

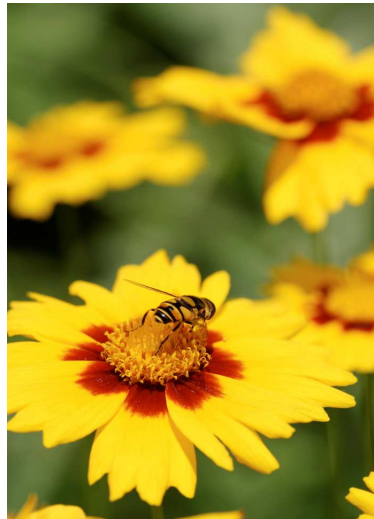
Metro Chicago

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 8, 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

In this Issue

ABCMC NEWS.....	2
Phil Yetter	2
NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS	3
Special Service at North Shore Baptist Church	3
Journey through the Land of Israel	3
Ecumenical Picnic.....	4
Fun at Irving Park Baptist Church	4
ABCUSA NEWS	4
Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships	4
2009 America for Christ Offering.....	4

Good News and Stirring Sermon Kick Off ABCUSA Biennial Meeting.....	4
Vujicic Urges Life without Limits.....	6
Structure Proposal Defeated in Close Vote	7
Baptist Leaders Endorse “American Clean Energy and Security Act”	8
Medical Mission Pictures.....	9
HEALTH CARE NEWS.....	10
Call Congress Today!	10
350 Lobbyists Are Working to Prevent Health Care Reform.....	11
Private, Nonprofit Health Insurance Co-Ops Cannot Adequately Reform Our Health Care System.....	12
PEACE NEWS.....	13
Northwest Suburban Meeting	13
PRAYER REQUESTS.....	13
CALENDAR.....	14

ABCMC NEWS

Phil Yetter

Phil Yetter, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Berwyn, went to be with the Lord this past Saturday, July 4. He died with his wife Sharon at his side in their Oak Park home.

His entry into ministry was his second career. Prior to entering seminary, Phil worked for a number of years in the field of computer systems. He continued to work in that field while serving bivocationally as a pastor.

Phil graduated from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1992. While in seminary, he served for an academic year as chaplain at McNeal Hospital in Berwyn. Later, he was a pastoral care associate at the First Baptist Church of Oak Park, where he had been an active lay member since 1983. He was called as interim pastor at the First Baptist Church of Berwyn in 1994. He was called as pastor in 1995. The First Baptist Church of Berwyn ordained Phil in 1996.

Phil was a well-read, thoughtful and articulate pastor. Recognizing problems of addiction and substance abuse in the neighborhood in which he was a pastor, he studied for and received certification in counseling about those issues. He brought not only significant learning and insight into his pastoral work, but also genuine joy and a wonderful sense of humor. Phil believed that church life and pastoral ministry should, most of the time, be fun. That was an important contribution that he gave to the congregation. His joyous presence will be greatly missed.

In addition to his faith and his work, Phil found great joy in his family. His wife Sharon, his daughter and step-daughters, as well as their families, were important sources of happiness and support for Phil. He loved them all.

Since, as a bi-vocational pastor, Phil worked at his secular job on week-days during business hours, he was not able to participate in some of the week-day activities in which full-time pastors have opportunities to develop professional relationships and friendships with colleagues. Nonetheless, he was as active in

ABCMC as his schedule allowed. Numerous other pastors came to know and appreciate him. He built friendships with colleagues, and he was respected by other ABCMC pastors.

In recent months, after receiving a diagnosis of inoperable liver cancer, Phil was an inspiration to all who knew him. He courageously faced difficult treatments. Through it all, he held onto his sense of humor and was steadfast in his faith. This spring he and Sharon took a trip together to Yosemite and made memories in that beautiful setting. Although Phil knew his prospects for long life were not good, he did not fret, remembering Jesus' words, "Who among you, by worrying, can add a day to your life?" (Matthew 6:27)

On June 15, after learning that all treatment options had been exhausted, and his remaining time on earth was short, Phil wrote in his on-line journal to friends

To paraphrase the Apostle Paul in one of his letters, I am pulled between my desire to remain with you and my desire to be with the Lord. And elsewhere he wrote I have run the race and finished the course. I suddenly have a better understanding of Jesus in the garden (though only on a far lesser scale) when he asked God, if possible, not to have to drink the bitter cup, but not my will but yours be done.

He added

The future is entirely in God's hands. I am amazed at the outpouring of love from so many people. I don't know why. I shouldn't be but I am. I appreciate so much the prayers of so many people. Please continue to pray for me and particularly for Sharon. I have the easy part - dying - she has the much more difficult task - carrying on alone.

Phil is now at home with the Lord. Many of us will want to honor Phil by being present at events celebrating his life. There will be a visitation wake at the Heritage Funeral Home, 3117 S. Oak Park Avenue, Berwyn, on Friday, 3 - 8 p.m. The Funeral will be held on Saturday at the First Baptist Church of Berwyn, 6916 W. 34th Street, Berwyn, beginning at 10:00 a.m. and followed by a brief graveside service at the nearby cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be made to The Night Ministry, 4711 N. Ravenswood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640-4407.

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 120th anniversary. A sheet attached with this issue of *eWind* has detailed information about it. 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/whoweare/newsservice/newsservice.aspx>

Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships

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

BJC Executive Director Brent Walker is participating in today's meeting of the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Walker is a member of the task force charged with reforming the office, and today his group is outlining their priorities and areas of focus.

2009 America for Christ Offering

Your generous gifts to the 2009 America for Christ Offering support ministries that transform lives, churches and communities across the United States and Puerto Rico bringing hope to children and families living in poverty and equipping church leaders to share the Good News of Jesus Christ through evangelism, discipleship, congregational transformation and prophetic justice. The 2009 AFC offering provides a great opportunity for your congregation to come alongside home missionaries who are making a lasting impact on individuals, institutions and communities. God is not only calling us to go across the sea, but also to do mission across the street. "With Willing Hands" we serve, sacrifice and surrender in support of home missions that is making a difference and spreading the LOVE, GRACE and COMPASSION of Jesus Christ!

Good News and Stirring Sermon Kick Off ABCUSA Biennial Meeting

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 7/7/09)—The opening worship service of the Biennial Meeting of the American Baptist Churches USA began on June 26 with the blare of a Mariachi Band, and ended with the swell of an old hymn tune adorned with new words.

Music from the Stock Brothers, Jacqueline Colbert, and the house band led by Brad Berglund, wove through an evening of prayer, creative scripture reading, preaching, and some very good news.

American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) announced that it far exceeded its \$250,000 goal by \$100,000 to break the chains of sex trafficking around the world. Women in churches across the country saved change and gave change to break chains: \$348,507.09 worth.

They did much more than raise money. Rev. Virginia Holmstrom, executive director of ABWM, told the stories of women like an 84 year-old who convinced her church to hand out pamphlets on human trafficking at a community street fair, and members of a church in Oregon who have reached out to women who work in a local strip club.

Chains are being broken from Los Angeles to Thailand, South Dakota to Lebanon, Illinois to Ghana, Italy to Prague. God is at work among at-risk women.



The preacher for the night was Dr. Kirk Byron Jones, professor of ethics and preaching at Andover Newton Theological School (ANTS).

“We’re called to stretch,” he told participants. Preaching from Matthew 12:9-13, the story of Jesus healing the man with a shriveled hand, Jones reminded the listeners that Jesus told the man to stretch out his hand, and in the man’s stretch as he responded, he was healed.

Dr. Kirk Byron-Jones

“We must become spiritually stronger and to do it on purpose,” Jones said. “But genuine stretching is risky. We risk the unknown and the loss of the known—loss and changes. But, where Jesus is concerned, the stretch is worth the risk. We should thirst to stretch, to become a new creation—not just instantly, but continually, morning by morning.”

The “thirst to stretch” was reflected in Learning Experiences held earlier in the afternoon. Participants gathered to learn about children in poverty, hands-on discipleship through economic development, the ABCUSA response to human trafficking and modern-day slavery, and cross-cultural equipping of leaders.

The great diversity of ABCUSA was especially evident Friday morning at the caucus meetings. Hispanic, Asian, Haitian, African American, Indian and Portuguese speaking Baptists met to discuss concerns and perspectives out of their American experience.

Burmese refugees—a group that has been growing recently, in ABCUSA and in America—also met Friday morning for their first Biennial gathering. Many of these individuals are from the Karen and Chin ethnic groups, “Hill Tribes” whose history of Christianity reaches back a hundred years with the work of American Baptist missionaries Anne and Adoniram Judson.

At the Christian Unity Dinner, Dr. Donald C. Anderson, executive minister of the Rhode Island State Council of Churches, was honored with the Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award for his work strengthening Rhode Island’s human trafficking laws and reducing poverty in the state. As small as it is, Providence, the state capital, is the second worst city for number of children living in poverty.

Anderson announced that, just the day before, the Rhode Island House of Representatives passed a bill on human trafficking that will not go to the Senate.

Diversity is woven into American Baptist life and informs its relationship with other faith groups. A special guest at the dinner, Dr. Sayyid Syeed, national director of the Office of Interfaith and Community Alliance for the Islamic Society of North America, was present as Dr. David Coffey, president of the Baptist World Alliance, discussed his participation in drafting a response to a letter that was sent to the Christian world from King Abdullah II of Jordan and scholars from the Muslim world. The letter, and the Christian response, has resulted in continuing dialogue between Christian, Jewish, and Muslim scholars.

“This represents a landmark in Muslim-Christian relations,” Coffey said.

He also discussed the Alexandria Initiative, in which Christian and Muslim scholars meet regularly. “The ‘elephant in the room,’” Coffey noted, “is that both traditions are missionary faiths.”

“The best contribution Christians can make in sharing their faith,” he reminded participants, “is sharing their lifestyle.”

Vujicic Urges Life without Limits

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 7/7/09)—Nick Vujicic began the Saturday morning worship service of the Biennial meeting of the American Baptist Churches, meeting in Pasadena, CA, June 27, with stirring words. “Isn’t it ironic that God can use a man without arms and legs to be the hands and feet of Christ.”

Vujicic was born without arms or legs, and was given no medical reason for his condition. Faced with countless challenges and obstacles, he believes that God has given him the strength to surmount what others might call impossible. He is an evangelist who has established the non-profit organization “Life without Limbs” (www.lifewithoutlimbs.org).



Nick Vujicic

Speaking to the many youth attending the Biennial from all over the world, Vujicic said that he is living proof that “it’s not about what you have, but what you do with what you have.”

“Where was God,” Vujicic lamented as a child. “Why did God let a pastor’s son be born without arms and legs?”

But he began to imagine the time when he would stand before God in heaven, and God would ask him only two questions: “Do you know me?” and “Who did you bring?”

Since deciding to become an evangelist seven years ago—when he was 19 years old—Vujicic has spoken to hundreds of thousands of youth all over the world, and has helped to change tens of thousands of lives.

“When you put ‘go’ in front of ‘disable’,” he said, “you get ‘God is able.’” Vujicic views his disability as a gift from God that allows him to reach others for Christ, encouraging people to pray, thank God, and trust God.

“If you put your hope in money, good looks, riches, they will all fade away. Put your hope in Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.” Many Biennial participants, especially young people, responded to his call to refocus their lives.

As an “emerging voice,” Marisol Martinez, who serves with her family through Misión Internacional Nueva Generación, shared stories from their ministry with young families in Duarte, CA.

Aidsand Wright-Riggins, III, executive director of National Ministries, presented the Edwin T. Dahlberg Peace Award to Thomas Adams of Detroit, MI, for his work for community peace through justice with reconciliation.

Adams, a member of Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church, has established a prison ministry—The Chance for Life Organization—that “prepares inmates for a successful transition back into the community by providing educational life skills and personal encouragement.”

Saturday’s morning worship was filled with music that evoked dancing in the pews, and was drawn to a close with a benediction in poem by Jason Petty.

Structure Proposal Defeated in Close Vote



VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 7/7/09)—At the Saturday business session of the American Baptist Biennial meeting in Pasadena, CA, delegates narrowly defeated the by-law changes brought by the General Board. 377 delegates voted in favor of the changes and 217 opposed them, with 20 abstentions. Two-thirds of the delegates present are needed for by-law changes to be accepted.

“It was a very narrow vote,” said A. Roy Medley, ABCUSA General Secretary. “Just over 63% voted for the changes. We’ve asked the delegates to give us suggestions and critiques. Now, we’ll take that information into consideration as we continue to work on the new structure.”

The proposed changes would have reduced the number of representatives to each mission board and allowed them to work with more autonomy, creating a leadership pool from which they can choose board members with needed gifts and skills.

Under the proposal, the Biennial meeting would have become a Mission Summit, focusing on a current national and/or international need. After the Summit, a smaller Mission Table of representatives from the boards and staff would then have strategized how the information and concerns from the Summit would be integrated into the work of the denomination.

During the session, five delegates spoke about the amendments:

Rev. Curtis Price, pastor of Wedgwood Community Church in Seattle, WA, affirmed the amendments, noting the decision-making developed by the Evergreen Baptist Association. As an ethnically diverse region, they have developed a process that allows all members to have a voice. Price noted his belief that the proposed structure would have presented the denomination with the same opportunity.

Dr. Grant Ward spoke against the amendments on behalf of Central Baptist Church in Wayne, PA. He noted their concern about provisions in the proposed by-laws that would have set a higher threshold to rescind past policy statements and resolutions than it took to enact them in the first place, which would have made it more difficult to vote on statements and resolutions the church believes to be contrary to Baptist principles.

Dr. June Totten of Claremont, CA, also spoke against the by-law amendments, saying that she believed them to be unfinished and unclear. She was also concerned that, by changing the current representative structure, the denomination would have been altering the very provision that encouraged the diversity it prizes.

Dr. Michael Harvey of First Baptist Church, Worcester, MA (formerly pastor of Irving Park Baptist Church, Chicago), advocated developing a “process in which the important issues of society can be talked about with respect for every person.”



Dr. George Hancock-Stefan of Central Baptist in Atlantic Heights, NJ, was also opposed. He was concerned that the restructure would have violated our heritage of congregational polity, and would have led to an organization top-heavy with paid staff and special groups. He also shared his feeling that the proposal was unfinished and not ready for a vote.

These and other comments will be considered as national and regional staff continues to develop a new structure for the denomination.

“There are several things in the proposed bylaws that we can already begin to implement,” said Medley. “The 2011 Biennial will continue to be planned as a mission summit, and General Board meetings will be

more like a mission table. We have already begun the practice of having a representative from the caucuses meet with us, and we can move forward with establishing the leadership pool.”

During the next two years, Medley concluded that, “the program boards will have the time to fully flesh out the proposed changes in their by-laws for delegates to see and study before they meet in 2011 in Puerto Rico.”

Baptist Leaders Endorse “American Clean Energy and Security Act”

This article is from www.ethicsdaily.com.

By: Brian Kaylor

Posted: Friday, June 19, 2009



More than 140 Baptist leaders from across the country signed a Baptist Center for Ethics (BCE) letter to lawmakers endorsing the "American Clean Energy and Security Act," a bill in the House of Representatives approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee in May. The bill is an environmental effort to reduce significantly carbon dioxide pollution.

"We understand that this bill is a comprehensive one that

promises to create millions of clean energy jobs, to advance American security from foreign oil, to protect the planet by capping global-warming gases, to increase electricity from renewable energy sources and to improve energy efficiency," the letter states.

The letter begins by explaining that the motivations for supporting the legislation come from a commitment "to pursuing the twin moral imperatives to care for the poor and for creation, two imperatives drawn from an abundance of passages in the Bible." Planet Earth is the Lord's and we are caretakers of it," the letter explains. "When we guard the environment, we also protect the marginalized and those most vulnerable to droughts, floods, deteriorating ecosystems and diseases."

Although the letter expresses thanks that "this bill provides support to help the global poor adapt to the impacts of climate change," it also acknowledges that the legislation could be improved.

"We wish the bill provided more funding to help the marginalized and those most at risk — those least responsible for climate change," the letter explains. "Nonetheless, an imperfect bill will not keep us from speaking up and encouraging our fellow church members to support this legislation. We are determined that the tyranny of moral perfectionism will not block the urgency of moral realism."

The letter concludes by urging "The U.S. House of Representatives to strengthen and to pass without delay 'The American Clean Energy and Security Act.'"

BCE's open letter was distributed to each member of the House of Representatives on the morning of June 19.

In addition to members of BCE's board of directors, the 141 signers include national Baptist leaders like Jack Glasgow, David Emmanuel Goatley, Sumner Grant, Virginia Holmston, Emmanuel McCall, Roy Medley, Rob Nash, Reed Trulson, William Shaw and Daniel Vestal. Additionally, Baptist leaders from 26 states and the District of Columbia signed the letter. The entire letter and list of signatories can be found [here](#).

In May, BCE Executive Director Robert Parham wrote an [editorial](#) urging support for "The American Clean Energy and Security Act." In 2008, BCE [sent](#) a letter signed by more than 140 Baptists to the U.S. Senate urging support for climate legislation sponsored by Senators John Warner and Joseph Lieberman. That legislation, which was opposed by Southern Baptist Convention leaders, failed to survive a filibuster.

Earlier in June, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office [estimated](#) that "The American Clean Energy and Security Act" would reduce federal deficits by about \$24 billion dollars over a period from 2010-19.

Earlier this week, a [report](#) compiled by researchers at numerous U.S. scientific agencies documented the effects of global warming in the United States. The nearly 200-page report, titled "Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States," also warns about future consequences of global warming. Although publicly released, the report is addressed to "Members of Congress."

"Climate-related changes have already been observed globally and in the United States," the report explains. "These include increases in air and water temperatures, reduced frost days, increased frequency and intensity of heavy downpours, a rise in sea level and reduced snow cover, glaciers, permafrost and sea ice. A longer ice-free period on lakes and rivers, lengthening of the growing season and increased water vapor in the atmosphere have also been observed. Over the past 30 years, temperatures have risen faster in winter than in any other season, with average winter temperatures in the Midwest and northern Great Plains increasing more than 7°F. Some of the changes have been faster than previous assessments had suggested."

Key findings in the report include that the average U.S. temperature "has risen more than 2°F over the past 50 years," the amount of precipitation in the United States "has increased an average of about 5 percent over the past 50 years," the "amount of rain falling in the heaviest downpours has increased approximately 20 percent on average in the past century" and the sea level "has risen along most of the U.S. coast over the last 50 years."

The report estimates that additional effects of global warming will "stress water resources," harm the production of crops and livestock, further endanger coastal regions and increase human health risks. The report concludes by noting "the importance of reducing the concentrations of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere."

[Brian Kaylor](#) is a contributing editor to *EthicsDaily.com*

Medical Mission Pictures



Have you joined Facebook yet? Have you become friends with ABC missionaries Carlos and Ramona Shawver in Mexico?

If not, give it a try! The Shawvers' Facebook page gives links to pictures and videos of the ministries that they and visiting volunteers are doing. You will learn a great deal! You may even decide that God is calling you to volunteer with these wonderful folks.

HEALTH CARE NEWS

Call Congress Today!

This request is from Health Care for America Now, which is endorsed by the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago.

Demand the choice of a public health insurance plan!

National Call-In Day for the Public Health Insurance Option WEDNESDAY, July 8 Call Congress Toll Free 1-877-264-HCAN

On Wednesday, thousands of individuals across the country will be calling their representatives to demand guaranteed, affordable health care for all. Just last week, the insurance industry kicked off their campaign to stop health care reform. During the month of July, the industry will be lobbying, running ads, and hosting phone banks aimed at killing our health care campaign. Now is our best chance to counter their message!

The time to act is now. Wednesday is a critical day of action that will help us keep health care reform a priority for Congress. The more people that call their representative on Wednesday, the harder it will be for Congress to ignore America's need for health coverage that is affordable for every person, family, and business.

AND

If you don't have a chance to call on Wednesday, please call on Thursday or Friday.

Congress works for you! Please call your Congressperson toll-free at 1-877-264-HCAN to demand real health care reform.

Here is a sample script you can use when you call:

My name is _____, and I'm from _____. I am calling to ask (Senator or Representative _____) to support health care reform that guarantees quality, affordable health care for everyone. I want a real choice between keeping my private health insurance plan or joining a public health insurance plan.

Please ask (Senator or Representative _____) to make sure the upcoming health care bill has a strong public health insurance that all Americans can join. Thank you.



350 Lobbyists Are Working to Prevent Health Care Reform

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



REMINDER: National Health Care Reform Call-In Days July 7 & 8

According to the Washington Post, the insurance industry has hired over 350 lobbyists to pressure Congress in July. They want to prevent the passage of real health care reform this summer.

350 lobbyists can exert a lot of pressure on our elected representatives in Congress. In fact, about the only thing that has more influence is your voice. If you and your family and friends call your congressperson, and all of us do the same, our combined voices can overcome the influence of those 350 lobbyists. **If we act together, we can guarantee access to affordable health care for all.**

Add your voice to the call for real health care reform as part of this nationally coordinated campaign. CALL TODAY!

When: July 7th and 8th

How: Use this toll-free number to call the Capitol Switchboard: 1-866-210-3678

[Find your congressperson here](#)

Messages to Share with Your Congressperson

- We want better oversight and sensible rules to make sure insurance companies provide fair and affordable coverage and can no longer turn people away for having a pre-existing condition like cancer.
- We want health care reform that will give us the freedom of choice to keep our current plan, choose another plan, or choose a quality affordable public health insurance plan.
- We want peace of mind from knowing that if anything ever happens, there would be an affordable and guaranteed health plan available to us and our families
- I am your constituent and I demand quality, affordable health care for all NOW!

Together, we will win this fight!

Private, Nonprofit Health Insurance Co-Ops Cannot Adequately Reform Our Health Care System

This article by Monica Sanchez is from the blog on www.insurancecompanyrules.org

Some members of Congress are pushing the idea of nonprofit health co-ops as an alternative to a public health insurance option. According to a July 6, 2009 article in [Congressional Quarterly](http://congressionalquarterly.com) (<http://corporate.cq.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=101>) :

"The [Senate] Finance Committee would set up consumer-owned "co-ops" that would essentially function as nonprofit insurers to compete against private health insurance companies. The proposal is seen as a compromise designed to attract moderate Democrats and Republicans."

But this is not "change." Nonprofit organizations have always had an important role in the financing and delivery of health care services in the United States. Nonprofit health care organizations are part of the U.S. economy's "third sector," the other two sectors are government and for-profit businesses. In the early 1900s the first health care prepayment/insurance plan was founded as a nonprofit organization—Blue Cross—by a nonprofit hospital in Texas. Today, nearly [50 percent of people](http://www.nonprofithealthcare.org/reports/5_value.pdf) (http://www.nonprofithealthcare.org/reports/5_value.pdf) with private health insurance coverage are enrolled in nonprofit health plans.

Unfortunately, the strong and persistent presence of private nonprofit health insurance companies has not prevented any of the structural problems leading to our current health care crisis.

Private, Nonprofit Health Insurance Does Not Promote Competition.

Today, 84 of the 138 private health plans (61 percent) in the United States with at least 100,000 enrollees [are nonprofit](http://www.nonprofithealthcare.org/resources/BasicFactsAndFigures-NonprofitHealthPlans9.9.08.pdf) (<http://www.nonprofithealthcare.org/resources/BasicFactsAndFigures-NonprofitHealthPlans9.9.08.pdf>). Yet consolidation in the private insurance industry has narrowed price and quality competition. In 2008 the PPO/HMO industry's market power was considered [highly-concentrated, or anti-competitive](http://healthcareforamericanow.org/site/content/new_report_private_insurers_consolidate_and_control_prices) (http://healthcareforamericanow.org/site/content/new_report_private_insurers_consolidate_and_control_prices), in 94% of metropolitan areas. A public health insurance plan option coupled with more regulation of health insurers will break the stranglehold that a handful of private companies have on the market. Most importantly, these reforms will enable consumers to vote with their feet and switch out of plans that don't satisfy them.

Private, Nonprofit Health Insurance Does Not Control Costs.

While health care cost growth is unsustainable for individuals, businesses and the government, nonprofit status does not mean private insurance companies do not waste money. For example, many nonprofit insurers across the country have been abused by their officers and directors. For example, "Blue Cross Blue Shield of Maryland and its sister plan in the District of Columbia were poster children of nonprofit corruption and incompetence, squandering their assets on ego-building but money-losing diversification initiatives and on lavish executive lifestyles that devoted more days per year to jetting around the globe than to paying insurance claims back home," according to one [study](#). A public health insurance plan with public accountability and national purchasing reach would be able to slow health-cost growth and, through competition, keep private insurers honest and force them to become more efficient. Between 1997 and 2006, [spending grew 59 percent faster](#) for private plan enrollees than for Medicare beneficiaries. If private plans—either for- and not-for-profit—drop had controlled growth as effectively as Medicare, insurance premiums would be much lower than they are.

Private, Nonprofit Health Insurance Does Not Provide Stability.

Experience with Medicare private health plans shows the disruption caused when all kinds of private insurers drop out of geographic markets, change benefits, contract with different doctors and hospitals, or boost out-of-pocket responsibilities for patients. While for-profit insurers withdrew from the Medicare program more frequently, [nonprofit insurers have also abandoned](http://www.inquiryjournalonline.org/ingronline/?request=get-abstract&issn=0046-9580&volume=039&issue=04&page=0341) (<http://www.inquiryjournalonline.org/ingronline/?request=get-abstract&issn=0046-9580&volume=039&issue=04&page=0341>) their Medicare members. A survey of Medicare private health

plan members whose plans were scaled back or terminated suffered financial harm damaged their physical and mental health. Among enrollees seeing medical specialists, 22 percent reported they had to stop seeing that doctor, and 15 percent said they had to forgo a prescription drug after leaving their former plan.

Private, Nonprofit Health Insurance Does Not Advance Innovation.

While private nonprofit insurers in some cases have been found to [perform better](http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1116318) (<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1116318>) than for-profit insurers on several health outcomes measurements, they do not have the clout to drive other insurers and providers to adopt their practices. In addition, since they still have to compete with for-profit insurers and have fewer options for raising capital than companies that can sell shares to Wall Street, they have no incentive to share best practices with industry competitors. A new public health insurance plan would spur the development of innovative and transparent payment mechanisms, quality-of-care incentives, and evidence-based protocols. A new public health plan could follow the achievements of the Department of Veterans Affairs and Medicare and adopt large-scale use of electronic medical records, incentives for greater integration of delivery systems and improved measures of quality.

Don't be fooled!

Co-ops will not fix our broken health care system. A strong, national [public health insurance plan](http://www.ourfuture.org/healthcare/public-health-insurance) (<http://www.ourfuture.org/healthcare/public-health-insurance>) option is needed to bring down costs and make coverage affordable.

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 15** 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 pray for the people of China during this time of ethnic unrest there.

Please be in prayer for the family and friends of Phil Yetter while they celebrate his life and mourn his passing. Please remember especially Phil's wife Sharon and their daughters at this time. Please hold in prayer the First Baptist Church of Berwyn, where Phil was pastor for nearly 14 years.

Please pray for ABC missionaries Carlos and Ramona Shawver. Please pray also for Rev. Al Turl, who has recently returned home to Carbondale, IL from a mission trip to work with them. Al is also the person who manages their Facebook page.

Please pray for ABC missionaries Debbie and Jim Kelsey in Italy. Debbie and Jim assist the Evangelical Christian Baptist Union of Italy in ministry to English-speaking immigrant, particularly African, congregations. This includes local church ministry and theological and ministerial training of leaders. They work to welcome new arrivals to Italy who are seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

Please pray for ABC missionaries Carlos Bonilla and Mayra Giovanetti. Upon completion of their period of US/PR assignment, Carlos and Mayra, with their children, will be relocating in Spain to minister with the Baptist Evangelical Union of Spain in immigration, training lay persons, and preparing Christian Education curriculum materials. They were professors-at-large for the churches of the Convention of Baptist Churches of the Chilean Mission and for their Baptist Theological Institute until March 2009.

CALENDAR

July 10—Visitation/Wake for Rev. Phil Yetter, Heritage Funeral Home, 3117 S. Oak Park Avenue, Berwyn, 3 - 8 p.m.

July 11—Funeral for Rev. Phil Yetter, First Baptist Church, 6916 W. 34th Street, Berwyn, 10 a.m.

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

July 15—Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project monthly meeting, South Church, 501 S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect, 7 p.m.

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

July 20-25—Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America summer conference, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah. See 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

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.

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 19th 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. 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