

*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

July 1, 2009



Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Him.  
Colossians 3:17

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## **ABCMC NEWS**

### ***Larry's Visit with Phil Yetter***

Dear Friends in the Metro Chicago Region and Colleagues and Friends of Phil Yetter,

I spent some time today with our beloved friend and colleague Phil Yetter, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Berwyn. As some of you know, Phil and the medical staff attending to him have been fighting a cancer (Hepatic Carcinoma) in his liver for several months. At one point in the medical treatment it appeared that there might be some (not great) chance of beating or delaying the disease. But during a recent hospitalization the doctors indicated that they had exhausted the medical options. Phil has been told that he likely has 3 to 6 months to live. He's now back home under the care of his wonderful spouse Sharon and the support of his congregation and wide network of friends.

Phil says he's "hanging in there," still living with hope but not troubled, at least for himself, by the prospect of death—although he is concerned about others who are troubled by this. He says there is sadness about leaving people and the issues he cares about behind, but that he is at peace with the diagnosis and does not fear death. We recited that verse about "Lo, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" together.

Phil isn't experiencing much pain, thanks to the medications he's taking. But he gets tired easily and uses a walker when he has to walk very far. His speech is slightly slurred, but he receives calls on the phone, and he has a tremor in his hands. If anyone wants to visit him and Sharon in their Oak Park home, it would be best to call ahead of time.

He's planning to preach on Sunday--on the Holy Spirit no less! But others will be filling in later this month.

I know you will keep our brother in Christ in our individual and collective prayers.

Larry

### ***Thinking Theologically***

ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield writes a column, "Thinking Theologically for the Common Good" for Protestants for the Common Good's electronic newsletter. His latest column appears at the end of this issue of *eWind*.

### ***Brief Biennial Report***

TO: ABCMC Family

FROM: Larry Greenfield

RE: Biennial

I don't want to preempt our region's representatives from reporting to you on the ABCUSA Biennial that was held last week in Pasadena—as well as the General Board meeting that took place prior to the Biennial—so let me be very brief in my accounting.

First, the program and plenary session were outstanding: informative, inspiring, helpful. But the number of registered delegates was as low as I can ever remember, which depleted the ranks and spirit of some of the meetings of organizations and institutions.

The low number of delegates was probably partly responsible for the restructuring proposal NOT receiving sufficient votes to be adopted--but there certainly were other reasons that contributed to it not passing as well. So it will be back to the drawing board in terms of how we should be organized as a denomination in order to engage our mission.

The low number of delegates also made it difficult for us to secure signatures for our petition concerning public witness statements. With fewer than 800 registered delegates and the requirement that a statement needed 150 signatures to come to the floor for discussion and debate, it meant that we needed signatures from around 20% of the delegates. It was a squeaker, but we did it with only minutes to spare. It was discussed in a plenary session and will be taken to the General Board for action.

T.J. Litwiler received special recognition from the American Baptist Historical Society for his legal work in transferring documents from various locations to the new headquarters in Georgia. David Gregg did an outstanding job representing us at the General Board, at the National Ministries Board meeting, and Alice Greene represented both the Ministers Council and Metro Chicago with her usual grace.

More will be reported to you about the Biennial in forthcoming issues of e-Wind and at the August Family Council meeting. For now, I can say that it was an unusual Biennial in many ways, but one in which Metro Chicago played a visible and constructive role.

Larry

## **Going Green in ABCMC**

**Green Gram:** There is yet another vexing environmental problem out there. Our nation's honeybees have been disappearing at an alarming rate over the last couple of years. Scientists don't know yet why this is so although there have been several proposals. One is that the heavy use of cell phones, with their microwave radiation, has affected the honeybees' internal guidance sensors. More people and more groups are seeking answers. You can help by going to the website [www.helpthehoneybees.com](http://www.helpthehoneybees.com), which is sponsored by the Haagen-Daaz ice cream company. Thanks!

## **Corruption in Illinois**

*The people of Illinois are dealing with the realities of corruption at all levels of government. Many are working for and/or calling for changes in our public systems, even in admissions to our state universities. Here is an American Baptist statement on public corruption and private morality. Please read it thoughtfully and prayerfully.*

### **AMERICAN BAPTIST RESOLUTION ON PUBLIC CORRUPTION AND PRIVATE MORALITY**

WHEREAS, the strength of any nation lies in the integrity of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the strength of America which has made our nation great has been built upon the honest and fair dealing of its citizens in public and private life; and

WHEREAS, continuing disclosures of widespread corruption shake the confidence of the people in the basic integrity of public officials; and

WHEREAS, those disclosures have revealed that the integrity of the public officials is often corrupted by private citizens seeking special favors, with a shocking disregard for the public good; and

WHEREAS, the lethargy of otherwise high-minded citizens condones the lowering of basic moral standards: therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we reexamine our own attitudes and practices in the light of New Testament teachings, lest by our neglect of citizenship responsibilities we contribute to the current breakdown of public morality.

Adopted by the American Baptist Convention - 1952  
Affirmed by the Executive Committee of the General Board - September 1984  
(General Board Reference # - 8129:9/84)

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## **POLICY BASE**

### **American Baptist Policy Statement on a Statement by American Baptists Concerning Freedom**

...action by Christians must express itself in the fearless utterance of personal conviction; the development of personal character resistant to hysteria; the assumption of responsibility in political life; the support of free and democratic institutions; the acceptance of risks as well as privileges of freedom; and cooperation in maintaining our common Protestant heritage.

## **NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS**

### ***Special Service at North Shore Baptist Church***

July 12 will be Creation Sunday at North Shore Baptist Church, 5244 N. Lakewood Avenue, Chicago. The 10 a.m. worship service will be outside in the Centennial Garden. It will be led completely by the church's praise team, Ruach, and it will feature "camp style" songs. Justin Thornburgh, who will begin seminary studies this fall, will bring the message.

### ***Journey through the Land of Israel***

Alice Greene, pastor of Irving Park Baptist Church, invites us all to join her church family in a trip to the Holy Land as part of the celebration of the church's 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The projected dates for the tour are November 3-12, 2010. The expected cost is \$3,500. A \$300 fee will secure your place. For more information, please contact tour coordinator Harvette Grey at 773-517-3651, or call the church office at 773-286-6800.

### ***Ecumenical Picnic***

The Federated Church of Wauconda and most of the other churches in the Wauconda area will gather on Sunday, July 19 at Holy Apostles Episcopal Church for an ecumenical picnic from noon to 5 p.m. There will be a bouncy house and games for kids, and entertainment for adults. All food and drink can be bought on site for minimal prices.

### ***Fun at Irving Park Baptist Church***

Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, is celebrating its 120th Anniversary this year! As a part of their year-long celebration, they invite us to join them on Saturday, July 11 from noon until 3 p.m. for a family-oriented Community Fair. There is no admission fee for this celebration, which will be held in the church's parking lot. Please bring your family and friends to have fun with our sisters and brothers at Irving Park. They'll have music, food, games, and all kinds of fun activities for kids and adults.

## ABCUSA NEWS

Other articles from the American Baptist News Service are available at <http://www.abc-usa.org/whoware/newsservice/newsservice.aspx>

### ***ABC Delegates Reject Bylaws Changes***

*This article is from the Associated Baptist Press.*

By Robert Marus  
Tuesday, June 30, 2009

PASADENA, Calif. (ABP) -- While celebrating the denomination's broad ethnic, regional and language diversity at their biennial meeting June 26-28, members of the American Baptist Churches USA also exhibited their ideological diversity.

Delegates, meeting in Pasadena, Calif., torpedoed a major restructuring that had been backed by denominational officials but criticized by many progressive leaders and churches. They voted 377-217 in favor of the [bylaws changes](#) -- failing, by a handful of votes, to muster the two-thirds majority required to pass them.



ABCUSA General Secretary Roy Medley speaks to delegates during a business session during the denomination's Biennial June 27 in Pasadena, California.

The changes would have spun off the denomination's two mission boards into quasi-autonomous entities, altered the form of representation on ABCUSA's main governing board and changed the method by which American Baptists approve policy statements and resolutions.

In particular, progressive congregations and organizations feared that the changes would further marginalize their voice within the denomination and make it more difficult to rescind past ABC statements condemning homosexuality.

Grant Ward, a delegate from [Central Baptist Church](#) in Wayne, Pa., read a [statement](#) the church had approved opposing the bylaws revision. It primarily discussed the fact that the changes would make it more difficult to rescind official ABC actions with which the congregation disagrees, including a 1992 ABC General Board statement on homosexuality.

"Our principal concern regards the provisions of the new bylaws that transform all existing resolutions and policy statements into 'Public Witness Statements' of the ABCUSA, and that set a higher threshold to rescind these past statements than it will take to rescind future Public Witness Statements," Ward said, quoting the church's resolution.

Ward said Central Baptist Church was concerned specifically concerned about the impact the change might have on a 1992 resolution that states, "We affirm that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching," and the 2005 General Board decision to include the statement in the official

"Identity" document that describes ABC's core beliefs. Under the new bylaws, he said, those immediately become "Public Witness Statements" which can be rescinded only by action initiated by the Board of General Ministries and ratified by three-quarters of all regional and national boards. He said that is a higher threshold than the 66 percent majority of the General Board that enacted the resolution in 1992.

The Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists also [expressed](#) concern about an omission in the proposal, which contained no explicit affirmation that churches can choose to affiliate with a regional group outside the geographical areas in which they are located. In the last 20 years, a handful of pro-gay American Baptist congregations have been expelled from some regional ABC groups. Many of them have affiliated with more progressive regional groups outside their area -- the only way for a local church to continue its affiliation with the national ABCUSA.

The rule allowing churches to affiliate with such so-called "non-geographic regions" would not have been part of the new bylaws, but would have been a standing rule of the proposed Board of General Ministries. The board could, at any time, choose to undo that rule by a simple majority vote.

June Totten, a delegate from [Riverside Baptist Church](#) in Washington, spoke for many opponents who objected to another aspect of the proposed restructuring. The proposal would have altered the way the denomination approves public-policy statements, initiating and approving them through the boards of the denomination's regions and agencies rather than individual delegates to biennial meetings or local congregations.

"This is a little bit like swimming upstream, but here's a reason why salmon do it -- to ensure the next generation," Totten said. "Some restructuring needs to be done, especially around finances and financial commitments, but there are many other options that could better serve our beloved ABC.

"We have the challenge of becoming a place where the church's most difficult issues can be discussed and addressed. This means that discovering that our unity is a gift from God and not a result of human agreement," she continued. "Under these bylaws we will not have a unified voice; Babel comes to mind. We will have many voices not needing to communicate with each other."

Totten and other opponents said the proposed changes -- including a reduction of the number of representatives on the denomination's General Board, which would have been renamed the Board of General Ministries -- were not in line with Baptist polity.

"The uniqueness of Baptist churches is our congregational polity. However, when I look to this document, I do not see this polity concept transferred to our denominational bylaws," said George Hancock-Stefan, the pastor of [Central Baptist Church](#) in Atlantic Highlands, N.J. "These bylaws represent a different polity, a different model. While this model could be good for other Christian denominations, it does not represent well our Baptist congregational polity."

Many opponents also expressed concern about the decision to "decouple" the denomination's two major mission boards -- the Board of National Ministries and the Board of International Ministries -- from the ABC General Board.

Currently, their membership is picked from among members of the General Board. The proposal would have made their boards self-perpetuating, allowing them to set their own policy and create new governing documents.

"Separated boards and regions weaken our mutual accountability and leave our denomination vulnerable, as other denominations with separate boards have had them taken over one by one," Totten said. But heads of those agencies had argued to delegates that the proposed spin-offs would help their boards function more effectively and efficiently.

"People will be on a single, rather than two, boards," said Annie Marie Lebarbour, current chair of the board of directors of ABC National Ministries. "We see that new structure as providing new freedom for

National Ministries.”

However, she cautioned, the agency “has no desire to be freed from the denomination; this is who we are; it’s our DNA; it’s in our bloodstream -- it’s in our very work. You are National Ministries along with us. We wish to and intend to remain firmly American Baptist. So what does it give us freedom to do? It’s freedom to concentrate on the strategic mission of National Ministries -- to focus our time and ministry on the missional work of a single organization rather than two.”

With the failure of the bylaws changes, ABC leaders will now regroup and decide how to present a more palatable restructuring proposal to delegates at the 2011 Biennial, scheduled to meet in Puerto Rico. ABC General Secretary Roy Medley, in a June 30 letter to members of the General Board, said he would meet with ABC leaders to consider how to proceed with a future restructuring proposal.

“I am considering this vote much like a first reading at the General Board,” he said. “We have received feedback that our efforts need further work, and this gives us the opportunity to work to bring as many people on board as possible as we revisit the bylaws. And to aid us in our work we have significant written feedback from the delegates that was requested in the second discernment [business] session.” Medley said American Baptists can go ahead and begin implementing some non-formal parts of the restructuring -- such as increased participation by the denomination’s several ethnic caucus groups at General Board meetings -- now.

“You will agree with me, I am sure, that we do not want structure to consume the next two years,” he wrote. “There is too much important work that God is calling us to do to allow us to be diverted by that. The ABC officers and I will be discussing how we best move forward in this next phase to allow the necessary work to occur but not to fully dominate our time and deliberations.”

[Robert Marus](#) is managing editor and Washington bureau chief for Associated Baptist Press.

## ***ABCUSA General Board Honors Medley during Opening Plenary***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 6/24/09)**—The ABCUSA General Board began their June 2009 session in Pasadena, CA, by honoring General Secretary Dr. A. Roy Medley. In the opening plenary on June 22, Rev. Mary Armacost Hulst, President of ABCUSA, honored Medley, calling him a “man of passion for Jesus Christ,” and reminding the 85 gathered representatives that the General Secretary serves as “the pastoral and administrative leader of this denomination of more than 5,200 churches.

Now on his second four-year term, Hulst noted that if Medley is re-elected, he will enter his third term still focused on his original vision—that ABC is an association of churches “Centered in Christ, a missional people challenged to call the world to faith in God in Christ.

A slide presentation highlighted Medley’s 2006-2009 term of office and showed the regional and local church representatives photos of some of Medley’s most recent visits with Baptist ministries around the world, including churches in Africa, India, and Malaysia, as well as with Burmese refugees living in camps in Thailand.

Hulst also noted the important Baptist-Muslim dialogue, which Medley spearheaded, with plans for more opportunities to continue this important bridge-building process.

As he looks toward the work ahead, Medley will be taking a sabbatical in the fall. His time away will include a spiritual pilgrimage to Ireland, mission work in Namibia, study of reconciliation in South Africa, and more research into the “missional church.

Hulst expressed deep gratitude for Medley’s ministry, reminding the Board that, in all that he does, “the work of the General Secretary is grounded in prayer.

However, Hulst noted, prayer must always translate into action. She began her President's report by quoting Teresa of Avila: "Christ has no body now but yours; no hands, no feet on earth but you." As she has traveled across the denomination during her term as president, she has seen the identity statement for the ABC, "American Baptists: Serving as the Hands and Feet of Christ", continually affirmed and embraced.

Addressing the proposed structural change for the denomination, which will be voted on by delegates to the Biennial Meeting, June 26-28, Hulst assured the Board that, "though change is never easy and is almost always perceived as some kind of loss...we are on the cusp of responding to God's call in some new ways that will yield good fruit and great blessing."

The proposed by-law changes "respond to needs and realities—not reactively, but creatively and proactively." If the proposals pass, she noted, the denomination will commit itself, "with God's help, to making them work and making us better at keeping mission more and more at the heart and center of who we are."

Her report noted highlights of her past year, which have included attending the Baptist-Muslim dialogue, participating in the global Baptist Peace Conference held in Rome, and representing ABC at the Rekindling Theological Imagination conference.

Hulst recently retired as Senior Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Denver, CO. Now, following the recent announcement that ABCUSA is no longer able to fund the position of the Director of American Baptist Women in Ministry, she has been asked to give time exploring partnerships and new patterns of supporting and encouraging women in ministry.

## ***National Ministries' Board Affirms Ministry Of Mission***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 6/24/09)**—In the face of hard economic realities and financial challenges, National Ministries proclaimed its focus on mission at its semiannual board meeting, gathered in Pasadena, CA, which ended today.

Highlighting that focus was a unanimous vote to affirm the commissioning of Kelli Jane Foreman as a "missionary of Jesus Christ for ministry at Kodiak Baptist Mission" by American Baptist Churches of Alaska. A member of Community Baptist Church of Kodiak, Foreman serves at the mission as public education director and children's program administrator.

In remarks before offering a prayer of support for Foreman's work, Rev. Edwenia Brown of Anchorage, Alaska, pointed out that Foreman ministers to the children of a population that experiences some of the highest drug and alcohol abuse as well as domestic violence rates in the country.

National Ministries' Executive Director Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III addressed the current economy and its implications for National Ministries in his remarks, suggesting to board members that "the context for our contemporary witness is the wilderness." He continued: "We engage in ministry more concerned than we have been in a very long time about the availability of ministry-sustaining resources."

Wright-Riggins reported steps the organization is considering to address financial challenges with prudent and careful stewardship that will assure its future strength, including:

- Offering special retirement incentives to eligible staff;
- Implementing strategic travel reductions;
- Freezing salaries and implementing a six-day furlough;
- Identifying and reducing or eliminating non-core activities and expenses; and
- Negotiating cost reductions where possible.

Michaele D. Birdsall CPA, National Ministries' treasurer and chief financial officer, assured board members that even in the context of the current economy, National Ministries is not at a financial "crisis point.

Because the organization has used reserve funds to balance past budgets, however, \$1.3 million needs to be cut from the 2010 budget to begin the process of aligning income and expenses. This alignment will require strategic reductions in the work force. A combination of normal attrition, job elimination and early retirements has already trimmed National Ministries' current workforce by approximately 21% this year.

Birdsall reminded members of the biblical passage from John 15:1-2: "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more" (NLT).

"National Ministries has consistently borne fruit for God," Birdsall said. But, "God prunes us so we can bear more fruit. Even though we have to go through the pain of pruning, we will be positioned to grow over the long term."

In other business, board members considered a draft of proposed changes to National Ministries' bylaws and standing rules developed by the Design and Transition Task Force, chaired by the Rev. Douglas Stowers. Task Force recommendations for board restructuring include:

- 15-19 members;
- Three-year terms;
- Three-term service limit with one-year break between second and third terms;
- Three board meetings a year;
- Committee work outside of meetings;
- Two-year officer terms;
- Board election of recording secretary; and
- Reduction in number of standing committees.

Members will vote on final proposed changes at the November meeting.

At Tuesday's board and staff dinner, Rev. Mark A. Stauffer—pastor of Highlawn Baptist Church in St. Albans, WV—received the Rosa O. Hall Rural and Small Town Award from Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III.

Stauffer was recognized for previous ministry as pastor of Old Greenbrier Baptist Church in Alderson, WV, a town of 1,000 where almost half of the population lives below the poverty line. His work there included starting a food pantry and a thrift store, along with setting up work teams that repaired buildings and homes.

Board President Dr. Annie Marie LeBarbour reminded members of the challenges of the last year: "This board stands at the moment of change. We are looking at structure changes, financial changes and missional changes...These changes will come together as a brilliant future. We are strong and we are moving. God bless us in this work.

## ***Medley Addresses General Board***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 6/25/09)**—American Baptist General Secretary, A. Roy Medley, addressed the denomination's General Board as they met in plenary session on Wednesday afternoon, June 24, in Pasadena, CA. He set the theme for his report with his opening words; "I stand before you today filled with hope that is rooted in our faith.

Despite the difficult economic climate and ongoing cultural change, Medley sees promising hope.

Medley reported on his visits to ABC churches across the country, saying that he has been discovering "an emerging consensus around the joy of witnessing from the edge of our culture." He highlighted

churches that “are not counting their faithfulness by the brick and mortar they possess but by the lives they help reshape and redeem.”

He shared the example of First Baptist Church in Bennington, VT, which reopened a closed-off Sunday School wing to become the site of a free medical clinic and counseling for families that have experienced abuse.

“Witness from the edge can be exciting to the church and confusing to those who just expect us to focus on whether Sister Jones brought potato salad rather than her usual macaroni salad to the church supper,” he noted.

Another sign of hope is the growing involvement of American Baptists in concerns for peace. Among the hopeful signs are the Baptist Global Peace Conference, held in Rome, Italy, in February, which was initiated by American Baptist International Ministries; the work being done by Dan Buttry, an ABC missionary, to help bring reconciliation in North East India; and the Baptist-Muslim dialogue, also being spearheaded by ABC, which will be the focus of a documentary to be aired on ABC (American Broadcasting Company) in January.

As a third sign of hope, Medley also noted the growing role of American Baptists in responding to the plight of refugees from Burma. In addition to helping with resettlement within the US, ABCUSA is pushing for greater visibility of their concerns.

“Through our advocacy,” he reported, “the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Freedom and Justice will make the situation in Burma a major theme in its meeting this summer.”

Dr. Leo Thorne, associate general secretary for Mission Resource Development, reported on the work of that office, responsible for stewardship and communication for the Office of the General Secretary. He told representatives of the creation of new stewardship materials and resources, the imminent launch of the new [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org) website, and an emphasis on development to raise funds for the Office of the General Secretary. He also noted that they are seeking to fill two new staff positions: communications specialist/web manager and stewardship education/United Mission promotion.

Jim Ratliff, of the Budget Review Committee, reported that the audit received an unqualified opinion. He also noted that a grant has been made from the Mission Initiative Fund to International Ministries and Judson University, Elgin, IL, to underwrite a cooperative project between the two organizations and William Carey University, Hattiesburg, MS, to lead teacher education workshops in northeastern India. The project has the potential to reach 1,000 teachers.

Reports were also made by the American Baptist Home Mission Society and Woman’s American Baptist Home Mission Society (National Ministries) and the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (International Ministries).

The General Board Executive Committee voted to send the General Board offering to the Wichita Community Church, a historic 19th century church in Anadarko, OK, whose building was destroyed by a tornado on May 13, 2009.

## ***Medley Re-Elected General Secretary of the ABCUSA***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 6/27/09)**—In executive session of their third plenary on Wednesday, June 27, the General Board of ABCUSA re-elected A. Roy Medley to a third four-year term as General Secretary of the denomination, by a vote of 65 to 11.

As General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Medley has focused his ministry in several key areas. His vision for the denomination is a fellowship of strong, missional churches, focused on being the Good News of Jesus Christ and “serving as the Hands and Feet of Christ.”

Through visiting and preaching, Medley has focused on strengthening relationships among the more than 5,200 churches across the United States and Puerto Rico.

He has supported work among Baptists in other countries, particularly areas once associated with American Baptist missions. In the last two years he has traveled to Africa, North-East India and Southeast Asia, visiting churches and various ministries, and representing the denomination at celebrations of anniversaries of work that was begun generations ago by American Baptist missionaries.

Peace issues have been an important focus for Medley, who has been instrumental in bringing together Baptists and Muslims for dialogue exploring common ground between the two faith traditions. A documentary of the first such dialogue meeting will be aired on the ABC television network in January.

The American Baptist Historical Society also updated representatives on their ministry—to preserve the records of Baptist work. They highlighted ABCUSA's long history of service within the United States and overseas—from fighting against slavery in this country, to working on the elimination of human trafficking today.

President Trinette McCray and Executive Director Deborah Van Broekhoven reported on their year, especially the transition from offices in Rochester, NY, and Valley Forge, PA, to their new site at Mercer University in Atlanta, GA.

Sumner M. Grant, executive director of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board (MMBB), reported on economic challenges faced in the last year. By focusing on growth and long-term diversified investments, the MMBB has made it through with minimal damage, according to Grant.

The representatives also accepted the report on Changed Relationships of Local Churches. According to ABC polity, churches are related to the ABC through their association with a regional office. Changes made at the regional level are received and accepted by the national denomination. Since November 2008, 19 churches have been received and 19 have withdrawn, with two to remain with Transformation Ministries; 13 have disbanded; three have merged with other churches; one was dismissed.

## ***Kinnamon Addresses ABCUSA General Board***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 6/27/09)**—“Baptist’ is a wonderful adjective but an idolatrous noun,” Dr. Michael Kinnamon told the representatives of American Baptist churches and regions gathered for the fourth plenary session of ABCUSA’s General Board, meeting June 25 in Pasadena, CA.

As general secretary of the National Council of Churches (NCC), Dr. Kinnamon, a Disciples of Christ minister and theologian, reminded the Board that the paradox between honoring denominational identity and working for Christian unity is a tension that informs our faith.

“No part is finally self-determining; we are all interdependent members of Christ’s body. We are already bound to one another not by what we have done, but by what God has done through Jesus to reconcile us—both to God and to one another.

“We don’t set the entrance requirements,” he reminded representatives. “We simply try to make visible what God has accomplished and thereby serve as a sign of God’s power to unite.”



The Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon

Kinnamon sees part of his role in the NCC as helping covenanting churches to understand the nature of a “council of churches.” It is not an organization churches have joined, he stresses, but “a covenantal relationship you have made with 34 other communions to live out a unity which is already yours in Christ.”

“The essence of a council is the relationship of the churches with each other,” he insists. “It’s a community in which conflicting perspectives meet in dialogue.”

A council of churches has the “challenge of becoming a place where the Church’s most difficult issues can be discussed and addressed,” Kinnamon noted. “This means understanding that our unity is a gift from God and not the result of human agreement.”

Kinnamon went on to lay out the organization and work of the NCC and the challenges it faces, which includes living ecumenically in lean times, raising up a new generation of ecumenical leaders, and being more truly prophetic in its public witness.



**Rev. David Gregg**

In other business, the General Board sought to respond to the current healthcare crisis in the U.S. by affirming its 1991 Policy Statement on “Health, Healing, and Wholeness,” and its 1992 Resolution on “Health Care for All.”

David Gregg, a representative from Chicago, asked the representatives to bring these statements to the front of their thoughts, remind their constituents of the position American Baptists have taken, and to mobilize ABCUSA to pray for, write to, and meet with elected officials, to give voice to their concern about the need for a healthcare system that is accessible to all people. He further encouraged representatives to join with other organizations to adopt national healthcare policies that embody the principles laid out in earlier statements.

After the ABC of the Pacific Southwest withdrew from the denomination in 2006 to create Transformation Ministries, almost 180 churches continued to be associated with ABCUSA at varying levels of involvement. Those churches have become the American Baptist Congregations of the Southwest and Hawaii (ABCOSH).

Joe DeRoulhac, president of ABCOSH, updated delegates on the current status of this new configuration of churches, which is functioning as an autonomous association working with American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles (ABCLA) as one regional body. At the end of five years, both ABCLA and ABCOSH will evaluate their relationship and the feasibility of ABCOSH becoming a separate region of ABCUSA, and how best to partner in the future.

The meeting was adjourned after a preview of the Biennial, which began Friday evening with an address by Dr. Kirk Byron Jones, author and professor of ethics and preaching at Andover Newton Theological School.

## HEALTH CARE NEWS

### *In Word and Deed*

*American Baptist policy on health care reform asserts that we want to see health care for all. This invitation from Jim Duffett, Executive Director of Campaign for Better Health Care, indicates things we can do and say to help make that policy a reality in our nation.*



Dear Health Care for All Supporters,

As I write this, the U.S. House and Senate are debating legislation as it pertains to health care reform. This process has been on fast track for the past couple of months, especially during the month of June. This month, we must move our mindset and our activities into campaign and election mode.

Think of today as October, the month before a November election. Our candidate, Progressive Health Care Reform, is running absolutely even with the opposition. If we lose this race, we lose the opportunity to create the kind of health care system that we really want and need. Another opportunity will not come for several decades. We must act, and win, now. By August it will become tougher for the public to influence this debate.

I am asking you today to think about how you can best participate in the fight for health care reform in July. Will you write a letter to the editor of your local paper? Will you make phone calls to your legislators asking for their support for health care reform? Will you go door to door to discuss the benefits of quality, affordable health care for all with your neighbors? Do you belong to any organizations that you can recruit for this effort? **I urge you to consider what you and your local networks can do best, and ask that you DO THAT, whatever it may be.** Our effort needs every supporter to be engaged in some way right now. Otherwise, we lose.

The Campaign for Better Health Care will be instituting a new resource for Illinois health care advocates. At noon on July 6, we will kick off a series of bi-weekly statewide conference calls, to share the latest updates on health care reform in Washington and Springfield and talk about coordinated national and state efforts, including the upcoming Health Care Justice ACTION Week happening July 27-Aug 2. These calls will be held on the first and third Mondays of the month from 12 to 12:45PM. Please [register online](#) before 11AM Monday to receive the call in number and pass code.

We are also initiating a series of messaging and policy calls in July for our coalition's organizational and individual members. These calls will feature discussion with national messaging, communications and policy experts, and are available only to members of the Campaign for Better Health Care. If you or your organization is not yet a member, please visit our website to [sign up](#) today.

Thank you for giving your time, energy, and [financial support](#) to this cause during this crucial, historic time for health care reform. It is not hyperbole to say that our accomplishments over the next few months will directly impact the quality of life not just for ourselves, but for our children and grandchildren as well. We look forward to working with you on the fight for quality, affordable health care for all.

Sincerely,  
Jim Duffett, Executive Director  
Campaign for Better Health Care

### ***It Happened Last Week***

*This report is from Health Care for America Now. ABCMC endorsed Health Care for America Now at the May, 2009 Family Council meeting. Sen. Roland Burris, Sen. Richard Durbin and a number of our state's U.S. Congressional delegation have committed them to supporting the positions of Health Care for America Now.*

#### **10,000 people.**

Last Thursday, June 25th, 10,000 people came to Congress to demand quality, affordable health care in 2009. **We made an impact. America listened.**<sup>1</sup>

We rallied for health care right outside of the Capitol building - with actress Edie Falco and Dr. Howard Dean firing up the crowd. Senators Brown and Schumer and Representative Schwartz and many more told us how hard they were working in Congress for real health reform.<sup>2</sup> And we heard from people all around the country who need health reform.

[Check out the video from the event](http://healthcareforamericanow.org/page/invite/june25) at <http://healthcareforamericanow.org/page/invite/june25>



After the rally, those 10,000 people took to the halls of Congress. At **dozens** of town halls, Members of Congress heard from their constituents about health reform. And at **hundreds** of small meetings throughout the Capitol building, people from around the country met with their representatives one-on-one to make sure we get **real** reform this year.

Because of these efforts, we had Members of Congress signing our statement of principles and even one Senator, Senator Specter from Pennsylvania, supporting a strong public health insurance option for the first time!<sup>3</sup>

On Thursday, 10,000 people came to Washington, DC to make sure Congress knew what America wanted - quality, affordable health care for all in 2009. **And Congress listened.**

Thank you for being involved in this campaign, whether you came to DC with us in person or have been making your voice heard with us online. **Remember to text HEALTH to 94553 from your cell phone to stay involved!**

Congress is indeed listening, so let's keep it up and get the job done.

To your health,

Levana Layendecker  
Health Care for America Now

## **PEACE NEWS**

### ***Northwest Suburban Meeting***

The Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project will hold its regular monthly meeting at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 8 at the South Church, 501 S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect.

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

Please pray for world peace.

Please pray for God's guidance to those who are seeking to reform our health care system.

Please hold in prayer the people of Iran during this turbulent time in their country.

Please keep in prayer Phil Yetter, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Berwyn. Phil is dealing with liver cancer. Let's all pray also for Phil's wife Sharon and their family, as well as the church.

Please pray for ABC missionary Cathy Holmes in India. Cathy is director of admissions for Woodstock School (<http://www.woodstock.ac.in>), a Christian international school which has approximately 465 students from 25 countries. She also looks after a group of high school students who come to Woodstock for a year under the SAGE (Studies Abroad for Global Education) program, helping them make the transition from the U.S. or Europe to India and life at a boarding school.

Please pray for the ministry of Ann And Bruce Borquist, ABC missionaries in Brazil. Pray also for their children Elena and Asa. If you use Facebook, you may wish to become their friend (Ann Bruce Borquist).

## BOOK NOOK

### ***Weaving a Just Future for Children: An Advocacy Guide***

By Diane C. Olson and Laura Dean F. Friedrich

Proposing advocacy as integral to discipleship, Laura Dean and Diane challenge people of faith to flex their "courage muscles" and become involved in the increasingly urgent work of child advocacy. They use the image of weaving to bring together biblical and theological imperatives for caring action; practical tools and resources for ministry; and specific, productive ways that individuals and churches can make a difference for children.

Newcomers to the ministry of advocacy will feel welcome, and longtime activists will gain fresh insights. Readers will "dream, pray, and work" toward a deeper discipleship through advocacy for children in their churches, communities and the world.

This new publication makes an ideal gift for clergy, children's ministers, lay leaders, and others who care about children. Contact Laura Dean Friedrich at [ldfriedrich@thecommongood.org](mailto:ldfriedrich@thecommongood.org) or 312.223.9544 x223 for information about how to obtain a copy.



Laura Dean F. Friedrich is the Director of Education and Advocacy at Protestants for the Common Good. Prior to coming to PCG, she worked at ChildServ in Chicago. Diane C. Olson is the Minister of Discipleship at Fridley United Methodist Church in Minnesota. Previously, she was the Minister of Christian Education at First United Methodist Church at the Chicago Temple.

*Weaving a Just Future for Children* was published by Discipleship Resources in Nashville, TN in October 2008.

## CALENDAR

**July 8**—Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project monthly meeting, South Church, 501 S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect, 7 p.m.

**July 11**—Community Fair, Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, noon-3 p.m.

**July 21**—Finance and Property Committee meeting, 3 p.m.

**July 20-25**—Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America conference, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah. See [www.bpfna.org](http://www.bpfna.org) for more information.

**July 25-31**—National AB Women's Conference, Lake Williamson Christian Center, Carlinville, Illinois.

**July 27**—Tony Rake preaches at Federated Church of Wauconda, 200 S. Barrington Road, Wauconda, 9 a.m.

**July 28-29**—2009 Ministry In Hard Times Event, Geist Christian Church, 12756 *Promise Road, Fishers, Indiana*. Register at [https://21stcenturystrategiesinc.com/cart/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=33&products\\_id=381&zenid=af0c4a158b8b285942b5e05e8e642f84](https://21stcenturystrategiesinc.com/cart/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=33&products_id=381&zenid=af0c4a158b8b285942b5e05e8e642f84)

**July 30**—Memorial service for Rev. Julian C. Herrin, Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, 1712 Willow Drive, Chapel Hill, NC.

**August 3-7**—Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, presented by Lombard Mennonite Peace Center at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, 22W 415 Butterfield Road, Glen Ellyn. For information, please visit [www.LMPeaceCenter.org](http://www.LMPeaceCenter.org).

**August 3-14**—Vacation Bible School, Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

**August 18**—Property and Finance Committee meeting, 3 p.m.

**August 22**—Family Council meeting. Registration opens at 8:30 a.m.; meeting begins at 9 a.m.

**September 15**—Kids Hope United 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing, Bonnie Brook Golf Course, Waukegan.

**November 3-7**—2009 Black Church Conference, Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center, 500 Holiday Plaza Drive, Matteson, Illinois.

**November 14**—ABCMC Annual Meeting

**November 3-12, 2010**—Journey through the Land of Israel with Irving Park Baptist Church.

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 VIII no. 13, June 26, 2009

### THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT THE COMMON GOOD

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

#### *Losing Power*

Jesus, I suppose, didn't think he was retaining his power at the expense of others. In his mind, I'm guessing, he thought he was doing a pretty good job of sharing his power with everyone who asked.

After all, according to the first five chapters of Mark's Gospel, Jesus was

expending the supply of power God had granted him rather generously: exorcising demons, removing fevers, healing paralyzed bodies, curing withered hands, to name just a few — along with his preaching and teaching and arguing with the Pharisees and taking time out to explain his parables to the thick-headed disciples.

With every request and challenge, Jesus was spending his reserve of power without it fazing him much at all. No dip on the fuel gauge when he chose to expend that God-given power to bring life and health and sanity and understanding to people who needed it.

Until, that is, in the midst of a large crowd, Jesus unmistakably felt a strong and unintended drain on his battery. As Mark records it in the thirtieth verse of that fifth chapter: “Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus...”

A hemorrhaging woman, he was soon to learn, was responsible for his losing power.

She’d been hemorrhaging blood for twelve years — she’d been losing *her* power and strength for all of those dozen years. And although she’d seen every physician available and spent all her money doing so, nothing had changed. So in her desperation, having heard about this roving healer named Jesus, she went and joined the crowd around him and risked touching his garment.

Understand: this hemorrhaging woman didn’t ask to be healed; she didn’t beg; she didn’t seek his word or his hand. The contact with his robe, she believed, would be enough — enough to stop the bleeding, enough to end the exhaustion; enough to gain strength and to regain power.

When Jesus turned to the crowd around him and asked who had touched his clothes in such a way that he lost power, the thick-headed disciples told him not to bother — that it was a waste of time in that large crowd to try to find out who was responsible for the power loss.

But Jesus persisted and finally the now healed woman came forward “in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.” (5:33b) The Jesus who had just lost power told the once hemorrhaging woman: “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

\* \* \* \* \*

I’m confident that the church — the body — of Jesus Christ today thinks it’s doing a fairly decent job of sharing its God-given power with most everyone who asks. Even in hard economic times, the contemporary Body believes it’s doing its best to share its resources with those who request assistance. In a lot

of cases, it doesn't think it is retaining its power at the expense of others.

After all, there are some wonderful stories about churches doing extraordinary things to help people and families and organizations asking for aid.

And, most of the time, when this happens the church doesn't experience a major drain on its power supply. Somehow the power is sustained. And, sometimes, it seems that it actually gains power whenever it responds to the pleas for assistance.

But the story about the hemorrhaging woman who has been losing strength for over a decade, despite trying all the remedies, might make the church ask itself if it is sensing any unexplainable drains on the battery today.

Not from those who ask for help, but from those who, in the crowd, pass along our properties and pass by our facilities, harboring the hope that we have the power to give them life again.

I'm thinking of people, and families who *have* struggled to get by when, over the past dozen years or so, everything seemed to be going so well for so many others.

I'm thinking of those people and families who *are* suffering much more than the rest of us now that the economy has tanked.

I'm thinking of those who *will be* suffering even more severely because state legislatures can't find a way to meet their obligation to protect the vulnerable in our society — in fact, state legislators who are ready and willing to drastically reduce aid to the most vulnerable in order to protect their own political self-interest.

The story of the hemorrhaging woman should make the church ask, if it hasn't felt a power loss from the touch on its garments by those suffering people, whether it deserves to be called the Body of Christ.

A sign that it really is that Body might be that, having felt the touch of the vulnerable on its garments, the church expends some of its God-given power not just to stop the bleeding, but also to start the healing.

Losing our God-given power could help us experience our God-given calling.

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