

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

December 10, 2008

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ABCMC NEWS

Music Festival

ALL METRO CHICAGO AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES
ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2ND ANNUAL ABCMC
CHRISTMAS/ADVENT SEASON MUSIC FESTIVAL

DATE: Saturday, December 13, 2008

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

PLACE: Irving Park Baptist Church
4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago



And as happened last year, this year's musical festival will begin with a mass sing-a-long (involving all in attendance) of many of everyone's favorite Christmas carols and will conclude with a mass (unrehearsed) singing of the "Hallelujah Chorus", involving all the participants in the program, as well as willing volunteers from the audience.

Regardless of whether or not your church decides to participate musically, members and friends of Chicago Metro ABC churches are encouraged to attend. Admission is **FREE**. There will be a Free-Will Offering to support ABCMC and its programs and missions. So mark the date and time (Saturday, December 13 @ 3:00PM) on your calendar, encourage your church to participate, plan to attend, and warm up your voice for the singing of the "Hallelujah Chorus"!

Festival de Navidad

TODAS LAS IGLESIAS AMERICANAS BAUTISTA DE METRO CHICAGO ABCMC
ESTÁN INVITADAS A PARTICIPAR EN EL 2ND FESTIVAL DE NAVIDAD

Fecha: Sábado 13 de diciembre

Hora: 3:00 p.m.

Lugar: Irving Park Baptist Church
4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago



Así como hicimos el año pasado, empezaremos cantando los coros navideños favoritos, para concluir con un coro masivo del "Aleluya," en donde incluiremos a todos los participantes, voluntarios y la audiencia.

Ya sea que su Iglesia participe musicalmente o no, todas las Iglesias y amigos de ABCMC, están invitados. La admisión es GRATIS. Habrá una ofrenda voluntaria para ayudar a los programas y misiones de ABCMC. ¡Marque en su calendario el 13 de diciembre a las 3:00 p.m., participe, asista y entone su voz para cantar el "Coro Aleluya"!

Baptist Effort at Peacemaking in the Middle East

Dear ABCMC Family,

Many of you may have already received the communication from our General Secretary, A. Roy Medley, asking that you sign the statement to President-Elect Obama to urge him to make peacemaking in Palestine-Israel a top priority at the very beginning of his term.

I join him in that request.

But I also ask you to share this with members of your congregation and urge them to sign as well.

Time and time again we've seen administrations wait until the end of their terms to take initiatives on this issue—when it is too late.

Conditions are deteriorating so quickly now that we can't let this happen again.

Please sign and please get others to sign.

Peace be with you,
Larry



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we await the coming of Christ into our lives and our world during this Advent season, we renew our hopes for the day when all God's children can live at peace in the land called Holy.

With the Obama Administration, there is a new opportunity for the United States to help achieve a just and lasting two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

I recently joined other major American Christian leaders—Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox and Protestant—in [sending a letter to President-elect Obama](#), urging him to make Israeli-Palestinian peace a top priority during his first year in office.

On the campaign trail, Obama promised to work for peace between Israel and the Palestinians from the beginning of his Administration, but he faces many competing priorities and pressing global challenges. He needs to hear from American Christians that Holy Land peace cannot be postponed and that we will support his diplomatic leadership.

The work for a durable Israeli-Palestinian peace will not be easy, but the risk of inaction is far greater. Without active U.S. engagement, achievement of a two-state solution will become even more difficult. A further delay of peace will also mean continued emigration of the Christian community in the Holy Land. I urge all American Baptists to join me in signing this ecumenical letter, along with Christians around the country, and help ensure that Obama fulfills his campaign promise to engage in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking as soon as he takes office. You can do this by going to <http://www.cmep.org/letter> or by following the link below.

Especially at this time of year, when we anticipate the miracle of Christmas, we know that nothing is impossible with God. Jerusalem can become a powerful symbol of hope and coexistence for the region and the world.

To view the full text of the letter and list of signers, and to add your name, go to <http://www.cmep.org/letter>. The American Baptist Churches USA is a member of Churches for Middle East Peace, a coalition of national church bodies that is coordinating this grassroots campaign.

We also hope you will share the letter with your friends, family and church community. Go to <http://www.cmep.org/letter/resources> for church organizing resources and a tell-a-friend feature to help spread the word.

The deadline for signatures is January 16, 2009. The letter signed by national Christian leaders was sent to the Obama transition team Dec. 1. The final letter signed by leaders and church members will be delivered to President Obama during the time of inauguration.

Centered in Christ and United in Mission,

Dr. A. Roy Medley
General Secretary
American Baptist Churches USA
Serving as the Hands and Feet of Christ

Thank You for Your Generosity

Some weeks ago, our Executive Minister Larry Greenfield asked ABCMC pastors and churches to consider helping the First Latin American Baptist Church in Chicago with the cost of roof repairs. To date, 6 ABCMC congregations have contributed a total of \$1,850. Thank you for responding to this need.

Celebrating the 400th Anniversary of Baptist Beginnings

Baptists worldwide will in 2009 celebrate the 400th anniversary of Baptist beginnings. To assist your church in its observance of this historic year, the Baptist History and Heritage Society and The Center for Baptist Studies at Mercer University are pleased to announce that on December 15, 2008, they will jointly distribute the first of twelve **complimentary** Bulletin Inserts.

Available in PDF form and sent via e-mail, the Bulletin Inserts will feature stories of well-known Baptist founders and leaders as well as stories of some lesser-known Baptists. Each Insert will also focus briefly on a Baptist principle or development in Baptist life and will include illustrations.

The Bulletin Inserts measure 8.5 inches by 5.5 inches and will fit into the standard-size church bulletin. Churches may print out as many copies as needed.

The Baptist History and Heritage Society and The Center for Baptist Studies will distribute these in PDF format via e-mail on the 15th of each month through November 15, 2009.

To sign up to receive the Bulletin Inserts, please e-mail Pam Durso at pamdurso@baptisthistory.org prior to December 12.

Thinking Theologically

ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield is also the Theologian-in-Residence for the Protestants for the Common Good (PCG). As such, Larry writes a biweekly column, "Thinking Theologically About the Common Good" for PCG's electronic newsletter, *The Common Good Network*. In his latest column, "Of or About" he examines the spiritual implications of a translation when reading the gospel. That column, which was also picked up by *Ethics Daily* (http://www.ethicsdaily.com/article_detail.cfm?AID=11418), is at the end of this week's *eWind*. Be sure to take the time to read it.

Timely Intergenerational Christian Education Resource

To: Pastors and Christian Educators
From: Larry Greenfield
Re: Timely and Intergenerational Christian Education Resource

Recently our colleague with much wisdom and experience in Christian Education, The Rev. Dr. Wilda (Wendy) Morris, e-mailed me with a link to an article entitled "Students Lie, Cheat, Steal, but Say They're Good." Wendy suggested this could be a good topic for intergenerational conversation in congregations.

When I read the article, I agreed.

I wrote Wendy back, and asked if she would supply a set of suggestions for that kind of discussion that we could share with churches, along with the article.

She agreed, and the result exceeded even my high expectation. It is below. You can find the article at http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20081130/ap_on_re_us/students_dishonesty/print

I think this is a terrific resource that I hope many churches will use.

Let us know if you do use it, your experience with it, and if you would like to have more resources of this kind.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS FOR USE WITH YOUTH AND ADULTS IN RESPONSE TO "Students lie, cheat, steal, but say they're good."

First, select a leader or leaders for the discussion carefully. You may have a high school student who participates in small group leadership through the speech department of the school, or who has shown this kind of leadership during youth meetings. The adult who is leader/advisor for the high school youth group is another possibility. Or you may select one youth and one adult to share leadership. They could meet in advance and determine how to divide their responsibilities.

Depending on your group, you might want to begin with high schoolers (and college students, if any are involved) in one group and older adults in another, as they initially go over the article and begin to respond to what it says.

Unless you already have frequent youth-adult discussions, it would be wise to set down a few guidelines for the discussion, such as: One person will speak at a time. No one is to interrupt or directly contradict another person. Disagree agreeably. If you have already spoken to a question twice, give others a chance before you re-enter the discussion. If you don't understand what someone is saying, ask them to "please clarify."

It is important to go with the flow of the discussion, so you may not use all of these questions and may not necessarily use them in this order. The leader or leaders may want to determine in advance which questions should have priority. For instance, if you especially want to include the question on what Biblical themes or passages are relevant to this issue, keep an eye on the clock to insure that you leave time for it.

In order that the discussion not be seen as primarily an attack on youth or youth culture, it is important to include the fifth question.

- Who is the most honest person you know? Why did you pick that person?
- What is your first reaction to the story?
- If you are a teen or young adult, to what extent does the article reflect reality as you experience it?
- Which of the quoted responses most reflects your reaction, and why?
- If you were to conduct a comparable survey of adults, what are some questions that might be included [for example, would you ask if you listed ALL your income on your income taxes this year?]?
- What difference do generational perspectives make in the way we read this data? Many of those who are grandparents come from a generation in which truth was seen as absolute and right and wrong could be easily discerned. Is this true of today's parents and/or young people? What role might the trend toward situational ethics and more subjective views of right and wrong have played in changes discerned in this study? [This question reflects on the cultural shift from "modern" to "postmodern" thinking.]
- What Biblical themes/insights/passages might throw light on the issues raised in this article? How does your Christian faith impact your ethical behavior?
- What does it mean "to be good"?

After the discussion, ask participants to fill out a brief evaluation form (or evaluate in some other way). Suggested evaluation questions: 1-What did you find helpful about this discussion? 2-What would have made this discussion better? 3-What, if anything, did you learn about yourself or others? 4-What other questions would you be interested in considering in a youth-adult discussion?

Wilda (Wendy) Morris

NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS

Pastor's Anniversary

This coming Sunday, December 14, Saint John Church-Baptist, 5821-35 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, will celebrate the 13th anniversary of their pastor, Rev. Dr. Ricky Freeman. The celebration in the 11 a.m. worship service at the church will feature lay speaker Dr. Alma Jones Bland, and guest preacher Howard Wills, Sr. of Greater New Hope Baptist Church in Kankakee. We congratulate the pastor and congregation as they celebrate this milestone in their ministry together.

Christmas Tunes

North Shore Baptist Church continues its Second Sunday Series on December 14 at 2 p.m. Come hear Christmas tunes provided by the English Language Chancel Choir and the brass ensemble VII Brass. Following the concert there will be a time for a carol sing-along of your favorite Christmas hymns. Refreshments will be provided.

God-Talk 101

Beginning Sunday, January 18, the Community Church of Wilmette will present "God-Talk 101: An Honest Look at Tough Questions." This five-week course will be led by Dr. Cate Wallace at noon each Sunday. Each session will take place at the church, 1020 Forest Avenue, Wilmette. The class schedule and other information are on the flier attached with this issue of *eWind*. A brief course outline is posted at 222.godtalk101.blogspot.com. You are welcome to contact Dr. Wallace directly with any questions through the contact page at her web site, www.CatherineMWallace.com. For more information, please phone the church at 847-251-4370.

COMMUNITY NEWS

The Academy for the Common Good in 2009

The Academy for the Common Good will offer its program on "Bringing Faith to Public Life" three times in 2009. The Academy is an initiative of Protestants for the Common Good. The goal of the programs is to provide leadership training in faith-based education and advocacy for adults.

The programs in 2009 will take place in different locations and different time frames. The winter program will be in Glenview; the spring in Chicago; and the fall in Elgin. Please see the attached bulletin insert for more details. Also, please print and share the bulletin insert in your church.

For more information, session schedules, and to register, please visit the web site www.thecommongood.org, or contact Douglas Sharp, Dean of the Academy at Douglas.Sharp@thecommongood.org or 312-223-9544, extension 234.

Sweet Adeline Show

Edge O' Town Chorus of Sweet Adelines International will present "The Amazing Musical Race" on Sunday, December 14 at 2 p.m. at the Stahl Family Theatre (formerly the St. Patrick Performing Arts Theatre), 5900 W. Belmont Avenue, Chicago. Several members of the Irving Park Baptist Church choir are also members of this singing group. Come and enjoy an afternoon of harmony and fun.

Homegoing of Dr. Arthur Dedrick Griffin

Thank you to Rev. Janette Wilson for sharing this article.

On Friday, December 5 at 3:30 p.m. at his residence in Oak Park, the beloved Pastor Emeritus of the National Historic Landmark First Baptist Congregational Church of Chicago, Dr. Arthur Dedrick Griffin made his transition to his eternal home in Glory bringing to a close one of the most prolific and influential ministries of our time.

Reverend Griffin was surrounded by his loving family. He was 79 years old.

The world has lost a true man of God and the Heavenly Host is rejoicing. Reverend Griffin leaves a legacy of faithfully teaching and preaching of the Lord's return. Dr. Griffin served as pastor of First Baptist Congregational Church for 46 years. He was revered not only for his theological knowledge and community activism, but also for his tremendous contributions to the African American community and beyond.

The First Baptist Congregational Church family asks your prayers for the Griffin family and the church family.

2009 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

On Sunday, January 18, 2009 at 4 p.m., the Ecumenical Millennium Committee will host the 9th Annual Chicagoland Ecumenical Prayer Service in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The service will take place at St. Paul Chong Ha Sang Korean Catholic Mission, 675 Dursey Lane, Des Plaines. The preacher will be the Rt. Rev. Victor A. Scantlebury, Assistant Bishop, the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. Participating presiding leaders who will participate in the service include ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield. The service will be open to everyone. Please print and share the flier attached to this issue of *eWind*.

ABCUSA NEWS

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

Medley among Christian Leaders Urging Obama to Prioritize Immediacy of Israel-Palestine Peace

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 12/05/08) — American Baptist General Secretary A. Roy Medley is among a broad spectrum of American Christian leaders—from Catholic and Orthodox traditions to mainline Protestant, Evangelical and historic African American churches and institutions—that have appealed to President-elect Barack Obama to make Israeli-Palestinian peace an immediate priority during his first year in office.

In a December 1 letter sent to President-elect Obama as well as key members of his transition team and newly unveiled national security team, the leaders urged the incoming Obama Administration to “provide sustained, high-level diplomatic leadership toward the clear goal of a final status agreement” that will establish a viable Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel.

The letter notes that a durable peace agreement will help “strengthen U.S. security and improve stability and relationships through the Middle East.” Without active U.S. engagement, the leaders warned that “political inertia and perpetuation of the unbearable status quo will make achievement of a two-state solution increasingly difficult.” The leaders are also concerned about the “negative impact a further delay will have on the Christian community in the Holy Land, whose numbers continue to decline.”

Sending the letter during Advent, a season of hope and expectation in the Christian calendar, the leaders expressed their belief that “Jerusalem—home to two peoples and three religions—has the potential to become a powerful symbol of hope and coexistence for people across the region and the world.”

The leaders called on all Christians to support “vigorous U.S. diplomatic efforts to secure Middle East peace”. The letter is being followed by a broad grassroots campaign aimed at mobilizing American Christian church members nationwide. The final letter signed by both Christian leaders and congregants will be delivered to President Obama during the time of inauguration.

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, said, “This letter speaks to the need for the incoming Obama administration to help bring about a peace agreement quickly between Israelis and Palestinians. The opportunity for achieving a two- state solution is narrowing and must be seized now. Further delays will make reaching an agreement much harder and undermine long-term security for both Israelis and Palestinians.”

Bishop Howard Hubbard, Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, commented, “This conflict continues to undermine the social, economic and spiritual fabric of the lives of all persons in the region, including Christians who have lived in the Holy Land since the earliest days of our faith. With majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians supporting a durable peace, it is incumbent on their political leaders and our own to do everything possible to help bring about a just peace.”

Dr. Joel C. Hunter, Senior Pastor of Northland Church, said, “Our faith calls on us to work and pray for peace. It's not about taking one side over the other; it's about seeking justice for both parties. The President-elect can be assured that there are many American Christians who stand ready to support his efforts when it comes to seeking a lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace.”

Commenting on his participation in the appeal, Medley said, “American Baptists have long been at the forefront of efforts toward peace, justice, and the tangible manifestation of God’s reign of grace here on earth. The creation and sustenance of peace in the Holy Land is an opportunity to exemplify the love of God and neighbor, and I urge all American Baptists to join me in supporting this effort to pursue peace in these sacred lands.”

The full text of the letter and list of signers is available at <http://www.cmep.org/ecumenical-letter.pdf>, and those wishing to add their name to the letter can do so at <http://www.cmep.org/letter>.

Walter Pulliam, Former President of ABCUSA and Ministers Council, Dies

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 12/05/08) — Walter Bryan Pulliam, long-time American Baptist servant, passed away on Wednesday evening, November 26.

Walt, as he was known, was born in Elvins, MO, in 1925 to Stella and Walter L. Pulliam. At age seventeen, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, and was the nose gunner on the first plane over Nagasaki after the atom bomb drop. It made a life-long impression of the devastation of war. After his discharge, Pulliam returned home to Eureka, CA, and met and married Marilyn Hallmark, his wife of 62 years.

Pulliam was active in the American Baptist Churches USA, having served as the Director of Education for Idaho, Montana, Utah and Detroit. He was Minister of Education at Seattle First Baptist and later Co Minister. He became pastor of Judson Memorial Baptist in Minneapolis during which time he was elected President of the Ministers Council for American Baptist Churches USA and later President of American Baptist Churches USA.

In commenting on his years of service, General Secretary A. Roy Medley said, “Walt served as an exemplary leadership in the local church, in our denominational life, and in God’s world. Our lives were enriched with his wisdom, courage, and compassion, and he led us, under God’s direction, toward the Beloved Community of justice, peace, and love that Jesus proclaimed and initiated. God blessed Walt’s life, and those of us who had the privilege to partner with him in ministry over so many decades cannot express the depth of our love and abiding admiration and affection. We thank our gracious God for Walt’s life and ministry. He is a dear friend who will be greatly missed.”

Pulliam was passionate about serving others, and became a volunteer commissioned police officer while at Seattle First Baptist Church. In retirement he organized chaplain services for Fire District Seven. He had difficulty remaining retired, and served in several churches as interim pastor. He had a love for people—his family, the churches he served, and the wider community. He had a remarkable ability to make friends and connect people.

His valued family included Mary Ann Tucker, Walter E. and Denise Pulliam, Susan and Lyell Ernst, and grandchildren Brett and Jamison Ernst, Stephanie Pulliam, Nicole Pulliam Wagner and Kyle Wagner. He is also survived by a brother Norvel and Nancy Pulliam and a brother-in-law Robert and Carol Hallmark. A memorial service was held at Seattle First Baptist Church, Sunday, December 7.

Remembrances may be made to the Music Committee of 1st Baptist, Companis through the church or ROAR of WA, 717 N 36th, Seattle 98103, and cards can be sent to Marilyn Pulliam (address available through the [Office of the General Secretary](#)).

HEALTH CARE NEWS

Health Care Reform is on the Move

This article is from the Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care.

Health Care Reform: A Federal & State Reality *Next Steps Strategy Discussion*
Friday, December 12, 2008; 10:00 a.m.-3 p.m.; AFL-CIO Headquarters; Springfield
9:30 a.m. – Registration; 1- a.m. – Morning Sessions; Noon – Lunch; 12:30 p.m. Afternoon Sessions;
2 p.m. – Closing Remarks

With the Presidential election of Barack Obama, confidence is building regarding the potential for major health care reform, even in today's troubling economic times. Why? Because health care is the key to economic security and opportunity. We know, you know it and our longtime ally, friend and Health Care Justice supporter President Elect Obama knows it!

A new federal-state partnership is needed to make accessible, affordable and guaranteed health care a reality for ALL Illinoisans. During these tough economic times, when voters are asked their top concern that requires federal action, the answer resoundingly remains consistent: guaranteeing accessible, affordable, and quality health care.

It is time that we roll up our sleeves and make this happen. This is a meeting that we urge you not to miss as we:

- Appraise the current political environment in DC
- Evaluate the different strategies being discussed in DC
- Forecast President Obama's plans for reform
- Discuss the role of the IL General Assembly in federal reforms
- Review some of the major IL General Assembly initiatives
- Develop and initiate next steps as they relate to Congress and Springfield
- Gain unified momentum in the commitment for Health Care Justice!

Join us and take Action!

For more information and to register, please visit www.cbhconline.org, or contact Josephine Kalipeni at 217-352-5600 or jkalipeni@cbhconline.org.

Coping with Mental Illness

Thank you to Wendy Morris for sharing this information.

Do you know about <http://www.mentalhealthministries.net/> - This website has a resource for people struggling with mental illness, and members of their families and communities of faith, on "Coping with the Holidays." It can be downloaded in English and Spanish. Mayra Castaneda called it to my attention.

Community Health Care Discussions

This invitation is from Eric Quamme of the Illinois Health Care Justice Campaign.



What does next year look like for health care reform? What is on the horizon for the federal and state level? At the discussions, we'll talk about some significant health care reform legislation for 2009 on both the federal and state level. 2009 must be the year for health care reform! It is time. Our system is broken, and unsustainable. We have a social and moral responsibility to help each other and take care of one another here in Illinois, and throughout our country. We need

unity! We cannot afford to do nothing anymore. We need a sustained effort to push for meaningful health care reform. We must stand united, though.

I am excited to announce that the Illinois Health Care Justice Campaign will be holding a series of upcoming Community Health Care Discussion this month throughout the metro Chicago area. I hope that you are able to attend them. I also hope that you can help spread the word to your contacts, and encourage others in your community to attend these events. Here are the details:

Waukegan Community Health Care Discussion

Tuesday, December 16th

7:00 - 8:30 pm

**Waukegan First Congregational United Church of Christ
320 Grand Ave.
Waukegan, IL**

Des Plaines Community Health Care Discussion

Wednesday, December 17th

7:00 - 8:30 pm

**Des Plaines Public Library
1501 Ellinwood Ave.
Des Plaines, IL**

RSVP to Eric Quamme at equamme@ilmaternal.org or by calling at (312) 491-8161

PEACE NEWS

Northwest Suburban Meeting

The Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project will hold its monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 10 at 7 p.m. at the South Church, 501 S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect. The meeting is open to all who are interested in helping high school students make career decisions for peace. For more information about the project, please visit www.northwestsubpep.org.

Baptists and Burma

Burma is dear to the hearts of Baptists because of our mission history there. The first American Baptist international missionaries, Adoniram Judson and his wife Ann Hasseltine Judson, first brought the good news of Jesus to that nation. Christians in Burma trace their faith back to the ministry of these missionaries in the early nineteenth century.

Burma (now called Myanmar) is struggling under an oppressive regime that especially targets ethnic groups such as the Karen, with whom the Judsons had their greatest success. Baptists today are ministering with Karen and other refugees fleeing Burma for the United States. Read the November-December 2008 issue of *Baptist Peacemaker* to learn about the work of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America is doing with Burmese refugees.

Peace Vigils

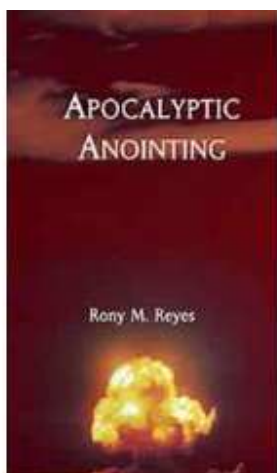
Suburban peace vigils will take place on two Saturdays in December:

- Saturday, December 14, 3 p.m-4 p.m., at the intersection of Arlington Heights Road and Northwest Highway, Arlington Heights. Signs will be available, or bring your own.
- Saturday, December 21, 3-4 p.m., at the intersection of Hicks Road and Northwest Highway, Palatine. Signs will be available, or bring your own.

BOOK NOOK

Apocalyptic Anointing

Thank you to Rony Reyes, Spanish Language Pastor at North Shore Baptist Church for this announcement.



A Message From Rev. Rony Reyes...It is a privilege to introduce to ABC of Metro Chicago Family my book, *Apocalyptic Anointing*. It is about my early spiritual encounters with the Holy Spirit. Although the book's original audiences are Pentecostal/Charismatic, nevertheless, everyone who is interested in spiritual gifts, visions and dreams, and want to deepen an understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit will benefit from buying this book (www.amazon.com or www.emethpress.com). The book is already out! For more information visit the book's website: <http://apocalypticanoointing.com> the list price of the book is \$29.00 but if you go to amazon.com they are selling it for \$14.71 If you are not a savvy computer person or want to order locally you can contact me at (312) 316-4400 or send me an email to: ronyfbcoqt@hotmail.com

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for world peace.

Please hold the people of India in prayer.

Please pray for the First Baptist Congregational Church and the Griffin family as they celebrate the life and mourn the passing of Dr. Arthur Griffin.

Please pray for our state and our governmental leaders in this time of uncertainty following the arrest of the governor of Illinois on charges of corruption.

Please join Saint John Church-Baptist and their pastor Ricky Freeman in prayers of thanksgiving and rejoicing as they celebrate 13 years of ministry together on Sunday, December 14.

Please remember in prayer and action those who do not have adequate shelter and warm clothing in this season.

Please pray for—and contribute to—food pantries that help deal with hunger in these difficult economic times.

Please hold in prayer graduate theological schools that are preparing individuals for ministry.

Please pray for individuals and families dealing with HIV-AIDS.

Please pray for ABC missionaries John and Tomoko Armagost, serving in Japan. Please pray also for churches in Japan.

Please lift up in prayer ABC missionaries Anita and Rick Gutierrez in South Africa, where they are helping people deal with many health issues such as HIV-AIDS and diabetes, as well as helping people overcome ancient fears and superstitions.

Please hold in prayer those who are working to reform our nation's health care system—and become one of them if you feel so led.

CALENDAR

December 10—Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project meeting, South Church, 501 S. Emerson Street, Mt. Prospect, 7 p.m.

December 12—Health Care Reform meeting, AFL-CIO headquarters, Springfield; registration opens at 9:30 a.m., meeting concludes at 3 p.m. Cost for lunch is \$10. Please visit www.cbhconline.org, or contact Josephine Kalipeni at 217-352-5688 or jkalipeni@cbhconline.org.

December 13—2nd Annual ABCMC Christmas/Advent Season Music Festival, Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, 3 p.m. (Please note time change from original announcement.)

December 14—Saint John Church-Baptist celebrates the 13th anniversary of pastor Ricky Freeman, beginning with the 11 a.m. worship service.

December 14—Sweet Adeline show, Edge o' Town Chorus of Sweet Adelines International, Stahl Family Theatre, 5900 W. Belmont Avenue, Chicago, 2 p.m.

January 18-February 15—"God-Talk 101" course, Community Church of Wilmette, 1020 Forest Avenue, Wilmette, Sundays, noon.

January 18, 2009—9th Annual Chicagoland Ecumenical Prayer Service for Christian Unity, St. Paul Chong Ha Sang Korean Catholic Mission, 675 Dursey Lane, Des Plaines, 4 p.m.

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Thinking Theologically About the Common Good

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

"Of or About"

"You could translate it 'in,' or 'through,' or 'among,'" my New Testament/Early Church professor explained those many years ago. And then Robert Grant added still more prepositional possibilities for the Pauline text we were studying that class period.

He didn't explain why that was so that day.

But I later learned that in some cases the prepositions of the New Testament Greek are inarguably clear, while in others they are trickier, requiring more research.

And then there are the times when the original (well, let's say the closest one we have to the original) scriptural preposition is absent altogether and the responsible translator has either to determine the meaning from the linguistic context or simply to make an informed choice because, despite the most careful research, the meaning remains ambiguous.

Just recently I was waiting to be invited into a meeting at a church and, trying to find something to occupy my brain, noticed that the nearby shelf contained a number of Bibles in various English translations. So I pulled out a sampling and checked on how each translated the first verse of the Gospel according to Mark.

They were all pretty much the same. No birth narrative, just the bold statement that this is the beginning of the gospel, or good news, or good message, or good proclamation identified with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

But there was one glaring exception, involving, of all things, a preposition. The old King James Version represented one translational choice: "The beginning of the gospel *of* Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

The New Revised Standard Version followed that translation exactly except for substituting "good news" for "gospel." The preposition "of" remained the same.

When, however, I turned to the New International Version, it read: "The beginning of the gospel *about* Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

That was the translational path also for The New Testament in Today's English

Version: *about* rather than *of*.

When I got back to my study and checked out still more versions, it was the same divide between *of* and *about*.

The question, of course, is whether this division in the house of translators makes any difference.

I believe it does.

But I need to make it clear that I am not attributing bad faith or bad motives or inferior scholarly skills to those with whom I disagree in interpreting the preposition-less first sentence of Mark's Gospel. My longtime friend, teacher, and colleague, Jay Wilcoxon, has persuaded me that, given the *Greek* construction of that first sentence in Mark, there is genuine ambiguity about which of the *English* prepositions should be chosen and that either can be justified on linguistic grounds.

But which *English* preposition is chosen makes an immense theological and socio-ethical difference, I want to argue.

To put the issue in its starkest terms: Is the good news Jesus himself or the kingdom of God he proclaims?

If Jesus proclaims *himself* as the gospel — the good message — then the gospel is *about* him, and it follows that his followers will believe *in him*. That, in a strict sense, is the test of faith and faith-practice: believing *in* Jesus as the Chosen One of God. The follower's faith and faith-practice *in him* is based on not just Jesus' self-proclamation but also on his wondrous works of compassion and healing, of self-giving and sacrifice, and his being resurrected by God from the dead and being given eternal life and power with the Divine Parent.

Clearly, if both textually and existentially, one holds that this is the Christian gospel, then translating the ambiguous first sentence of Mark's Gospel into English with the preposition "about" would be entirely justified and fully appropriate. And yes, using the preposition "of" even allows for the same Christological interpretation as those who opt for "about." Indeed, those translators who use "of" may be choosing to be intentionally ambiguous themselves, permitting the reader to understand Jesus himself to be the gospel. There's plenty of evidence in other parts of the New Testament and in this history of Christianity to support such an understanding. As Rudolf Bultmann put it so well, "the proclaimer became the proclaimed."

But if in the Synoptic gospels Jesus truly proclaims not himself but rather the reign and rule, the kingdom and dominion of God, as the gospel — the message of God's good news — then the gospel *of* Jesus is not *about* Jesus but instead about what God is doing to create a new reality, a new configuration, a new community in the world. And it follows, then, that his disciples will not so much believe *in* Jesus but instead choose to believe what he proclaims, what he demonstrates, what he embodies *about* God's intention for and God's action in the world.

Here the faith *in* God and the faith-practice grounded *in what God is doing* has its primary source in what the Chosen One of God proclaims, demonstrates, and embodies. The combination of this proclamation, demonstration, and embodiment is evidence both about the nature and character of God and about the new reality God is already introducing into the world. The presence of that new reality is apprehended in Jesus' acts of compassion and healing, of care for the poor and marginalized, of self-giving for the sake of mutual love in the new community. The

consequence of believing Jesus in his proclamation and his action is, in faith-practice, to join with him in the new community he demonstrates and embodies, even in his sacrificial death for the salvation of others and for the sake of God's new community. Jesus' resurrection is not just the confirmation of his cause of a Community of Love but is also its continuing witness to, and embodiment in, the life of the world.

The alternatives here are not between leaving Jesus in or out of the gospel picture. Jesus figures centrally in both options, but in much different roles. In one he is the decisive object of faith. In the other he is the decisive figure who points to the object of faith by his words and deeds and who invites others to be a part of the new thing that God is doing.

I contend that the earliest witness we have about Jesus in the Synoptic gospel points us to the second of these alternatives. The 14th and 15th verses of that same first chapter in Mark prove crucial, at least for me, in this choice:

Now after John (the Baptist) was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming *the good news of God*, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the *kingdom of God* has come near; *repent and believe in the good news*."

What difference does it make theologically and socio-ethically?

I acknowledge that those who favor the preposition "about" in the first verse of Mark can also opt to be involved in issues of social justice based on their faith in Jesus Christ. But there is plenty of historical and contemporary evidence that the strictly personal relationship between the believer and Jesus-as-the-object-of-faith can lead the believer to an indifference and even, in some cases, an objection to participation in movements for social justice as an essential ingredient of Christian faith.

That isn't possible for those who believe Jesus' words and actions about the God of love who is working to re-create the world in keeping with God's own nature. Believing Jesus means accepting the invitation to join with God in the re-creation of the world through the instruments of reconciliation and justice. The very nature of the Christian faith and life is accepting and living out that invitation as a disciple of Jesus.

A lot turns on the choice of a preposition.

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