice System Based on Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Healing!  
Sign the Statement of People of Faith on the Transformation of the Illinois Criminal Justice System.  
People of faith in Illinois are calling for a justice system rooted in the principles of restoration, rehabilitation, and healing. Your voice is needed. On October 5th, Illinois faith communities and the Community Renewal Society will convene the first ever Faith Summit for Criminal Justice Reform to lay out a new vision for our broken criminal justice system. Take action now to call for our state to turn away from vengeance and take a stand for restoration, rehabilitation, and healing:

- 1) Sign the statement
- 2) Register to attend the Faith Summit
- 3) Spread the Word

#### HERE IS THE BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUMMIT:

Faith Summit for Criminal Justice Reform  
Sunday, October 5, 2008  
Resource Fair – 1:30 to 2:45 p.m.  
Summit Event – 3 to 4:30 p.m.  
The Forum, University of Illinois at Chicago  
725 W. Roosevelt Road  
Chicago, IL 60608

Ample parking located two blocks west of the UIC Forum at 1135 S. Morgan St., Lot 5.

## ABCUSA NEWS

For additional articles from the American Baptist News Service, please visit <http://www.abc-usa.org/howweare/newsservice.aspx>.

### ***Medley Co-Chairs Baptist-Muslim Taskforce***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 09/15/08)** — American Baptist General Secretary Dr. A Roy Medley recently co-chaired the Baptist-Muslim taskforce, held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Islamic Society of North America, along with eight other Baptist leaders from around the United States. Sayyid Syeed, national interfaith director for the Islamic Society of North America, co-chaired the taskforce, which was formed to address how Baptists and Muslims can have honest and open dialogue about ways that the two faith traditions can seek the welfare of everyone, and to break down the fear of each other within both communities of faith.

Medley's role in the fostering of Baptist-Muslim dialogue emerged as the result of several experiences that he had in recent years. "In light of the disparaging remarks against Islam made by some Baptist leaders in North America after 9/11, I issued a statement that their remarks were not representative of Baptists as a whole, and were contradictory to our respect for religious freedom and conscience," said

Medley. "Several weeks later, I received a letter from the Council of Churches in the Philippines thanking me for the letter which they said was most helpful in their context as they sought to enhance Christian-Muslim relations."

Then, in September of 2006, Medley was part of a delegation visiting Lebanon after the summer of conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. Medley said, "On that visit, Lebanese Baptists and other Christian leaders urged me to do all that I could to improve the relationship between Baptists and Muslims in North America."

In April of 2007, Medley was in the Republic of Georgia at the invitation of Georgian Baptists. While there he was introduced to the chief Imam for Georgia. Pointing to the good relationships between Baptist Christians and Muslims in Georgia, he challenged Medley to work for greater understanding between Christians and Muslims in the US. "Those three events led me to ask American Baptists to take the lead in North America in creating better understanding and relationships between our two faith communities," Medley said.

Both Baptists and Muslims have within their scriptures a mandate for seeking justice and peace. "Love of God" and "love of neighbor" are commandments that are common to both faiths, and can be a starting point for dialogue. The hope of the taskforce was that, while it recognized the significant differences and concerns between the two faiths, if both traditions begin with the common emphasis on love of neighbor, then both groups can find common ground in the ways each fulfills their mutual mandates toward justice and peace.

While many Christians feel that dialogue with Muslims compromises their own faith, Medley rejects such a view. "It is important that we first of all establish a sense of mutual respect and an understanding that each is committed to the welfare of the other," he said. "The missional impulse of the church is rooted in "for God so loved the world." To seek to establish love as the first principle of our relationship with one another is at the very heart of the integrity of Christian witness. If that is doubted, all that we teach about Jesus as the revelation of the very nature of who God is and who we are to be is undermined. The greatest evangel is the Holy Spirit working through the living witness of the community of devoted disciples of Jesus. The kerygma cannot but be announced/proclaimed by the church. But if the kerygma is not seen as consistent with the life of the church, its effectiveness is blunted."

To read an interview with Dr. Medley about the Baptist-Muslim dialogue, conducted by EthicsDaily.com, go to [www.abc-usa.org/documents/EDInterview.pdf](http://www.abc-usa.org/documents/EDInterview.pdf).

## ***Emergency Appeal Issued for Disaster Relief Kits***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 09/12/08)** — As Hurricane Ike continues to grow and focus its wrath on the Texas coast, Church World Service (CWS) needs assistance in meeting the needs of those affected by this and other disasters.

Lisa Rothenberger, World Relief Officer for ABCUSA, said, "In a conference call earlier today about the ecumenical responses to hurricanes Gustav, Hanna, and Ike, we learned that the natural disasters of 2008 have left Church World Service with an urgent need for relief kits. Providing material resources in the form of kits and blankets is one of the ways that we can effectively respond to victims of these storms and hurricanes. CWS kits are often among the first forms of aid that disaster victims receive, so I encourage churches and individuals to prayerfully consider responding to this need."

In the last 30 days, CWS has provided dozens of shipments of CWS Blankets, CWS Hygiene Kits, CWS Baby Kits and CWS Emergency Cleanup Buckets. CWS Kits have helped flood survivors in Iowa, displaced persons from the Russia-Georgia conflict and Hurricanes Hannah, Gustav and Ike.

Preparing CWS kits is a tangible way local churches, community groups and others may help people in need. All kits are assembled using common household items. To find out how to prepare and deliver help to someone in need, go to [www.churchworldservice.org/kits/](http://www.churchworldservice.org/kits/).

These items provide immediate, important relief to those coping with disaster. Displaced from their homes, disaster-affected individuals rely on CWS resources after being forced from their homes with little more than the clothes on their backs.

Contributions to support this and other CWS work can be made online at <https://secure.churchworldservice.org/catalog/display.php?sid=1>; by calling 1-800-297-1516; or by mail to Church World Service, 28606 Phillips Street, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515.

## HEALTH CARE NEWS

### ***Health Care Speak-Out September 17***

The Commonwealth Fund recently released a study reporting more than two in five adults report problems paying medical bills in 2007. 61% of these individuals were insured. As our health care crisis deepens its impact on individuals and families, we need to come together to create an American solution that protects both the health and financial well-being of everyone. Come be a part of our grassroots movement for Healthcare for America NOW! at a Health Care Speak-Out on September 17th. The event will take place at the Waukegan Public Library, 126 N. County Street, Waukegan at 6 p.m. A flier is attached with this issue of *eWind*. Please print it out and share it, and come to the event in Waukegan.

### ***Faith and Health Summit***

We are all invited to take part in a Faith and Health Summit on Thursday, October 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the DePaul Center, 333 S. State Street, Chicago (Lower Level). This Summit will build on a similar event in 2007 where participants looked at the root causes of health inequities and learned about faith-based initiatives that are addressing these issues.

The 2008 Summit will provide an opportunity to talk with others who are working at the intersection of faith and health about how we move even further to support healthy, whole and hopeful communities where everyone can live out their God-given potential and calling.

Dr. Sharon Welch, Provost and Professor of Religion and Society at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, will frame the day by talking about how risk, jazz and improvisation can inform how we create responses to the critical social issues we face. Participants will apply her ideas as they engage the lauded PBS series, "Unnatural Causes," which examines how racism, economics, immigration, housing and other realities impact people's health. In the afternoon attendees will talk with each other, exploring how we can continue to build a faith and health movement that can truly improve the quality of people's lives in metropolitan Chicago.

Because this is an event built on dialogue, space is limited to 100 people. RSVP as soon as possible to reserve your place. The registration deadline is Wednesday, October 1, 2008. The preferred method to register is online at [www.advocatehealth.com/seminars](http://www.advocatehealth.com/seminars). Look under October events for the Summit. If you do not have internet access, you may also call 1-800-3-ADVOCATE (1-800-323-8622) to register by phone. Cost for this event is \$25.00, which can be paid by credit card when you register or by check at the door.

### ***Health Care Sabbath***

*This invitation is from the Illinois Health Care Justice Campaign and the Campaign for Better Health Care. We encourage ABCMC congregations to observe Health Care Sabbath on October 18.*



*Accessible, Affordable, Quality Health Care for ALL*

Dear Person of Faith,

We have a unique opportunity this fall to call for healing and justice in our society. Millions of Illinois residents are uninsured, underinsured or risk losing their coverage. For many of us, these include our friends, relatives and neighbors.

This is not just a medical and economic crisis - it is a moral one. But it is one that people of faith - like you - can change through advocacy. Given this, the Faith Caucus of the Health Care Justice Campaign invites you and your congregation to participate in:

### **The Health Care Sabbath October 17-19**

To learn more about this important event, visit <http://www.cbhconline.org/index.html>

For a **free Congregational Advocacy Toolkit** - including prayers, liturgies, scripture readings and discussion guides - visit <http://www.cbhconline.org/index.html>. You can even receive a Toolkit specific to the Jewish, Christian or Muslim faiths,

As part of this event, congregations across the state will do at least one of the following:

- Pray for the uninsured and others who are suffering from the health care crisis
- Read scripture and liturgies related to healing and justice
- Hold discussion groups on what it means to work for justice as people of faith
- Sign postcards to send to legislators, calling on them to enact health care reform.

**We urge you and your congregation to take part in one or more of these activities - even if only to pause during worship to pray for those in your community who are uninsured.**

To participate in the Health Care Sabbath and receive a free Congregational Advocacy Toolkit, please visit <http://www.cbhconline.org/index.html> today.

For more information, feel free to contact Jonathan VanderBrug, CBHC Chicago Office (312-913-9449 or by replying to this Email), or Josephine Kalipeni, CBHC Downstate Office (217-352-5600 or [jkalipeni@cbhconline.org](mailto:jkalipeni@cbhconline.org)).

May you always have the blessing of good health care.

Sincerely,

Jonathan VanderBrug  
Health Care Justice Director  
Campaign for Better Health Care

P. S. - Even if you cannot take part October 17-19, we still encourage you to order a Toolkit and to observe the Health Care Sabbath at another time. You can also combine this event with other Sabbath observances, such as the CDF Children's Sabbath.

## PEACE NEWS

### ***Suburban Peace Vigil***

There will be a peace vigil in Palatine at the intersection of Hicks Road and Northwest Highway, 3-4 p.m., on Saturday, September 20. The vigil will take place at the Volunteer Plaze where the clock tower is. Parking will be available across the street in the large strip mall that contains Ace Hardware and Sparrow's Nest Thrift Shop. Participants in the vigil are not to park in the lot behind the Volunteer Plaza. *Be very careful crossing the street!* The vigil is sponsored by Palatine for Peace.

## MINISTERS COUNCIL NEWS

### ***Ministers Council Dues***

Dues for 2008 must be paid no later than September 30. If you still need to pay your membership dues, please send \$45 to Sara Day, ABCMC's Ministers Council treasurer, at Rev. Dr. Sara E. Day, CFP®  
The Ministers & Missionaries Benefit Board  
2205 S. Wolf Rd. #281  
Hillside, IL 60162  
(This is a new address.)

If you have any questions about dues, please contact Sara by email at [sara.day@mmbb.org](mailto:sara.day@mmbb.org) or by phone at 800.531.1940.

### ***ABCMC Ministers Council September Meeting***

The Ministers Council of ABCMC will have an afternoon meeting at Lake Street Church, 607 Lake Street, Evanston, on Thursday, September 25, 4:30-6:00 p.m. The program for the meeting will include discussing with Bob Thompson, pastor of Lake Street Church, his recently published book, *A Voluptuous God*.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for World peace.

Please hold in prayer the people in India, who are in the midst of a season of sectarian danger and violence.

Please pray for those dealing with the impact of violent storms in this season. Please remember especially our mission partners and all other people in the Caribbean. ABC International Ministries has provided emergency grants to our Caribbean partners as they help victims of recent hurricanes.

Please pray for our nation in this season of decision making.

Please pray for peaceful Muslims who are being discriminated against in this country. Please hold in prayer especially those Muslims whose employers/supervisors stop them from practicing their faith by praying when they take their breaks during the day.

Please pray for ABC missionaries Ed and Miriam Noyes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where they are assisting with public works projects and helping overcome illiteracy.

Please pray for Joel Hoefle and Trish Magal and their three daughters. This family from Minnesota is serving as volunteer missionaries in Chiang Rai, Thailand for a year, possibly longer.

Please hold in prayer surgeon and ABC volunteer missionary Ed Tegenfeldt, who is volunteering in a hospital in Western Nepal, where his expertise is much needed.

Please pray for mission volunteers from Salem Missionary Baptist Church, Columbus, Ohio, while they serve in South Africa September 11-23.

Please pray from Emily Andree of Roanoke, Virginia. She is serving as a volunteer with ABC missionaries Glen and Rita Chapman July 2008 through August 2009 in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## CALENDAR

**September 19-21**—Indian Christian Festival, featuring evangelist Anil Kumar from India. Friday and Saturday evenings, Mather High School, 5835 N. Lincoln, Chicago, 6:30 p.m.; Sunday morning, India Mission Telugu Methodist Church, 1049 S. Euclid Avenue, Oak Park, 10:30 a.m.

**September 20**—A Better Day 2008, Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, 1025 Smith Street, Palatine, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

**September 20**—Third Annual ABCMC Stewardship Seminar, Third Baptist Church of Chicago, Heritage Plaza Center, 1500 W. 95<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago, 9 a.m.-Noon.

**September 21**—Christian Education Sunday.

**September 21**—Installation of Rick Kesler as pastor of the South Church, 501 S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect, 10:30 a.m.; luncheon to follow, 11:30 a.m.

**September 21**--ABCMC Sunday, Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago; Larry Greenfield preaching, 11 a.m.

**September 22-25**—Revival, Original Providence Baptist Church, 515 N. Pine Avenue, Chicago, 7 p.m.

**September 25**--Ministers Council meeting, Lake Street Church, 607 Lake Street, Evanston, 4:30-6 p.m.

**September 28**—ABCMC Sunday at the First Baptist Church of Park Forest, 80 N. Orchard, Park Forest; Larry Greenfield preaches, 11 a.m.

**October 3-5**—ABCMC Renewal Conference with focus on the Holy Spirit.

**October 5**—Faith Summit for Criminal Justice Reform: Resource Fair – 1:30-2:45 p.m.; Summit Event – 3-4:30 p.m.; The Forum, University of Illinois at Chicago, 725 W. Roosevelt Road, Chicago.

**October 12**—Memorial service for Andrew Kmetko, First Baptist Church of Park Ridge, 1266 N. Northwest Highway, Park Ridge, 3 p.m.

**October 12**—ABCMC Sunday at the First Baptist Church of Berwyn, 6916 W. 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Berwyn; Larry Greenfield preaches.

**October 16**—Faith and Health Summit, DePaul Center, 333 S. State Street, Chicago, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Register at [www.advocatehealth.com/seminars](http://www.advocatehealth.com/seminars) or 1-800-3ADVOCATE.

**October 17-19**—Children's Sabbath. Please observe Children's Sabbath in your congregation on Sunday, October 19. For resources and additional information, please visit [childrensdefensefund.org](http://childrensdefensefund.org) >Programs >Religious Action Program.

**October 17-19**--Health Care Sabbath. Please observe Health Care Sabbath in your congregation on Sunday, October 19. Please contact Eric Quamme ([equamme@ilmaternal.org](mailto:equamme@ilmaternal.org)) or Jonathan VanderBrug ([jvanderbrug@cbhconline.org](mailto:jvanderbrug@cbhconline.org)) for more information. For a toolkit, please go to <http://www.cbhconline.org/index.html>.

**October 21**--Finance and Property Committee meeting, Wunderlich Securities office, 200 W. Madison, Suite 2950, Chicago, 3 p.m.

**October 21-22**—Conference of Baptist Leaders from Burma, October 21-22, at the Chin Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.

**October 26**—Installation of Thomas Aldworth as pastor of Morgan Park Baptist Church, 11025 S. Bell Avenue, Chicago, 3 p.m.

**November 1**—Workshop with Ken Medema, Rockford. For more information, please contact Mark Vincent by e-mail: [marklv@DesignForMinistry.com](mailto:marklv@DesignForMinistry.com) or [marklv@DesignForBusinessIntl.com](mailto:marklv@DesignForBusinessIntl.com) or phone: 877-771-3330 or 888-463-9995.

**November 8**--ABCMC Annual Meeting, Morgan Park Baptist Church, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. This year's theme will be Disparity and Difference: New Testament Perspectives and Imperatives.

**November 12**—Kids Hope United Annual Dinner, law firm of Drinker Biddle, 191 North Wacker Drive, Suite 3700, Chicago (in the Loop), 6 p.m.

**November 18**--Finance and Property Committee meeting, Wunderlich Securities office, 200 W. Madison, Suite 2950, Chicago, 3 p.m.

**December 20**--Finance and Property Committee meeting, Wunderlich Securities office, 200 W. Madison, Suite 2950, Chicago, 3 p.m.

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 email the newsletter each Wednesday. We welcome your news, prayer requests and comments. Please email your communications to the editor, Lynne Kelley, at [lynne@abcmc.org](mailto:lynne@abcmc.org). If you spot a typographical error or other mistake in *eWind*, please let us know at the ABCMC office, 773-804-1655. The ABCMC office is at 7035 W. Grand Avenue, Suite 102, Chicago, Illinois 60707



Vol VII no. 19, September 12, 2008

# Thinking Theologically About the Common Good

*Reflections on theology, scripture, and public life  
from the Rev. Larry Greenfield.*

## "Imitation"

It's pretty tempting, the day after the commemoration of the 9/11 attacks on the United States in 2001, to attempt to make the case — based on Jesus' teaching about forgiving an offender seventy-multiplied-by-seven times — that serious Christians ought to figure out how to extend that forgiveness to brother bin Laden and his Al Qaeda accomplices.

The commentators on the passage make it clear that when Jesus answers Peter's question on how many times he needs to forgive a seven-times offending brother (or sister), Jesus really didn't mean, literally, 490 times.

Jesus meant, literally, "always," or "as many times as there are offenses against you," or "unendingly," or "without limit."

That's because, as Jesus explains in the parable that follows (about a ruler who forgives — cancels, actually — the astoundingly large debt of a subject out of abundant mercy and then astonishingly learns the forgiven subject is ruthlessly unwilling to forgive/cancel the relatively small debt of a fellow subject, and ends up angrily condemning the forgiven subject to be tortured until the debt is repaid in full, which means forever) Christians should understand how incredibly merciful God has been to them and, thus, why they should fully imitate this awesomely merciful God in their dealing with others who are guilty of offenses against them.

After telling this parable to his disciples, Jesus says: "So my heavenly Parent will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Get that? Not just 490 times. Not just always, or unendingly, or without limit. But always, unendingly, and without limit "*from your heart.*"

Unlike the Bush administration, with its policy of capturing and incarcerating, and torturing anyone remotely connected with Osama bin Laden and his organization, followers of Jesus are to find a way to imitate God by forgiving the whole bunch from Al Qaeda *from the heart*, under the threat of being tortured ourselves by God for failing to be merciful and forgiving.

Now I know some readers will say that this is an improper application of the New Testament text (Matthew 18: 21 — 35) because it was meant to operate as a teaching *within* the community of disciples. In this reading of the text, this teaching on imitating God and forgiving offenders applies only to the *internal life* of the church.

But that clearly overlooks or dismisses the fact that at the very end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gathers his disciples together on a mountain in Galilee and instructs them as follows:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and

of the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you*; and lo, I am with you *always*, to the close of the age. (28: 18 -20)

Jesus couldn't be clearer: the teachings that apply within circle of disciples, and later within the church, are to be observed in all the nations. They (the people of the nations) are to observe, to carry out, what Jesus has told the disciples to observe, to carry out.

Jesus is saying that the disciples must teach the people of the nations to be abundantly merciful in dealing with those who commit offenses against them, because God, the fundamental reality in the universe, is abundantly merciful.

And I don't think it would be a stretch to suggest that, in addition to teaching this truth about the merciful God with words, Jesus is telling the disciples to teach the truth in their action: by imitating the merciful God with their own merciful behavior toward offenders — and to manage to extend this merciful action in a heartfelt way.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is tempting, as I mentioned at the beginning, to try to apply this teaching of Jesus to our relations, as Christians in the United States, with Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda members.

But there is something we have to wrestle with even closer to home, at least for those of us who live in Illinois, but possibly in other states as well.

The Governor of Illinois has attacked needy children and their vulnerable families, as part of his effort to eliminate \$750 million from the state's budget. He has directed, in order to accomplish his purpose, that budgets be severely cut for the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Healthcare and Family Services — those agencies of state government that help those who need help the most.

In many cases, those to be affected by these actions will be as vulnerable as those who were trapped in the Twin Towers seven years ago. There's virtually nothing they can do by themselves to be spared from injury and, yes, death.

So its clear beyond any doubt that followers of Jesus have to avoid shrugging their shoulders about this tragedy, they have to resist every temptation to think that this is just the way politics works in Illinois.

It's clear beyond any doubt that followers of Jesus have to go to bat for these sisters and brothers in need.

We must extend our abundant mercy toward them *not* because they have offended us or anyone else. We must extend our love and care because Jesus *also* taught us to love and care for anyone who is being treated inhumanely, who is suffering, who requires our assistance. We must extend that mercy as if Jesus himself were the one in need.

So, at the very minimum, we are, as disciples of Jesus, required to be in direct communication with our representatives in the General Assembly about restoring the funding for the proposed cuts.

It would be an act of utter unfaithfulness to stand silent and inactive when we have the power as citizens to demand that our political representatives reverse the Governor's dangerous and deadly proposals.

But what about the offender?

What about the Governor?

Are we, as disciples of Jesus in Illinois, to be forgiving of him? Are we to be forgiving of someone who has been given so much power to accomplish good — and has received so much undeserved mercy! — who now, when given the chance to be merciful, has chosen to attack those who are most in need, not of mercy, but in need of what they deserve simply as human beings?

The teachings of Jesus are clear on this one: we again are to imitate God and find it in our hearts to show mercy to the Governor.

And possibly, just maybe, if he sees us as imitating God in our mercy toward him, he too will find it possible to be God-imitating and be, not merciful, but just toward those in need of justice.

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