

*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 23, 2008

**In this Issue**

ABCMC NEWS.....	2
ABCMC Office.....	2
Thinking Theologically.....	2
Great Fundraising Opportunity for the ABC Chicago Metro Region.....	2
NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS .....	2
Financial Secretary Needed .....	2
God-Talk 101 .....	3
Out 'N About .....	3
COMMUNITY NEWS .....	3
Christmas Eve on CBS.....	3
2009 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.....	4
Petition for Equality.....	4
AFA Ends Boycott of McDonald's.....	4
Mission Conference at the Divinity School .....	6
ABCUSA NEWS .....	6
Christian Leaders Call for Easing Travel Restrictions to Cuba.....	6
PRAYER REQUESTS.....	7
CALENDAR.....	8
Thinking Theologically.....	8
"Halfway There" .....	8

## ABCMC NEWS

### **ABCMC Office**



The ABCMC office will be closed December 24, 2008 through January 5, 2009. Everyone on the ABCMC staff wishes you a blessed Christmas season:

Larry Greenfield ♦ Lynne Kelley ♦ Tony Rake ♦ Jesse Smith ♦ Lowell Young

### **Thinking Theologically**

ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield is Theologian-in-Residence for Protestants for the Common Good (PCG). As such, Larry writes a biweekly column, "Thinking Theologically About the Common Good" for that organization's enewsletter. Larry and PCG graciously share his column with ABCMC. At the end of this issue of *eWind* is Larry's most recent column, "Halfway There."

### **Great Fundraising Opportunity for the ABC Chicago Metro Region**



The De Paul vs. Cincinnati men's college basketball game on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at 1:00 PM at the All State Arena in Rosemont, IL will be a fundraiser for the ABC Chicago Metro Region. In order to succeed, this Regional fundraiser needs the support of ABCMC churches.

More specifically, the Chicago Metro Region will purchase a bloc of tickets at \$5.00 each for the 01/17/09 De Paul vs. Cincinnati game. ABCMC churches will be asked to purchase from 5 to 10 tickets for that game from the Region at the face value price of \$20.00 each and then to sell these tickets for the same face value price. This will result in the Region securing its profit, while each participating ABCMC church will get its original investment (ranging from \$100.00 to \$200.00) back in full!

Doing this not only will help the Chicago Metro Region, it will also help each participating ABCMC church lay the groundwork for success with its own De Paul fundraising game. In other words, since they will have experienced first hand the fun and excitement of a De Paul Big East Conference men's college basketball game, the 5 to 10 individuals from a particular ABCMC church who attend the Cincinnati game will be better able to encourage others from their church to attend their own church's De Paul fundraising game and to promote the sale of tickets for that game.

ABCMC churches interested in supporting the Chicago Metro Region by purchasing 5-10 tickets for the January 17, 2009 De Paul vs. Cincinnati game are asked to call Lowell Young, ABCMC Mission Support Associate, at 773-370-2003 or to e-mail him at [younglowell@aol.com](mailto:younglowell@aol.com).

## NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS

### **Financial Secretary Needed**

North Shore Baptist Church has an opening for the part-time position of Financial Secretary. Please contact Ron Barlow, Administrator, for further information. Tel. 773-728-4200, ext. 22; FAX 773-728-1582; e-mail: [rbarlow@northshorebaptist.org](mailto:rbarlow@northshorebaptist.org).

## 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](http://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](http://www.CatherineMWallace.com). For more information, please phone the church at 847-251-4370.

## Out 'N About

*This article is from the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists Associational.*

Woodside Church, Flint, MI, is participating in a community program called Out 'N About. It is sponsored by the Greater Flint Arts Council and showcases GLBT artists in various venues over several months. Last year the church hosted both Jason & DeMarco and emma's revolution as our part in the effort. This year they hosted a public showing of a movie made by a local artist, David Garcia, called *Fences* about the Matthew Shepherd murder and *Remember Who Made You*. *Fences* was presented on November 15, and was followed by a panel discussion. *Remember* was featured on December 5 with a dinner and dialog. Folks at Woodside are not only reaching out to people of faith; they are also modeling in their community what it means to be welcoming and affirming.

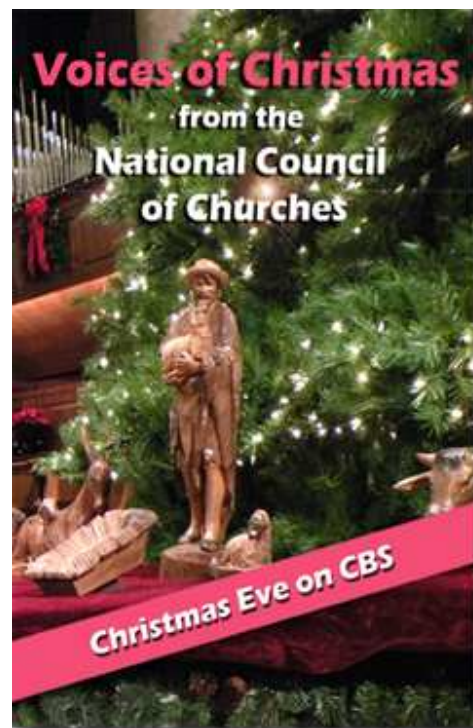
## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Christmas Eve on CBS

**CBS will present “Voices of Christmas from the National Council of Churches,” on Christmas Eve** – Wednesday, December 24, at 11:35 p.m. Eastern Time in most cities – in observance of the Council's *100th anniversary*. Hosted by Dr. Michael Kinnamon, general secretary of the NCC, the program will feature music from across the 35 communions that make up this ecumenical fellowship. It will celebrate the movement to ward Christian unity and the common call to mission that brings these diverse believers together in the spirit of the Christ child of Bethlehem.

**For 2009 the National Council will focus on mission initiatives linked to the immediate economic crisis**, and to the broader role Christians must play in fostering a fair and just society. These initiatives include advocacy on behalf of “the least of these” for *food, shelter and jobs*; adequate *health care* for all; protecting and restoring *God's creation*; training and equipping *young ecumenical leaders*, and *racial justice and peace* both here and around the world.

**Learn more about our work** on Christian unity, our dialogues with other faith traditions, our work on leadership and curriculum development, and the new **NRSV Green Bible** at [www.nccusa.org](http://www.nccusa.org)



## **2009 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

On Sunday, January 18, 2009 at 4 p.m., the Ecumenical Millennium Committee will host the 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **Petition for Equality**

*This request is from Allied for Equality.*

Dear Clergy and Lay Leaders,

If you feel that it is unfair and wrong to deny families and couples the legal protections and dignity they deserve based on sexual orientation, please read on and sign on to our open letter.

Allied for Equality, a project of **Northern Illinois PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Council** and **Equality Illinois** is coordinating a clergy sign-on letter in support of a measure in the state legislature that would grant all Illinois families the right to a civil union. The letter will be delivered to the Illinois General Assembly when the vote on civil unions takes place. It will also be printed on the Northern Illinois PFLAG Council & Equality Illinois websites and submitted in a press release. Please sign the petition online at [http://eqfed.org/campaign/afe\\_clergy\\_civilunion](http://eqfed.org/campaign/afe_clergy_civilunion)

No matter where your church or synagogue, or larger denomination, stands on the issue of blessing same-gender couples, I hope you can all agree that **no one** should be shut out of a system that is supposed to be there to protect their unions.

Thank you for your support.

In partnership and equality,

Caroline Staerk  
Field Director, Allied for Equality  
[cstaerk@eqil.org](mailto:cstaerk@eqil.org)  
Office: 773-477-7173  
Fax: 773-477-6912

## **AFA Ends Boycott of McDonald's**

*This article is from Baptist Message of the Southern Baptist Convention.*

October 23, 2008

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) – The American Family Association announced Oct. 9 an end to the boycott it had organized against McDonald's, citing the restaurant chain's willingness to "remain neutral in the culture war regarding homosexual marriage."

"McDonald's said McDonald's Vice President Richard Ellis has resigned his position on the board of [National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce] and that his seat on the board will not be replaced," AFA founder and chairman Don Wildmon wrote in an e-mail alert to the pro-family organization's 2.4 million supporters. "McDonald's also said that the company has no plans to renew their membership in NGLCC when it expires in December."



The alert went on to say that McDonald's sent an e-mail to its franchise owners, stating, "It is our policy to not be involved in political and social issues. McDonald's remains neutral on same sex marriage or any 'homosexual agenda' as defined by the American Family Association."

"We appreciate the decision by McDonald's to no longer support political activity by homosexual activist organizations. You might want to thank your local McDonald's manager," Wildmon wrote. AFA launched the boycott July 3 after Jack Daly, a McDonald's senior vice president, confirmed that the chain gave \$20,000 to the chamber of commerce and that Ellis, an open homosexual, personally approved the contribution. Talks between AFA and McDonald's had been unsuccessful, so AFA urged its supporters not to give McDonald's their business.

Despite AFA's declaration of victory, a news release on the website for the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce Oct. 9 said, "There has been no discussion between the NGLCC and McDonalds regarding continuing membership, nor has the NGLCC been notified of any move not to renew our work together."

McDonald's still is listed as a corporate partner on the chamber of commerce website, but Ellis is no longer listed as a member of the board of directors.

Michael Deprimo, an AFA spokesman, pointed Baptist Press to a Sept. 25 blog entry at PRWeek.com, which said Ellis returned to McDonald's Restaurants of Canada as senior vice president of communications and public affairs and president of Ronald McDonald House Charities.

*Baptist Press* asked Deprimo for a copy of the e-mail from McDonald's to its franchise owners that Wildmon quoted in his alert, but Deprimo declined.

"We obtained the information from a franchise owner. For obvious reasons, we will not name him/her," Deprimo wrote in an e-mail to *BP*.

An Oct. 9 news release on the AFA website said AFA is ending the boycott because "McDonald's has notified the organization" that Ellis has resigned from the chamber of commerce. *Baptist Press* asked Deprimo how AFA was notified, and he said it was a telephone conversation between Daly and Tim Wildmon, AFA's president, Oct. 3.

*Baptist Press* placed calls to check with both Daly's office and Wildmon's office to confirm the conversation, but those calls were not returned by press time.

Felicia Powers, a spokeswoman for the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, told BP the statement on their website was the only statement they were making regarding AFA and McDonald's. When BP asked if Ellis was removed from the board of directors simply because he moved to Canada or if there was another reason, Powers said, "Pretty much the only thing we released today was this statement."

According to the chamber's website, "Advocacy is a top priority for the NGLCC, whether it's lobbying Congress or the White House, commenting on regulatory issues or working with leaders throughout America's top corporations to bring about equality, opportunity and change. The NGLCC has quickly moved to become the LGBT business voice in Washington, on Wall Street, and down Main Street USA."

In comments reported by *The Washington Post* in July, McDonald's spokesman Bill Whitman reiterated the company's commitment to inclusion.

"Hatred has no place in our culture," Whitman said. "That includes McDonald's, and we stand by and support our people to live and work in a society free of discrimination and harassment."

*WorldNetDaily* reported Oct. 9 that Whitman confirmed that Ellis "made a personal decision to step down" from the chamber of commerce after he took the new position in Canada, and a post by blogger Jeff

Bercovici at portfolio.com reported that a McDonald's spokeswoman said, "McDonald's has no plan to fill his seat [on the board] because it's not our seat to fill."

## ***Mission Conference at the Divinity School***

You are invited to the next Border Crossing conference at the University of Chicago Divinity School, on Friday, January 23. "Resisting Mission: Redefining Engagement" will look how globalization is leading Christian churches, other religious communities, and non-religious organizations to rethink the meaning of mission. The conference will feature a keynote from Lamin Sanneh, a leading scholar of global Christianity from Yale University, with panels of scholars and mission leaders reflecting on practice. Seminary students, anthropologists of religion, theologians, and clergy will all be challenged by the discussion.

The conference will be from 10 AM to 4 PM on Friday, January 23, in Swift Hall (on 58<sup>th</sup> Street between University and Ellis Avenues in Chicago) at the University of Chicago. Registration is free; lunch is included for all who register before January 19.

You can find more information at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/programs/mission.shtml>

You can register at [lillyconference@gmail.com](mailto:lillyconference@gmail.com)

## ***The Academy for the Common Good in 2009***

*Seeking a place and way to make a difference?*

*Wondering how to bring faith to public life?*

Check out the video at <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5364472535189090932>

Protestants for the Common Good announces the 2009 program offerings of the Academy for the Common Good. The program provides education to help persons explore the place of Christian faith in social, economic and political life, and bring biblical and theological perspectives to the evaluation of public policy. The Academy is a faith-based approach to developing social justice leadership in both congregational and public ministry.

The winter program will be held at **Glenview Community Church**, starting in January. The Downtown program will be at The **Chicago Temple**, also starting in January. The spring program will be located at **Third Baptist Church** in Chicago beginning in April. The fall program will be in Elgin at **Epworth United Methodist Church**, beginning in September. *Enrollment is limited.* For more information and registration, go online to [www.thecommongood.org](http://www.thecommongood.org) and click on "Academy for the Common Good," or contact Douglas Sharp, Dean of the Academy, at [douglas.sharp@thecommongood.org](mailto:douglas.sharp@thecommongood.org), (312) 223-9544, x234. Attached to this issue of eWind is a flyer suitable for use as a bulletin insert.

## **ABCUSA NEWS**

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

## ***Christian Leaders Call for Easing Travel Restrictions to Cuba***

*This article is from the Associated Baptist Press*

*By Bob Allen, Senior Writer for the Associated Baptist Press*

Thursday, December 18, 2008

NEW YORK (ABP) -- Christian leaders on Dec. 18 called on President-elect Barack Obama to ease travel restrictions to Cuba they say hinder religious work.

Denominational and ecumenical leaders from a variety of faith groups said restrictions imposed in 2005 have made it harder for religious bodies to send religious delegations or support church partners in Cuba. Religious institutions now are eligible for only limited travel licenses, and some have been unable to obtain even those.

The group went a step further, urging the president-elect to lift the ban on travel to Cuba for all Americans, ending a 46-year-old trade embargo and restoring full diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba.

"For decades the U.S. policy toward Cuba has had unfortunate consequences for the Cuban people, while denying important freedoms to Americans," the letter said. "It has failed significantly in its stated objective to precipitate change in the Cuban government."

The faith leaders said hostility between governments has also disrupted historical bonds between churches in the U.S. and Cuba, at a time when Cuban churches are growing rapidly and need support from their Christian counterparts in the U.S.

"We are convinced that it is time to change the ineffective and counter-productive U.S. policy toward Cuba," the letter said. "We urgently request you to change the Cuba policy of the United States in ways that will assist the churches in their work and benefit all Americans."

Baptists signing the letter included Stan Hastey, minister for mission and ecumenism for the Alliance of Baptists; Roy Medley, general secretary of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.; and Tyrone Pitts, general secretary of the Progressive National Baptist Convention. The PNBC's ecumenical officer, Brenda Girton-Mitchell, signed the letter, along with Jose Norat-Rodriguez, area director of Iberoamerica and the Caribbean for American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

Other signers included John McCullough of Church World Service, Michael Kinnamon of the National Council of Churches and leaders from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of the Brethren, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Mennonite Central Committee, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, United Methodist Church and United Church of Christ.

One signer, John Thomas, general minister and president of the United Church of Christ, introduced Obama last summer at the UCC's General Synod in Hartford, Conn. At the time Obama was a member of a UCC-affiliated church in Chicago, but he later resigned his membership during the Jeremiah Wright controversy.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

Please pray for world peace.

Please hold the people of India in prayer.

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

Please hold in prayer ABC missionaries David and Leslie Turley, serving in Okinawa, Japan.

Please remember in prayer ABC missionaries Annie and Jeff Dieselberg, serving in Thailand.

Please pray for women and children being trafficked, and for networks, solutions and resources to help them.

## CALENDAR

**December 24-January 5**—ABCMC offices closed; no *eWind* on January 31.

**December 25**—Christmas Day.

**January 17**—ABCMC Fund Raiser, De Paul basketball game, 1 p.m.

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

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

**January 23**—Mission Conference, Divinity School, University of Chicago, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
You can find more information at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/programs/mission.shtml>  
You can register at [lillyconference@gmail.com](mailto:lillyconference@gmail.com)

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



Reflections

Vol VII no. 27, December 19, 2008

## Thinking Theologically About the Common Good

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

### **"Halfway There"**

Who would have thought that this would be a year in which Mary's claim would get us halfway there?

In her poem recorded in the first chapter of the Gospel According to Luke (verses 46 – 55) – upon learning from Angel Gabriel that she would be God-favored by carrying in her womb and then giving birth to God's chosen child – Mary assuredly declares:

[God] has brought down the powerful from their thrones...

and has sent the rich away empty.

If what's been happening in the financial world these last few months, weeks, and days is a reliable measure, it would seem that Mary finally got it right about the high and mighty, the rich and powerful, being laid low and drained.

First came the collapse of the financial sector (which, according to Nobel Prize economics winner Paul Krugman, has accounted in recent years for 8% of the country's Gross Domestic Product, compared to less than 5% in the preceding generation — see his column in the *New York Times*, Friday 12/19/08), based on the sub-prime mortgage crisis. Down from their throne came what had been the most respected and trusted financial and banking firms in the nation, and with them their domestic and global dependents.

More recently the U.S. auto industry lost its royal status and is being threatened to be sent away empty or nearly so.

And now the Bernard Madoff scandal: a vast Ponzi operation that is wiping out the accumulated wealth of many we know as "the rich and famous." A lawyer with a prominent New York law firm commented, "There are people who were very, very well off a few days ago who are now virtually destitute. They have nothing left but their apartments or homes — which they are going to have to sell to get money to live on."

Mary must be having at least half a grin.

Yes, I know, some financiers and executives are still drawing pretty awesome salaries, and there are some Madoff investors who evidently hedged their bets a bit and systematically withdrew a portion of the profits for a more diversified portfolio. Still, a more careful eye is now being kept on executive pay and there's even a legal possibility that wise (or lucky) Madoff investors might have to share some of their profits from the past with the unwise (or unlucky) ones.

After a long period in which Mary was repeatedly proved wrong, she's finally getting some respect.

\* \* \* \* \*

Could it really be that Mary's half grin this year is based on a continuing divine judgment against the rich and powerful?

There's a good deal of New Testament evidence that this is exactly the case.

Think of all the times when Jesus is reported to have condemned the wealthy, warned them how difficult it would be for them to enter the new community that God is bringing into the world, told them to give up what they had and give it to the poor.

Why was that the case?

Biblical scholars Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh provide us a perspective in their *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*. They explain that in ancient Palestine all "goods" were finite and limited — not just material and economic goods, but also "honor, friendship, love, power, security, and status as well — literally everything in life." This is in distinction from modern notions that all of these "goods" are open-ended and, in that sense, unlimited. In the New Testament world, the pie didn't get larger, its size was fixed, so the moral issue was always how the pie got divided — for someone to get more meant someone else got less.

An honorable man would thus be interested only in what is rightfully his and would have no desire to gain anything more, that is, to take what is another's. Acquisition was, by its very nature, understood as stealing. The ancient Mediterranean attitude was that every rich person is either unjust or the heir of an unjust person (St. Jerome: "Every rich person is a thief or the heir of a thief...") Profit making and the acquisition of wealth were automatically assumed to be the result of extortion or fraud. The notion of an honest rich man was a first century oxymoron...To be labeled "rich" was therefore a social and moral statement as much as an economic one. It meant the power or capacity to take from someone weaker what was rightfully yours. Being rich was synonymous with being greedy. (p. 400)

Surely, many would say, that doesn't apply to us in the early 21st century, and then

would point to precisely that caveat that Malina and Rohrbaugh note about differences in an ancient fixed-sized pie and the modern expandable one. But the rejoinder to that objection could be twofold: First, aren't we now in the early 21st century learning the ancient lesson about "limited goods" that we are going to have to take seriously in more dimensions of our life? And, second, the ancient notion of "limited goods" was closely tied to the sin and immorality of greed — taking more than you deserve — and that certainly still applies today with a vengeance. Maybe Mary's half grin this year is, to some important degree, justified. If so, she has helped us get halfway there.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is, unfortunately, that other half — the half of our current situation in which Mary can take no joy. She proclaimed that not only would the powerful be brought down from their thrones and that the rich would be sent away empty, but also that the lowly would be lifted up and the hungry filled with good things. It hasn't worked out that way this year. Report after report indicates that the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the uninsured, the growing number of unemployed are becoming more and more vulnerable. That's the case here at home in the United States as well as most places around the world. Mary may have us halfway there, in the biblical sense, but we've got a long, long way to go before we are there. Which should make us ask: what's "*there*?" My assumption is that we only get a clue about that by reading further into the Gospels and learning that the fetus she carried in her womb and the child delivered in the most humble of settings had a message about that "*there*." "*There*" is that community, envisioned and still being formed by God, in which each member contributes to and receives from the other members so that all can flourish together. A fairly simple idea, yet one so difficult to realize, even in small portions. But rather than be despairing in these days, maybe we should join Mary in a half grin, recognizing we may at least be halfway there.

© 2008 [Protestants for the Common Good](#)  
77 W. Washington St., Suite 1124 • Chicago, IL 60602  
TEL: 312-223-9544 • FAX: 312-223-9540 • [cgn@thecommongood.org](mailto:cgn@thecommongood.org)  
[Contact Us](#)