

*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

August 26, 2009

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## **ABCMC NEWS**

### ***ABCMC Stewardship Seminar***

TO: Pastors and Church Leaders

FROM: Larry Greenfield

RE: STEWARDSHIP SEMINAR, Saturday, Sept. 12, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm

In keeping with our shared economic condition, we are doing our annual STEWARDSHIP SEMINAR differently this year, even if it means we will need to travel farther to benefit from it.

Instead of “going it alone” we are joining with the United Church of Christ in a stewardship workshop on “Stewardship in Hard Times,” being held in Yorkville, Illinois (about 50 miles west of the Loop) at the Yorkville Congregational Church, 409 Center Pkwy, 60560.

The workshop is being led by the Rev. Steve Clapp, Executive Director of Christian Community, Inc. (headquartered in Fort Wayne, Indiana), which serves congregations across the nation on issues of congregational development and stewardship.

I’ve known Steve for years and come to greatly respect him for both his practical knowledge about the way churches work – and can work better! – and his capacity to communicate that knowledge and counsel for very different settings. He is a United Methodist minister (graduate of Garrett-Evangelical in Evanston) with an MBA from Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management. He has published extensively on church finance and stewardship and led hundreds of workshops on these topics.

I can tell you that this seminar will not be flashy or flim-flam. It will be solid, down-to-earth, useful instruction, based on decades of experience and research about what works and doesn’t work and how all of this applies to the current financial issues we face now.

Because we are very interested in encouraging ABCMC congregations to take advantage of this opportunity, the Region will help offset the costs of registration (\$30, including lunch) and transportation for up to two people per congregation

Please contact me as soon as possible about (1) interest in attending the stewardship workshop, and (2) your request for any financial assistance. You can do so by e-mailing me at [larry@abcmc.org](mailto:larry@abcmc.org) or calling me on my cell phone (312-497-0688) and leaving a message if I don’t answer.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Larry

## ***Hold the Date: Vitalizing Congregational Ministries, October 3, 2009***

Earlier this year the Ministers Council and ABCMC sponsored a day with Dr. C. Jeff Woods (Associate General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches USA) to assess "trends in ministry."

Those who attended insisted that we invite Jeff back to Metro Chicago, but this time to involve both clergy and lay leaders, to draw on his expertise on vitalizing the ministries of congregations.

This will be a highly beneficial gathering for churches that want to move ahead with new direction and energy. Location will be announced later, but please mark it on your calendar now.

### ***Pandemic Planning***

At the Family Council meeting on August 22, John Wilson, a member of the South Church, and a chaplain at Lutheran General Hospital, shared from his knowledge and experience in planning for disasters such as pandemics. He focused on how churches can fill an important role if/when a pandemic of H1 N1 flu develops in the next few months. Folks who study such things are pretty sure that's going to happen.

It is important for congregations and pastors to be an informed, calming presence in the situation. Advance planning is essential. We must be prepared for it before it happens, or it will be too late.

We can, first of all, help prevent spreading of infection by making sure that surfaces in church buildings are clean and sanitized. This includes door knobs and kitchen counters, as well as toys and equipment in church nurseries. Using face masks during an epidemic can be helpful. More important than keeping us from breathing on each other or inhaling germs, wearing face masks keeps us from putting our fingers into our mouths and noses before we touch sanitized surfaces or other people, or after we touch contaminated surfaces or sick people.

Providing plenty of soap, hand sanitizer, and tissues can help prevent the spread of disease. Trash cans containing used tissues should be emptied frequently by folks wearing disposable latex gloves.

How are we to greet each other when there is concern about transmitting dangerous germs? Rather than hugging or shaking hands, we can learn to do an elbow bump. This is a friendly, sometimes humorous form of greeting. Touching elbows rather than hands is not likely to spread disease, because people rarely place their elbows in their mouths.

We need to be prepared ahead of time for rapidly-spreading infection. In many churches, it is a good idea to appoint a team of folks who commit to becoming informed about pandemic flu through reliable sources such as the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Team members can help educate fellow church members by sharing what they learn.

Churches need to make plans ahead of time for what they will do, and how they will keep the church's ministries going, if the minister and/or other staff members and/or leaders in congregation become ill. The church needs to know who in the congregation will fill in for those individuals while they recover.

If illness becomes so rampant that church members are unable to attend worship services, churches can bring worship services to members. A good, germ-free way of doing this is by doing a web cast of a service. Large public gatherings may be prohibited by law during a severe outbreak, and churches need to plan ahead of time how they will maintain contact with one another.

Churches need to plan ahead of time how they will keep financial support coming in. It is good for churches to set up a system through which supporters can transfer funds electronically.

## ***Thinking Theologically***

In addition to his many duties as ABCMC's Executive Minister, Larry Greenfield writes a bi-weekly column for the electronic newsletter of Protestants for the Common Good. His most recent column, "Is Defense Enough?" appears at the end of this issue of *eWind*.

## **NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS**

### ***Special Musical Guest***

Gospel recording artist Dr. C. Charles Clency will lead the Sunday morning worship service at the First Baptist Church, 401 N. Genesee Street, Waukegan on August 30. He will be joined by a gospel choir composed of singers from the church.

Dr. Clency is professor of music at the College of Lake County and leads the college's 60-voice gospel choir. A gifted organist, pianist and conductor, Clency was accompanist-arranger for the late gospel singer Mahalia Jackson. He later produced six record albums with his own 60-singer group, Voices of Melody.

### ***120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration***



Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, is celebrating their 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. The special day of celebration will be Sunday, September 13. The congregation and pastor Alice Greene invite the ABCMC family to celebrate with them on that special day.

The guest preacher in the 11 a.m. worship service will be former pastor Michael Harvey. The service will also include music and thanksgiving to God for the blessings of the church's many years of ministry.

Following the service there will be a 1 p.m. luncheon at LaVilla Banquets, 3638 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago. Luncheon tickets will be \$35 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and under.

### ***Peace Day Event September 19 in Mount Prospect***

On September 19, the South Church will host a community-wide afternoon Peace Walk and an evening Peace Day Celebration to commemorate International Day of Peace. The General Assembly of the United Nations passed a resolution in 2001 naming September 21 as International Day of Peace ("Peace Day").

"On this International Day, let us promise to make peace not just a priority, but a passion. Let us pledge to do more, wherever we are in whatever way we can, to make every day a day of peace," said U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Civic, community and religious groups will walk together from the South Church to the Mount Prospect Village Hall. On the village green, there will be a short ceremony to reflect on the importance of global and personal peace. Speakers will include Mt. Prospect Mayor Irvana Wilks, and other civic and community leaders. Following the ceremony, the walk will continue back to The South Church for a Peace Day Celebration. The route is handicapped-accessible.

The activities for the evening Peace Day Celebration include a tree planting, peace-related crafts, games, food and live music by Voodoo Cadillac and Friends. The walk and the evening activities are open to the public.

"I'm hoping that many people in our community come together for this Peace Walk and Celebration. There is power in numbers. This weekend we invite our neighbors to participate with the global community in honoring the International Day of Peace. It is my hope that as we walk, we will contemplate the many ways we are called to create a world where true peace becomes possible. May our walk for peace be a first step toward working for justice and equality," says Reverend Rick Kesler in his an open invitation to all individuals and organizations in the community.

Additionally, the South Church welcomes all to join an interfaith community worship service on Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m.

**Event Details:**

2:00 Walk will begin from The South Church, 501 S. Emerson St.

3:00 Ceremony at Mount Prospect Village Hall

4:00 Peace Day Celebration at The South Church, 501 S. Emerson St.

Crafts, games, tree planting, food and live music

## ***Family Conference***

"Life is good. A healthy marriage makes it better." This will be the theme of a family conference on September 19 at Waukegan High School. Guest speakers will be Judge Gloria Hatchett and Carlos Cuauhtemoc Sanchez. To register, please call 877=41BRIDGE. For more information, please call First Baptist Church member Barbara Waller at 847-244-3192.

## **COMMUNITY NEWS**

### ***The Meaning of the Word***

As you probably read in the paper or saw on local television news, 10<sup>th</sup> District Congressman Mark Kirk (who is also a Republican senatorial hopeful) held a "town hall" meeting on health care this past Monday, August 24 in Arlington Heights. The standing-room-only conditions in the meeting place and the hundreds of people outside made it a media event that received attention from all the local television stations

The story presented on Chicago's CBS affiliate focused on one woman who was at the event. Reporter Mai Martinez said of this woman, "Linda Camodeca has been battling lung cancer for six years." Camodeca stated, "I am 67 years old, and if we go to universal health care, I wouldn't be here today." She added, "I'm afraid that they would consider me too old to do all they've done for me and save my life,"

Camodeca apparently does not know the meaning of the word "universal." According to the dictionary, the word means "affecting, concerning or involving all." Universal health care would mean that everyone would receive the health care they need, without regard to race, gender, age or health issues. The reporter made no effort to correct Camodeca's misunderstanding. Neither did Kirk. But if you know Camodeca, please give her a call and help her understand the truth about health care reform proposals.

According to a front-page article in Tuesday's suburban newspaper the *Daily Herald*, at least one person in attendance felt uninformed and wanted more information. The article stated, "Cindy Flatebo of Grayslake said no one knows what is in the 1,000-page HR 3200 health care reform bill Congress is considering. 'I want bullet points and the 'Cliff Notes' version,' she said."

No problem. A clear summary of the proposed bill is available free from the House Ways and Means Committee at <http://www.stark.house.gov/images/stories/111/legislation/AAHCA/aahca-billsummary-071409.pdf>. Please take a look at it. And if you know Flatebo, please send her the link, or print out the four-page summary and give her a copy.

## **Walter Wink to Give Public Lecture at Chicago Theological Seminary**



On Thursday, September 24, at 7 p.m., Chicago Theological Seminary, 5757 S. University Avenue, Chicago, will host Walter Wink, a noted author, theologian and Bible scholar for a lecture and book signing with the theme “Non Violence for the Violent.” Wink will address the question, “Is there a way between absolute pacifism and just war theory, a position committed to non-violence that is able to address the thorny issues of armed aggression, terrorism and civil strife responsibly?” In this presentation we will attempt to find a nonviolent path for people who are opposed to war and the mindless addiction to violence in our society, yet who are unsure of their capacity to respond with love in every situation.

Tickets will be sold at the door only. The cost will be \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. Space is limited, and tickets will be available on a first come first served basis.

Some of the books the speaker has written will be available for purchase and signing. These three books are *Engaging the Powers*, *Jesus and Nonviolence* and *Powers that Be*. Don't miss this opportunity to hear an outstanding speaker who is a gifted interpreter of scripture.

## **Preparing for Advent**

It's August, and preachers and worship leaders know what that means: it's time to get ready for Advent.

Chicago Theological Seminary will host an Advent Lectionary Workshop on Thursday, September 24, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Covenant United Church of Christ, 1130 E. 154<sup>th</sup> Street, South Holland. This workshop will focus on studying and preaching the lectionary texts for Advent 2009. Timothy Sandoval, Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible at the seminary, will be the presenter.

The cost will be \$40 prior to September 10 and \$45 thereafter. Breakfast and lunch will be included. All are invited—ministers, church leaders, worship planning committee members, seminarians and persons interested in biblical study and theological conversations.

A registration form is attached with this issue of *eWind*.

## **Soldier's Heart**

What we know as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, a condition that afflicts many military persons after their experiences at war, was known as “Soldier's Heart” in the time during and after the American Civil War. Today “Soldier's Heart” is the name of an organization committed to helping returning veterans and their families. You can learn more about this caring ministry by visiting [www.soldiersheart.net](http://www.soldiersheart.net)

Next month the organization will host a workshop for returning veterans and their families, as well as those who wish to help them.

### **Veteran Return Retreat and Training**

Led by Dr. Edward Tick and Kate Dahlstedt, September 17-20, 2009, Racine, Wisconsin

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the spiritual, holistic, community-based, and cross cultural approach to healing from war, as found in Dr. Tick's book, *WAR AND THE SOUL*.

This experience provides an opportunity for veterans, family members, helping professionals and all who care to learn practical ways of integrating essential healing strategies into relationships and practices.

### **EVENT DETAILS**

COST: \$795 includes tuition, room and board

To inquire about veteran scholarships – [info@soldiersheart.net](mailto:info@soldiersheart.net)

START & END TIMES: Registration begins at 3 PM Thurs. Sept. 17, opening ceremony at 7  
Program ends on Sunday after lunch

PLACE: Siena Center, Racine, WI – [www.racinedominicans.org](http://www.racinedominicans.org)

DIRECTIONS: arriving by car – [www.racinedominicans.org](http://www.racinedominicans.org)

Arriving by plane – fly into Milwaukee Airport,  
contact [lind@merr.com](mailto:lind@merr.com) for transportation from airport to retreat.

TO REGISTER: write to [info@soldiersheart.net](mailto:info@soldiersheart.net)

QUESTIONS? [info@soldiersheart.net](mailto:info@soldiersheart.net) or 518-274-0501 X10

Capacity is limited to 30 and filling up quickly. We encourage you to register now.

To learn more about Soldier's Heart, please visit [www.soldiersheart.net](http://www.soldiersheart.net)

### ***What We Need to Know***

What We Need to Know: two remarkable Muslim woman speak of faith, peace and hope in today's world

Wednesday, October 14th

5:15-5:45 Reception 5:45-7:00 Program

"Let's Talk About It" series

St. James Cathedral

65 East Huron Street, Chicago

RSVP to [ron.fox@seabury.edu](mailto:ron.fox@seabury.edu)

Come hear two remarkable Muslim women share their stories and speak together about how we create the space for dialogue, for sharing our own traditions and learning about each others traditions.

Ms. Manar Fawakhry, a Muslim from Mazra'a in northern Israel, is Program Director of Face to Face/Faith to Faith at Auburn Seminary in New York City. In the program, 50 participants at a time, ages 16-18, from communities in the US, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and South Africa are brought to a facility in upstate New York staffed by young adult counselors, religious leaders, educators, and trained facilitators.

The curriculum consists of multi-faith education, dialogue, and communication skills-building workshops, and experiential learning activities that foster interfaith understanding, including arts projects, visits from musicians, storytellers, and off-site excursions.

Dr. Ingrid Mattson a Canadian convert to Islam who was elected in 2006 to lead the Islamic Society of North America, told the Chicago Tribune at that time that women should participate fully in Muslim life, whether that means sitting next to men during mosque lectures, but not at prayers, or contributing to the rules that govern religious observance." I want to make sure women are fully engaged," Mattson told the Tribune. "They should sit on boards and in mosques in space equal to men so they can participate in discussions." She is Professor of Islamic Studies and Director of Islamic Chaplaincy at the MacDonald Center for Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary in Hartford, CT.

This program is sponsored by Seabury, Bexley, EPF, Cathedral, Peace and Justice Commission/Chicago EPF.

## **ABCUSA NEWS**

Other articles from the American Baptist News Service are available at <http://www.abc-usa.org/Resources/AmericanBaptistNewsService/tabid/79/Default.aspx>

### ***2009 Black Church Conference***

“Power Connection: A Call to Greater Works” will be the theme of this year’s American Baptist Black Church Conference. The conference will take place at the Holiday Inn Chicago Matteson, 500 Holiday Plaza Drive, Chicago November 3-7. The Third Baptist Church of Chicago will be the host church, and ABCMC along with the American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin, will be the host regions.

A pre-conference event will be a Ministers Summit November 2-3. The Ministers Summit is designed to provide dialogue, networking and resource sharing for those ministering in the African-American Community.

Speakers for the Black Church Conference will include ABCMC’s own Brenda Little, Alan Ragland, Marshall Hatch, Carol Jamieson Brown, Alice Greene and Francine Stark. ABCMC’s own John Sundquist and Rick Barlow will represent the American Baptist Foundation to talk about estate planning.

The conference will end with a Super Saturday Extravaganza including a Hip Hop Intergenerational Summit. This will be a great event, and a good investment of a pastor’s time.

For registration and more information, please visit [www.ABCPowerConnection.org](http://www.ABCPowerConnection.org).

### ***Parrish III Elected General Secretary of Progressive National Convention***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 8/20/09)**—This may be a historical first. “A father and son will soon be at the head of major interests of two significant religious denominations,” according to Dr. Walter Parrish II who has served as the executive minister of the American Baptist Churches of the South (ABCOTS) since 1979.

ABCOTS is one of the 33 covenanting regions of the American Baptist Churches (ABC). Since 1970, ABCOTS has served the 16 southern states including Washington, DC.

In August, his son, Dr. Walter Parrish III, was elected general secretary of the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC), a Baptist denomination of more than 2,000 churches with a total membership of 2.5 million.

Founded in 1961, the PNBC is the third largest African American Baptist convention in the world. He will begin his new ministry in October after the retirement of Dr. Tyrone Pitts, the current general secretary.

Dr. Parrish comes to this position from the senior pastorate of Union Baptist Church in Montclair, NJ, a church dually aligned with the PNBC and the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA).

Before assuming the pastorate of Union Baptist Church, Dr. Parrish served on the staff of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of ABCUSA for 12 years.

“ABCOTS joins me in congratulating my son on his election,” noted Dr. Parrish II who, in the 1970s, worked with both the PNBC and ABCUSA in a capital fund campaign called Fund of Renewal. “Someone asked me how I felt about the competition,” Dr. Parrish II said. “My response was ‘There is no competition. We’ll continue to work in a collaborative partnership in strengthening kingdom ministries.’”

“Although there is a DNA connection, our administrative styles and audiences allow for individual relationship to be distinct. PNBC is a national organization; ABCOTS is a regional entity of a national body.”

“We congratulate both the PNBC and Dr. Parrish on this call,” said A. Roy Medley, general secretary of ABCUSA. “Walter is well-respected within ABC life where he has served for years, and we know he will bring excellent leadership to PNBC.”

“We have enjoyed the increased relationships between ABC and PNBC under the leadership of Dr. Tyrone Pitts, the current general secretary, and we look forward to continuing to explore how our mutual efforts in mission and ministry might increase,” he continued. “Dr. Pitts has been known internationally for his prophetic ministry, and we wish him God’s blessings in his upcoming retirement.”

## ***National Ministries Awards Grants to Help Children in Poverty***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (08/20/09)**—National Ministries, The American Baptist Home Mission Societies, has awarded grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000 to 15 American Baptist congregations and organizations in support of their work with children in their communities. The grant program is part of the Children in Poverty initiative, which began in 2006.

Forty-four applications demonstrating commitment to children and creativity despite limited resources were reviewed. Each brought passion and hope to transforming the lives of children and youth. Among other factors, an important aspect of award recipients’ programs was their focus on one of three targeted issues: education, health care or support of higher parent income. Grant recipients range from grassroots projects staffed by volunteers to more established, institutional projects complete with budgets and paid staff.

Grants were awarded to these projects, following a difficult and prayerful selection process:

- Bethel Neighborhood Center, Kansas City, KS; “Educational Support to Karen Refugees”
- Cameron Community Ministries, Rochester, NY; “Reading Partners at Cameron”
- Edna Martin Christian Center, Indianapolis, IN; “Leadership and Legacy Summer Ministry Program”
- Elliot Avenue Baptist Church, Springfield, IL; “Wednesday Evening Enrichment Program”
- Emmanuel Baptist Church, Albany, NY; “Computers for Kids 2009”
- First Baptist Church, Indianapolis, IN; “Karen Kids Step Up”
- First Baptist Church, Mt. Vernon, IL; “Brown Bag Friday”
- First Baptist Church, Oakland, CA; “Samaritan Neighborhood Center”
- First Baptist Church, Seattle, WA; “Back to School Program”
- First Baptist Church, Syracuse, NY; “SHARE (Summer Health Activities Reading Education)”
- Friendship House, Billings, MT; “Summer Enrichment Program”
- Monte Vista Baptist Church, Phoenix, AZ; “Love Spoken Here”
- National Center for Children/Families (formerly Baptist Home for Children), Bethesda, MD; “Support to Homeless Children”
- Neighborhood Ministries, Campbell, OH; “Children Health and Screenings Follow-Up”
- West Virginia Baptist Convention, Sandyville, WV; “La Casa de la Amistad (Friendship House)”

Among Africa’s Masai tribe there is a common greeting, “Kasserian ingera,” which means, “And how are he children?” The traditional and proper response is “All the children are well.”

The meaning of the greeting is obvious, says Rev. Marilyn Turner, National Ministries’ associate executive director for Program Ministries: “Only when the youngest and most vulnerable members of our communities are safe, loved and living in conditions of peace and sufficiency can our society be whole. National Ministries is proud to support and applaud these projects focused on assuring that all of our children will be well.”

Visit [www.nationalministries.org](http://www.nationalministries.org) for information about resources and projects that promote care of those most vulnerable among us.

## ***ABCUSA Burma Refugee Task Force Awards Grants***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (08/26/09)**—Thirty-eight 2009 grants have been awarded by the ABCUSA Burma Refugee Task Force to American Baptists working with Burmese refugees in the United States. The 2008 grants totaled 31. These grants are supported by ABCUSA's Mission Initiative Fund and One Great Hour of Sharing funds from National Ministries

Grants are utilized for a variety of purposes. Most commonly, they support transportation that enables refugees to go to church, work, appointments and job interviews. Grants have been used to help new arrivals participate in drivers' education.

The funds also support staff positions such as outreach coordinators and interpreters, along with general programs that assist with emergency needs, welcome baskets and initial settlement costs. Grants also fund programs that send children to church camp, help people find jobs, participate in job skill and life skill training, and more.

Thirteen of the 2009 grants support work in new locations. The grant program will continue into 2010, the final year of the award from the Mission Initiative Fund. The Burma Refugees Task Force hopes to expand the scope and number of projects even more next year.

"The grants became vision vehicles for congregational transformation that capture mission on the doorstep in a challenging time," says the Rev. Florence Li, National Ministries' Asian churches strategist. Duane Binkley, a Burma Refugee Task Force member and missionary dually-aligned with International Ministries and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, says, "The real value of these grants also says 'welcome' to these new Americans while strengthening the relationship between the denomination as a whole, the new refugee congregations, and the churches and people helping them."

The Burma Refugee Task Force is a cooperative effort of National Ministries, International Ministries, the Office of the General Secretary, and American Baptist Women's Ministries, along with leadership from Karen, Chin and Kachin pastors as well as lay leaders of American Baptist churches serving refugee populations.

For more information about Burmese refugees and related ministries:

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- Visit [www.karenconnection.org](http://www.karenconnection.org);
- Contact Florence Li at 1-800-222-3872, x2468, or [Florence.Li@abc-usa.org](mailto:Florence.Li@abc-usa.org);
- Contact Duane Binkley at 330-699-4174 or [dmbink@pobox.com](mailto:dmbink@pobox.com).

For information about sponsorship of refugee resettlement:

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- Contact Ken George at 1-800-222-3872, x2034, or [Ken.george@abc-usa.org](mailto:Ken.george@abc-usa.org);
- Contact Diane Giova at 1-800-222-3872, x2450, or [Diane.Giova@abc-usa.org](mailto:Diane.Giova@abc-usa.org).

## ***Edwin Tuller, Former General Secretary, Passes Away***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (08/26/09)**—Rev. Dr. Edwin Tuller, a strong advocate for human and civil rights, passed away August 25 in Pittsburgh, PA. Tuller served as the general secretary for ABCUSA from 1959 to 1970.

Tuller was born in Hartford, CT, in 1913, the second son of an active Baptist family.

He was a Phi Beta Kappa magna cum laude graduate of Brown University in Providence, RI, where he was the editor of the university yearbook, member of the governing board, and won six athletic letters in soccer and lacrosse.

He graduated from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, NY, in 1938, and did graduate work at La Faculte Libre de Theologie Protestante in Paris, France, in 1938 and 1939.

In 1958, Brown University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree, and in 1959 he was conferred an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Franklin College in Franklin, IN.

Tuller served as the Assistant Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, DC, from 1939 to 1944.

He was the director of Christian Education and assistant executive secretary of the Connecticut Baptist Convention from 1944 to 1950, when he became executive secretary of the Connecticut State Council of Churches, a position in which he served until 1955.

In 1955, Tuller returned to denominational work as executive secretary of the Massachusetts Baptist Convention, where he helped revitalize the church extension (church planting) program. In 1957, he became associate general secretary of ABCUSA, in which capacity he directed the Convention's fund-raising program.

Tuller served as the second general secretary for ABCUSA, the top leadership position in the denomination, from 1959 to 1970. During his tenure, he steered a steady ship as both the denomination and the entire country went through a period of unprecedented turmoil and transition.

Tuller presided over the completion of the American Baptist Mission Center headquarters in Valley Forge, PA, and the dedication and initial occupancy of the building in conjunction with the annual Convention in Philadelphia in 1962.

Tuller positioned the American Baptist Convention in the leadership of the movement for civil rights in this country, often participating in public advocacy efforts, and sat behind Dr. Martin L. King, Jr., at his famous "I Have A Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963.

Said current general secretary A. Roy Medley, "Dr. Ed Tuller was that rare mixture of both the prophetic and pastoral leader. He became general secretary during the racially charged civil rights struggle. Through his prophetic leadership, American Baptists threw their support behind Dr. King and his fledgling movement. Yet, Dr Tuller was pastoral in his approach to those American Baptists who questioned such an active stance in "politics," patiently answering their concerns and helping them embrace the struggle for equality as a biblical response to injustice. Dr. Tuller will long be remembered for his leadership that paved the way for American Baptists to be the most racially diverse denomination today."

Albert Paul Brinson, former associate general secretary for World Mission Support, was a childhood friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, and served as co-pastor with him, under senior pastor Martin Luther King, Sr., at historic Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA. Brinson also worked with Tuller in denominational work, and reflects fondly on his spirit and ministry; "Ed Tuller was one of my American Baptist idols and mentors. He was a true model for ministry, committed to all the things the American Baptist family stands for...freedom, equality, and justice. He was a friend and a great soldier for Jesus Christ. He will be missed indeed."

Tuller often ventured outside the Valley Forge compound to meet with American Baptist constituents and to dialogue with them about the witness of the denomination.

In response to the organization of the American Baptist Black Caucus in 1968, Tuller helped open the doors for greater participation by people of color in ABCUSA, which today has become the most racially diverse Protestant denomination in America.

Tuller also worked with the Commission on Denominational Structure (SCODS) authorized by the Convention in Boston in 1968, whose report and recommendations were adopted by the Convention in Denver in 1972. SCODS laid the framework for the ABCUSA denominational structure and governance from 1973 to present day.

During much of his time of service to the denomination, Tuller made his home on a farm in Flemington, NJ, with his wife, Rose Catherine, and their four children; Edwin H., Jr., Joan Elizabeth (Jensen), James Gordon, and Katherine ("Kitty") Crawford (Abbott).

After leaving the position of General Secretary, Tuller and Rose were appointed as Special Service Workers of the Board of International Ministries, with Ed serving as Pastor of the American Church in Paris, France—the oldest non-governmental American institution established on foreign soil—until his retirement from active ministry.

For the past several years, Tuller has lived in the Pittsburgh area, where he has continued to be an active American Baptist as a member of the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh.

James Oldham, ABCOPAD interim area minister for Pittsburgh and Southwest, reports that the Pittsburgh Baptist Association organized a special 95th Birthday Celebration to honor Tuller last December, attended by many local clergy, two of Tuller's adult children, and Dr. Medley.

"When I reflect on Dr. Tuller's lifetime of Christian service," Oldham stated, "I am gratified and humbled that he seemed equally comfortable and effective whether serving Christ in the highest leadership office in our denomination or as faithful and supportive member of a local American Baptist church. His example is one we can all take to heart. I trust his forthright and positive witness will continue to influence our denomination as we build upon the strong foundation that he so thoughtfully and joyously helped lay for all of us."

A memorial service will be held at First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh on Saturday, August 29, at 10:00 a.m.

## **Religious Liberty Day**

*This article is from the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC).*

Plan your own Religious Liberty Day with BJC's online resources.

Churches and individuals are spreading the word about the importance of religious liberty with special worship services and small moments of emphasis focused on our first freedom.

Metro Baptist Church in New York City recently had a "Religious Liberty Day" celebration in [their Sunday morning service](#), complete with a religious liberty-related call to worship, a [special dialogue](#) written by two members, hymns, and more. You can [read all about it](#) on our Web site. [www.bjconline.org](http://www.bjconline.org)

The BJC wants to help you plan your own religious liberty emphasis by providing you with [resources and ideas online](#). We have [bulletin inserts](#), [litanies and readings](#), [hymns](#), [sermon and teaching ideas](#), and much more!

**If you want to plan a religious liberty day event at your church -- or if you have any questions -- just let us know! Please contact Kristin Clifton at [kclifton@bjconline.org](mailto:kclifton@bjconline.org) for more information or to simply share your story!**

## **Healthy Boundaries for Clergy & Spiritual Teachers**

The Faith Trust Institute offers resources about doing trustworthy ministry in the faith community. ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield says, "**I have worked with the Faith Trust Institute for many years, and highly recommend their program.**" This excellent organization has a workshop scheduled in Chicago. For more information and registration, please visit [http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/index.php?p=Healthy\\_Boundaries&s=341](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/index.php?p=Healthy_Boundaries&s=341)

**Two-day Training of Trainers**  
**September 9-10, 2009**  
**9:00 AM to 5:00 PM**  
**Chicago, Illinois**

## **Training Description | Registration Info | Accommodations**

This training will prepare you to train others on healthy boundary issues for clergy and spiritual leaders using *A Sacred Trust* curriculum.

### **Who Should Attend:**

- Those who want to learn more about using *A Sacred Trust* curriculum to train local clergy about healthy boundaries in ministerial relationships.
- Those who are already a trained facilitator and want a refresher course.
- Those who have a background in addressing clergy ethics and abuse and want to help other clergy leaders in preventing misconduct and the harm it causes.

### **Training Fee Includes:**

- Two-day Training
- DVD program [\*A Sacred Trust: Boundary Issues for Clergy and Spiritual Teachers\*](#)
- Facilitator's guide with background information, discussion questions, interactive exercises, and audience handouts
- NEW! Participant Workbook
- Additional training handouts and materials

## ***Resource for Ministry***

Ministry Mentors is a resource for ministers to use to support their spiritual lives. You might want to check it out at [www.ministrymentors.org](http://www.ministrymentors.org).

## **MINISTERS COUNCIL NEWS**

### ***Collegial Covenant Groups***

The Minister's Council of American Baptist Churches continues to have funds from the Lily Grant to support Collegial Covenant Groups in 2010. Please go to their website at [www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com) to find more detailed information about how to apply for these grants listed under the Together In Ministry section.

All applications for new or continuing groups must be sent to Rev. Douglas Harris, President of ABC/MC Minister's Council, 5244 N. Lakewood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640 no later than September 1, 2009. The local Minister's Council officers will meet to approve all applications and send them on to the National Minister's Council, who make the final decisions on who receives the grants for 2010. You must get your applications in on time to have a chance for them to be approved. May we continue to have ongoing ways to strengthen our life together as those called into professional ministries.

### ***Together in the Lord Conference***

Come to Orlando January 4-7, 2010 for the *Ministry Renewal Conference!* The conference will be held at the Wyndham Resort and Conference Center, 8001 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819. It will be presented by American Baptist Churches, USA -

For registration and conference schedule visit this link -

<http://www.ministerscouncil.org/Together%20in%20the%20Lord/TITLinfo.aspx>

# HEALTH CARE NEWS

## ***Truth Telling***

*This article by Laura Dean Friedrich is from the August 21 issue of **The Common Good Network** from Protestants for the Common Good.*

Virtually everyone agrees that the health care system in this country is broken. Health care costs have risen 4 times faster than wages in recent years. About 47 million people in the U.S. do not have health insurance. The underinsured comprise an even larger number. Health care costs are the biggest driver of the federal deficit.

Why, then, has the discussion about health care reform become so antagonistic? Why are people so angry about the health care proposals currently being considered in both chambers of Congress?

We had expected vigorous debate and thoughtful dialogue this summer on the merits of the various components of health care reform in Congress and across the nation. That's how we develop consensus or compromise in a democracy.

However, as August draws to a close, we find ourselves immersed in a public debate characterized by misinformation, name-calling, and disruption of town hall meetings. The tone and content of the debate has turned ugly, very ugly. Legitimate questions are being drowned out by vocal, often rude, opponents, and advocates have not been consistently effective in articulating the "case" for reform. It seems that the discussion of health care reform is out of control.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, from FactCheck, pointed out in an interview on the [Bill Moyers Journal](#) on August 14, 2009 that the media has focused primarily on the protestors in its coverage of the reform debate. Therefore, much of the public's knowledge about health care reform is coming from news stories about protests and polls taken about the news coverage, *not* from factual information or rebuttals by reform proponents.

This is not the way to develop good public policy. We need to listen to the fears and concerns of our neighbors--and the protestors. We must learn about the [various proposals](#) currently being considered in Congress, and we need to communicate our opinions to our elected officials in Washington. We must get involved in the dialogue and debate and remind everyone to focus on what *all* people need.

Truth-telling is a vocation in every faith tradition. We need to get the facts about the reform proposals to our families, congregations, neighborhoods, and the general public. It's time for us to be vocal in our support for health care reform, based on what we've learned on our own and in dialogue with others.

The next 40 days are critical. Our hope for a health care future that includes everyone and works well for all of us is at risk. Each of us must do our part!

Please take action now. Sign on to "[A Faith-Inspired Vision of Health Care](#)," and encourage others to sign. Visit the Campaign for Better Health Care web site and use its [letter-to-the-editor](#) tool to send a letter to your local newspaper. Write to or call your [representative and senators](#) to voice support for reform. Talk to your family and friends about taking action on this issue. Encourage your congregation to observe a [Health Care Sabbath](#).

And, above all, challenge the negative messages out there by learning and telling the truth about this rare opportunity to create meaningful health care reform for all.

## ***Different from the Others***

Gary Page, moderator of Grace Baptist Church and a resident of Arlington Heights, says that the current public discussion of health care reform is different from any public discussions he has seen before in the decades he has been observing politics. He has seen many times when politicians used half-truths or innuendos to lead the public to agree with them. But never before has he seen opponents to anything tell such obvious lies as opponents to health care reform are telling.

A case in point was Mark Kirk's recent "town hall" meeting in Arlington Heights. Kirk opposes health care reform that would make health insurance available to the tens of millions of Americans who cannot (for a variety of reasons) obtain insurance but want it. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's "Current Population Survey" indicates that 47 million Americans are without health insurance. The much-respected Lewin Group has analyzed that figure, and says that in reality that figure is closer to 87 million. Kirk claimed on Monday that only 7 million Americans lack health insurance coverage, and says that such a small number of people (his description) do not merit a broad reform of our health care system.

Kirk began his program with a slide show. It quickly became evident (from dates on the slides) that some of his information was out of date. He demeaned the health care systems of Britain and Canada. He also claimed that the United States has the best health care system in the world, and it costs more than the systems of other industrialized nations because ours is the very best.

Kirk was not telling the truth.

1. The U.S. does not have the best health care system in the world. The World Health Organization says that France has the best health care system in the world. This is based on "health outcomes," that is how people fare when they are treated in a particular health care system. The United States doesn't even come close.
2. One of the criteria for judging the quality of a health care system is the rate at which newborns survive the first year of life. According to the World Health Organization, our health care system is #37, well behind other industrialized nations.
3. The U.S. health care system is more costly than that of any industrialized nation because it involves a "middle man" collecting money and making health care decisions, and paying health care providers. The "middle man" is health insurance companies. The cost of health insurance is rising more rapidly than any other cost in our economy. The CEO's of American health insurance companies are paid on average close to \$10 million dollars a year. Of every dollar we pay for health insurance premiums, health insurance companies pay out less than 70 cents, and keep the rest.

Kirk claimed that the reform proposals currently before the House of Representatives would be too expensive. That's not true, either. Yes, it will cost some money initially to set up the public option, but it will soon be self-supporting. According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, within 10 years of being put into place, the "public option" will bring millions of dollars into the funds for health care.

Kirk has another plan. His plan will take the form of "tort reform" and put a cap on how much money insurance companies must pay out for medical malpractice suits. His claim overlooks the fact that the financial problems in our current health care system are not particularly related to malpractice suits. Insurance companies no doubt support Kirk's proposal, but it has nothing to do with health care reform.

Kirk also wants people to be able to shop for health insurance, and buy health insurance across state lines. The result of this is likely to be that insurance companies will establish as their home bases states that have minimal or no legal regulations on health insurance companies. This could leave Americans vulnerable to decisions made by an unregulated industry. Furthermore, unlike HR 3200, Kirk's plan provides no federal regulations to limit the powers or profits of insurance companies, except eliminating "pre-existing condition" clauses that insurance companies have already said they are willing to give up. (HR 3200 also makes those clauses illegal.)

At his presentation in Arlington Heights this week, Kirk alleged that 15 million would lose their covered

under the current proposed House plan. That is not true. Read the 4-page summary of HR 3200, "America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009" at <http://www.stark.house.gov/images/stories/111/legislation/AHCA/aahca-billsummary-071409.pdf> You may choose read the whole bill (not a quick read at over 1,000 pages) at [http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press\\_111/20090714/aahca.pdf](http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press_111/20090714/aahca.pdf) For more information about how supporters of the reform bill expect to pay for it, please visit <http://personalmoneystore.com/moneyblog/2009/07/21/hr-3200-pay/>

Why does Kirk oppose a bill that would help millions of Americans? We did not have a chance to ask him, and we cannot speak for him. Health insurance companies oppose the bill because they fear it might hurt their bottom line. Public information indicates that the health care industry is among the 5 largest donors to Kirk's campaigns now and in the past. (You can go to [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org) to learn about campaign donations that political candidates have received.)

During Kirk's question-and-answer session, he called on a number of audience members, one at a time, to share their thoughts and questions. One gentleman in the front was called upon and got up and talked about supporting the Public Option plan. He challenged Kirk's using the British and Canadian plans as contrast to the proposed public option, since those countries have socialized medicine, not at all what HR 3200 is trying to establish with a public plan. He said people in those countries are not losing their homes, etc. because of lack of insurance coverage and went on to explain the Health Care for America position very well. Many people in the audience apparently supported what he was saying and clapped. Kirk looked puzzled.

## ***Your Call Matters!***

*This information and request are from Health Care for America Now.*

The media and some politicians say we "don't have the votes" in the Senate for real health care reform with a strong public health insurance option.<sup>1</sup> But poll after poll shows that three out of four of people want a public health insurance option to keep the insurance companies honest.

The President's Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said today, "The President believes that **the public option is the best idea** he has seen for achieving the goals of lowering costs and increasing choice and competition." And Speaker Pelosi has made it clear that **the House of Representatives won't pass a bill without a strong public option.**

Senator Jay Rockefeller said yesterday that, "**I believe the inclusion of a strong public plan option in health reform legislation is a must.**"<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, some Senators are proposing state-based co-ops as an alternative. The non-partisan Government Accountability Office made clear that **co-ops do nothing to lower the cost of insurance.**<sup>4</sup> And we know that only the government has the clout to force insurance companies to change the way they behave.

We need to get a simple message to Senators: **Join with the majority of Americans to support a public option to lower costs and keep insurance companies honest. A co-op isn't a public insurance option.**

Please call your Congressperson to tell them they can't be on the fence when it comes to our health!

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.**

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

## PEACE NEWS

### ***Fund Raising for Peaceful Youth***

Do you know what a zine is? We didn't until recently. The Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project (NWSPEP) says this is the dictionary definition:

**Dictionary: zine 'zine (zēn)**

- 1. An inexpensively produced, self-published, underground publication.**
- 2. "Give Peace a Chance" A DIY project to reach and encourage interaction with students.**

The organization has learned that zines are all the rage with high school and college students. Those are just the folks the group wants to reach. Volunteers from this group work with suburban high schools to encourage young people to consider careers in peace-making and social change. So NWSPEP is producing its own zine. The problem is, that takes some money. So they need our help.

The group is having a fund raising event in Rolling Meadows on Saturday, September 12. The weather should be great. There will be food and drink and music and fun beginning at 4 p.m. The charge for the event (which will include burgers and veggie-burgers and all the usual sides plus desserts) will be \$20 for adults or \$10 for students—but don't worry if you don't have such riches in your wallet: come anyway, because no one will be turned away.

More information about the event is on the fliers attached with this issue of *eWind*. There is a half-sheet flier just right for trimming down and using as a bulletin insert; the full-sheet flier is perfect for printing and posting—or even mailing.

For more information about this group, please visit their web site at [www.nwsubpep.org](http://www.nwsubpep.org) RSVP to this invitation to the event at [nwsubpep@comcast.net](mailto:nwsubpep@comcast.net) The Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project is a 501(c)(3) educational organization, and donations are tax deductible. If you can't make it to the cook-out fund raiser, you can still contribute to the cause. Learn how by emailing [nwsubpep@comcast.net](mailto:nwsubpep@comcast.net)

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for world peace.

Please pray and take action for real reform of the health care system in the United States.

Please lift up in prayer the Kennedy family, the people of Massachusetts and many other people who are celebrating the life and mourning the death of Senator Edward Kennedy.

Please pray for Americans who need but do not have health insurance, and pray that we can find a way for them to receive the health care they need. This group includes some ABCMC pastors.

Please pray for all missionaries ministering in Jesus' name around the world.

## CALENDAR

**NOW**—Please take action—phone calls, emails, letters to the editor—for health care reform.

**August 29**—Funeral for Edwin Tuller, First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, 10 a.m.

**September 6**—ABCMC Sunday with Larry Greenfield preaching, Emmanuel Baptist Church, 8301 S. Damen Avenue, Chicago, 11 a.m.

**September 9-11**—Theological Conversation with Jurgen Moltmann, First Presbyterian Church, 219 Maple Avenue, Libertyville. Please visit <http://moltmannconversation.com> for information and registration.

**September 12**—ABCMC Stewardship Seminar, 10 a.m.

**September 12**—Memorial service for Eugene Nyman, 407 South Grove Avenue in Barrington, 4 p.m.

**September 12**—Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project bar-b-que fund-raiser, 4 p.m. until...

**September 13**—Celebration of 120 years of ministry, Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, with Mike Harvey preaching, 11 a.m. Luncheon follows at La Villa Banquets, 3638 N. Pulaski Road, Chicago, 1 p.m.

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

**September 21**—International Day of Prayer for Peace.

**September 24**—CTS Advent Lectionary Workshop, Covenant United Church of Christ, 1130 E. 154<sup>th</sup> Street, South Holland, IL, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Advance registration \$40 until September 10; \$45 thereafter.

**September 24**—Lecture and book signing by Walter Wink, Grand Taylor Chapel, Chicago Theological Seminary, 5757 S. University Avenue, Chicago, 7 p.m.

**October 3**—ABCMC gathering with Jeff Woods on vitalizing congregational ministries. Save the date! More information to come.

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

**November 8-9**—Hidden Treasures: Spiritual Wisdom Through the Voices of Women in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Catholic Theological Union, 5416 S. Cornell, Chicago. For more information and registration, please call the Bernardin Center at Catholic Theological Union, 773-371-5432, or visit [www.ctu.edu](http://www.ctu.edu)

**November 14**—ABCMC Annual Meeting

**December 12**—ABCMC's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Advent and Christmas Music Festival, Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago, 3 p.m.

## POSITION OPENING

### ***Youth Program Assistant***

The Youth Program Assistant (YPA) at Lake Street Church provides organizational and programmatic support to our Middle School & High School Youth Programs. This includes coordinating communication with youth participants and their families; maintaining event calendars; sharing information with volunteers; and encouraging youth participation.

Required skills include:

- strong communication skills, utilizing a variety of media;
- experience coordinating, planning and organizing events;
- attention to detail;
- experience and enthusiasm for working with youth.

Salary is \$18 - \$20/hour, commensurate with prior experience and qualifications. Weekly workload varies from 4-8 hours, based on scheduled activities; monthly schedule will range from 20-25 hours.

Applicants must submit a cover letter, resume, and three references to Rev. Ann-Louise Haak. Materials may be submitted electronically ([alhaak@lakestreet.org](mailto:alhaak@lakestreet.org)) or in hard copy (Lake Street Church, 607 Lake Street, Evanston, IL 60201). For more information about our congregation, please visit [www.lakestreet.org](http://www.lakestreet.org).

The Metro Chicago *eWind* is an electronic communication intended for the people of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. The events publicized herein do not necessarily express the opinions of the American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago. We email the newsletter each Wednesday. We welcome your news, prayer requests and comments. Please email your communications to the editor, Lynne Kelley, at [lynne@abcmc.org](mailto:lynne@abcmc.org). If you spot a typographical error or other mistake in *eWind*, please let us know at the ABCMC office, 773-804-1655. The ABCMC office is at 7035 W. Grand Avenue, Suite 102, Chicago, Illinois 60707



Vol VIII no. 17, August 21, 2009

### **Thinking Theologically About the Common Good**

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

#### **"Is Defense Enough?"**

Reading the pep talk at the end of the Letter to the Ephesians, one could get the impression that the Christian game plan is all defense.

The writer (or writers) of this Epistle, penned in the name of the Apostle Paul, tells members of the Company of Christ that they should put on the

“whole *armor* of God” and then adds “so that you may be able *to stand against* the wiles of the devil.”

Sounds like a defensive strategy to me.

And that’s confirmed by most of the rest of this concluding section of the letter. (See 6: 10-17) There’s reference, for example, to putting on the breastplate of righteousness, and fastening the belt of truth, and using the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation.

One can suppose that the defensive tactic being proposed here is specific to the particular battle being fought: not, on this occasion, by the enemies made of flesh and blood (which in Jesus’ ministry were real and serious enough) but “against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of the present evil age, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (v. 12)

Against these enemies an offensive strategy won’t work. Just rely on defense in these circumstances.

Doesn’t that resonate in some ways with our contemporary circumstances?

OK, I grant that in the current health care debate we are, in the end, talking about the enemies of “flesh and blood” — that is, about what kind of health care system and its financing will allow us to fight the forces of disease, the enemies that are as real as the H1N1 flu virus that could kill millions of human beings across the globe, including our own country, before the end of this year.

And yet it is hard to avoid the conclusion that something larger, more powerful and systemic, almost cosmic and spiritual, is at stake.

At issue fundamentally is whether the flesh and blood matters of health and health care are to be treated *spiritually* as commodities upon which corporate profits are to be gained, even if the supposed commodity of health can’t be secured by all, or can’t be secured by millions of people. Or, alternatively, are the flesh and blood matters of health and health care to be treated *spiritually* as something so essential that all human beings must have it as a necessary condition of their very humanity and their participation in the human community.

That seems to me to be pretty systemic (having to do with rules and rulers, with authority and authorities), and maybe even cosmic. Depending on which side you come down on, there are understandings of the reality of evil itself at stake.

Sadly, from my own Christian perspective at least, most of the debate going on right now is not between those who understand health to be a commodity that can be bought and sold for financial gain versus those who understand health to be an essential dimension of human existence whatever the cost. Rather, the current debate seems to be largely taking place among those who

have already chosen to treat health as a commodity, with the contending issues confined to what limitations ought to apply to the profit-making so that more health consumers can purchase the health care commodity.

The question, then, if I've got the terms of the current debate right, is whether the defensive strategy outlined at the end of Ephesians is sufficient. Can Christians — those who believe that the God revealed decisively in Jesus Christ is the One who gives up the Divine Self out of love and care for the world and the One who invites human beings to find their authentic humanity in their mutual love and care for one another and for the world that, in the end, belongs to God — can Christians simply engage in a strategy of self-protection against the spiritual forces of evil operating in our current age?

Or have I not done justice to the passage from Ephesians?

There is, after all, reference to putting on shoes that will make Christians ready “to proclaim the gospel of peace.” (v. 15) And just two verses later, we are told to take up “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (v. 17)

To be sure, running to proclaim a gospel of peace seems to be in tension with wielding a sword of the Spirit; but that gospel of peace has its grounding in the word of God — a word, a truth, a reality about a God who is not self-protective or defensive, but goes on offense to love and care for, to reconcile and redeem, a divided and diseased and dying world.

That's more than sufficient to make me believe that a defensive strategy is not enough for the Company of Christ today. Against all of those who continue to believe spiritually that health is a commodity to be bartered, it's time for us, with the sword of the Spirit, to go on the offensive.

Perhaps, when it comes to contesting the forces of evil arrayed against our humanity and our relationship with God and one another, when it comes not only to our own flesh and blood matters, but to those of our fellows as well, especially the weaker among them, we need to be on the offensive, even at the risk of being offensive.

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