

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

October 21, 2009



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ABCMC NEWS

174th Annual Meeting

ANNOUNCEMENT
The 174th Annual Meeting of the
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF METRO CHICAGO
Saturday, November 14, 2009
North Shore Baptist Church
5244 N. Lakewood, Chicago

8:30 – 3:00 p.m.

A HISTORIC MISSION RENEWED: THE IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE CHALLENGE

Guest Speaker: Miguel De La Torre

Professor of Social Ethics and Director of the Justice and Peace Institute
Illiff School of Theology



One of the most important voices in contemporary theological ethics, Dr. De La Torre is the author of over a dozen groundbreaking books including *Doing Christian Ethics from the Margins*, *Reading the Bible from the Margins*, and most recently *Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration* (Orvis Books).

The discussion of the theme in the morning of this annual meeting will prepare us for a year (2010) devoted to a pressing issue that has a proud history among American Baptists in Chicago and one that now calls us to a renewed biblically-grounded, theologically-informed, and socially responsible commitment to do justice in our congregations, region and society.

The luncheon will be prepared by our newly arrived Karen sisters and brothers from Burma/Myanmar and will include a program of recognitions, presentations, and fellowship, followed by the annual business meeting.

Register for the annual meeting by calling or leaving a message for Tony Rake at the ABCMC office: 773-804-1655 or tony@abcmc.org.

Thinking Theologically

ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield writes a biweekly column for the electronic newsletter of Protestants for the Common Good (PCG). Larry's latest column, "Sharing from the Same Cup," appears at the end of this issue of *eWind*. Larry's columns are always biblical and insightful. The other items in PCG's newsletter are also well worth reading. For more information about subscribing to PCG's newsletter, *The Common Good Network*, visit PCG's web site, www.thecommongood.org.

Christian, Jewish and Muslim Leaders Support Health Care Reform with Public Health Insurance Option

Leader: O God, you have called us to your high standard of compassion and justice for all, but we have not met our obligation to you and those who needlessly suffer and die in our nation because they lack adequate, affordable, and accessible health care.

People: Forgive us, we pray.

Leader: O God, you have placed us in a democracy in which we, the people, can call on our political leaders to act on behalf of compassion and justice for all, but we have not exercised our capacity as citizens to demand that quality health care be accessible and affordable for everyone.

People: Forgive us, we pray.

Leader: O God, you promise not only to forgive us but also to renew and redeem us for your work of compassion and justice. Grant us, we pray, not only that renewal and redemption, but also your empowerment so that, in our democracy, needless suffering and death, callous greed and indifference, heartless inhumanity and injustice will end, and that we as a people will again find favor in your sight.

People: In your mercy, O God, hear our prayer. Amen.

With this prayer of confession a congregation of Christians, Jews and Muslims joined together at the Chicago Temple this past Monday to express their sorrow about our nation's broken health care system and their commitment to persuading elected leaders to bring about systemic reform that includes a public health insurance option.



ABCMC's Executive Minister Larry Greenfield was one of the leaders of this interfaith service of prayer, scripture readings and commitment. Other leaders were Rabbi Bruce Elder, Congregation Hakafa; Rev Arlene W. Christopherson, Northern Illinois Conference of the United Methodist Church; Imam Ahmed Murad, Sound Vision; and Rev. Alexander Sharp, Protestants for the Common Good.

Following the service and a time of questions and answers, participants walked to the Federal Building to deliver over 1,000 letters signed by religious leaders and other members of Chicago congregations to the office of Senator Richard Durbin. This letter was originally written, signed and sent in September to Chicago's congressional delegation by the Chicago Council of Religious Leaders. Copies of the letter were delivered again in hopes of convincing Senator Durbin to support reform with a strong public health insurance option. The text of the letter, signed by 21 heads of communions and theological seminaries, appears below:

A LETTER TO THE ILLINOIS DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS FROM LEADERS OF RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Dear Congresspersons and Senators:

As leaders of major faith traditions across the Chicago region, we write to urge you to support, to publicly advocate on behalf of, and to vote for – during this congressional session – legislation that guarantees high quality, accessible, and affordable health care for every U.S. resident.

The very notion that our nation can continue to deny such fundamental health care provisions to its residents is disgraceful and alarming. In a country with the best medical schools, the best doctors, and best medical resources, we must be able to offer quality health care to all of our residents.

Even more importantly, it is simply immoral for a nation of our wealth and our ethical standing in the world to continue to have so many millions – *millions* – of people uninsured and underinsured.

The diverse religious traditions we represent have a long history – beginning in our sacred texts – of commitment to health and healing for all who are suffering. We will continue to do our part.

But we are also compelled by our faiths to hold our government, our democracy, accountable for its responsibility to assure that all people receive the health care they all require. That cannot be health care that is a discretionary commodity to be purchased if income permits or by chance of employment benefits. That quality health care must be treated as an essential public good that every resident must have in order to participate in and contribute to our common life as a nation.

We, therefore, urge that you only favor legislation that:

- Provides quality, affordable, and accessible health care to everyone, irrespective of whether or where they work or how much they earn.
- Provides for the elimination of insurance industry's ability to deny coverage based on a person's past medical history or pre-existing conditions.
- Provides for a public health insurance option in order to encourage competition, keep costs affordable for all, and make sure that no one has to face the prospect of losing their insurance.

We believe this is a critical, once in a generation, opportunity to inaugurate an ethical system of health care in our nation – one that has been, tragically, too long delayed. We plead for your vigorous and vocal support for a transformation in health care that does justice to our claim to be a government of, by, and *for* the people.

We write to you in our own names, not on behalf of the religious communities we lead; but we would also welcome the opportunity to share with you, at your request, the official statements from our various faith communities on health care reform.

Fall Dinner

The Cook County Jail Ministry's annual fall dinner will take place on Saturday, November 7 at 6 p.m. The event will be at the First Baptist Church of Oak Park, 820 Ontario Street, Oak Park. Valet parking will be available.

All are invited to come and participate in this evening of fellowship, prayer and music, as well as a delicious meal. All tickets are to be purchased at the door. The cost is \$15 per adult or \$5 per child under 12. A table for 8 will cost \$100.

Be sure to attend this event and support this important ministry with inmates at the Cook County Jail.

NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS

South Church Craft Fair

Find great gifts for friends, family and yourself. Crafts, jewelry, food and more will be available.. The 2nd Annual South Church Craft & Vendor Fair is Saturday, November 14th from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Call 847-253-0501 or email mciske@earthlink.net for details. The South Church is at 501 S. Emerson Street, Mount Prospect.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Understanding the Foreclosure Process: Property Research

Neighborhood organizations know that foreclosures are affecting their communities, but that knowledge barely scratches the surface when those organizations want to help. How do I find foreclosed homes? Who owns the buildings? What is its legal status? How many units? What would it cost to acquire? Veteran trainers Teresa Prim of the Prim Lawrence Group and Erica Pascal of Hispanic Housing will tackle these questions and more at this first in a series of Chicago Rehab Network (CRN) trainings that take on the pressing issue of returning foreclosed homes to the market and restoring neighborhoods.

This workshop is sponsored by The Private Bank.

Understanding the Foreclosure Process: Property Research will be held **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30th from 9:00 am until Noon**. RSVP below for more details!

Save your seat today! RSVP to Andy: andy@chicagorehab.org or call our office at 312-663-3936.

Vigil for Financial Justice

Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL) is organizing a prayer vigil and then participating in a larger coalition march for bank accountability when the American Bankers Association comes to Chicago for their national convention October 27. Those of us who are free at 10 a.m. on the 27th are invited to participate.

Information about the rally says,

Banks took **\$15,000 for every man, woman and child** in the U.S.
The top six banks **raked in \$30 billion in profits** in the first half of 2009.
Yet ordinary Americans are still struggling to stay afloat...
Unemployment is at its highest rate in 26 years.
Every thirteen seconds another American home goes into **foreclosure**.

Tell the Big Banks to Fix What They Broke!
Prayer Vigil and Rally
Tuesday, October 27, 10:00 a.m.
Michigan and Wacker, Chicago

For more information or to RSVP contact Will Tanzman at (312) 402-0572 or tanzman@soulinchicago.org

ABCUSA NEWS

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

Are You Going to the Black Church Conference?

Are you and/or others from your congregation planning to attend the Black Church Conference on November 3-7? Information about the event has been in *eWind* for a number of weeks. If you need the information still, please visit www.ABCPowerConnection.org. You don't have to be African-American to attend. Scholarships are available for American Baptist pastors. Call 1-800-AC-#USA, ext. 2446.

If your church's youth are planning to attend the Saturday program (November 8), please be in touch with Pastor Jesse Brown of the First Baptist Church of Chicago. His email address is pastordude60304@yahoo.com, and his cell phone number is 773-213-3274.

Pastor Jesse has an electronic version of the Youth Leader's Pre-registration form that he can send you. On that form, please list each youth and adult attendee. Please make your check or money order payable to National Ministries.

Here are the pick-up sites for folks coming to the Saturday program on November 7:

- North Side—Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Road
- West Side—New Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church, 4301 W. Washington Boulevard
- South Side—Third Baptist Church, 1551 W. 95th Street

Pastor Jesse will need the head count from your church, to ensure that he has arranged for enough buses at each pick-up site. Please call to let him know the number.

If members of your church want to be Conference Volunteers, Pastor Jesse can provide information for staffing needs. Each volunteer must fill out the Registration Form. Volunteer Orientation will be on Sunday, November 1 at 6 p.m. and Monday at 7 a.m. at the Holiday Inn, 500 Holiday Inn Plaza Drive, Matteson. If you need brochures, please contact Jesse.

Fighting for Reform of Faith-Based Initiatives

This week, the New York Times wrote an editorial (http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/14/opinion/14wed4.html?_r=2) in support of a letter sent by the Baptist Joint Committee and 57 other groups (http://www.bjconline.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2871&Itemid=112) to Attorney General Eric Holder. The [letter](#) asks the Department of Justice to reverse a 2007 memo that could open the door for religious discrimination when hiring for jobs funded with federal money.



On Tuesday, BJC Executive Director Brent Walker met with President Barack Obama's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships (http://www.bjconline.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2951) as part of his work on the task force charged with reforming the Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Walker and others are working to make sure safeguards are in place to protect religious liberty. Their complete list of recommendations will be finalized by February 2010.

MINISTERS COUNCIL NEWS

Come to Orlando

All ABC clergy are encouraged to attend the ministry renewal convergence **Together in the Lord** January 4-7, 2010 in Orlando, Florida. This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to rest, relax and renew. It will also be an unbeatable learning opportunity.

Workshop leaders will include Alan Bearman exploring "Core Baptist Principles in the Twenty First Century," Shane Claiborne on "Creating Christian Community in the Church Today," Mayra Castañeda speaking of "Today's Christian Education: Its Challenging Possibilities" and Trinetta McCray with "Lift Every Voice: Vocation and Calling as Discipleship Ministry."

The event will take place at the newly renovated Wyndham Orlando Resort. The resort offers a lush, tropical setting as well as shuttle service to area theme parks.

For more information, a downloadable brochure and online registration, please go to <http://www.ministerscouncil.org/Together%20in%20the%20Lord/TITLinfo.aspx> The deadline for registration is November 2, 2009.

Together in Ministry Application Deadline Approaching

All applications for 2010 covenant group grants are due in the national Ministers Council office by October 31, 2009. If you have not yet submitted your applications to your constituent Ministers Council officers please do so TODAY! Applications to the national office must come from constituent Councils and be postmarked by October 31, 2009. Application forms may be found on www.ministerscouncil.org under the Together in Ministry link. In order to be considered, please complete the form online and print it out. Applications must be received by mail and NOT by email or FAX. For applications click on this link: <http://www.ministerscouncil.com/TogetherInMinistry/TIMApplication.aspx>

HEALTH CARE NEWS

Campaign for Better Health Care 20th Anniversary and Annual Meeting

The Illinois Campaign for Better Health Care is observing its 20th anniversary with special events at its annual meeting November 18-20. The entire program will take place at Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 N. Orleans, Chicago.

[Sponsorship](#) and [ad book opportunities](#) are available for all these events! Combined [tickets](#) (both Wednesday's Illinois Gubernatorial Candidate Debate and Thursday's Illinois Health Care Forum) are available for \$65. [Order yours today](#), or contact [Kathleen Duffy](#) at (312) 913-9449. Tickets will cost \$65 Separate \$25 tickets for the debate may be purchased for \$25 if you can't attend the whole program.

Illinois Gubernatorial Candidate Debate

On Wednesday, November 18 from 3-5 p.m. there will be a debate among candidates for the governor of Illinois. Elizabeth Brackett (NewsHour, PBS) will moderate a debate focused on health care in Illinois with Gov. Quinn (confirmed), Dan Hynes (confirmed), State Sen. Bill Brady (invited), State Sen. Kirk Dillard (invited), and Andy McKenna (invited). Candidates will discuss how to implement federal reforms in Illinois, how to address the gaps in federal reform plans, how to protect existing programs, and how to manage revenue needs.

The event will take place at Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 N. Orleans, Chicago. Tickets will cost \$25. Seats are limited.

CBHC's Illinois Health Care Roundtable Reception

From 6 to 7:30 p.m. on November 18, following the gubernatorial candidate debate, there will be a reception. This event will be at the same location with a national health care reform leader as special guest.

Illinois Health Care Forum

CBHC's annual meeting will include a Health Care Forum on Thursday, November 19 from 9 a.m. to noon. National health care leaders and representatives from a diverse group of state and national organizations come together for a morning forum to discuss the status of federal health care reform, what still needs to happen to carry us to victory, and what needs to happen in Illinois in 2010.

The forum will take place at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 N. Orleans, Chicago. Tickets for this event only will cost \$50, or admission to the forum will be covered with the purchase of a ticket for the whole two days of events.

PEACE NEWS

Community Forum

The film *Drugs and Death at Bagram* tells the story of a young American military man in Afghanistan. On July 12, 2004 Army Specialist John Torres was found dead in a latrine at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan. He had a single gunshot wound in his head. His death was ruled a suicide, but members of his unit and family believed he was murdered.

Initial information that the family received led them to believe that U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan may have killed John for talking openly about heroin use among his fellow soldiers. Shortly before his death he had called his father, Juan Torres, from Afghanistan, and he was overwhelmed with fear. He was distraught because of rampant drug abuse, drug dealing and trafficking inside the army base. Since the day in 2004 when the young man was found dead, his father has been fighting to uncover the truth. This documentary film presents part of the discovery.

John Torres was right to be concerned about the substance abuse he witnessed all around him, even though military officials deny that it is taking place. Soldiers who come home addicted are reluctant to talk about it, even after they have been discharged from their military duties. The effects of using opiates while at war are lasting effects for individuals and their loved ones, and ultimately for American society. John did not use opiates, however. His death was, in all likelihood, related to another matter that the military does not want us to know about.

We are invited to attend a showing (the Chicago area premier) of the film hosted by the Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project (www.nwsubpep.org). It will be shown on **Friday, December 18 at 7 p.m. at the Arlington Heights Memorial Library, 500 N. Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights**. A discussion will follow the viewing of the film (<http://drugsanddeathatbagram.com/index.html>). Juan Torres, father of John Torres, will be at this event and will participate in conversation with us. Juan suggests that we read an article from a recent issue of the *Chicago Reader*. The article, "Lost to Larium," can be viewed at <http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/lost-to-larium/Content?oid=1201006>. A flier for the event is attached with this issue of *eWind*. Please print, post, and share this flier. There will be no charge for this event.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for world peace.

Please remember in prayer ABC missionary Chuck Shawver, serving in Mexico. His birthday is October 25.

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

Please pray for ABC missionaries and physicians David and Laura Parajón serving in Nicaragua. David is an internist and Laura is a family physician. Their ministry to serve the poor focuses on health, hope and healing.

Please lift up in prayer ABC Global Consultant Dan Buttry. Dan trains church and community leaders in conflict transformation skills, utilizing experiential education methodologies and Bible study.

Please hold in prayer those individuals and families dealing with loss of employment.

Please pray for our denomination, region and congregations who are trying to do more with less in the current economic situation.

CALENDAR

October 27—Prayer Vigil and Rally for Financial Justice, Michigan and Wacker, 10 a.m.

October 31—Deadline for Together in Ministry applications to be received in the national office.

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

November 8—Cook County Jail Ministry fall dinner, First Baptist Church, 820 Ontario Street, Oak Park, 6 p.m.

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

November 14—ABCMC 174th Annual Meeting, North Shore Baptist Church, 5244 N. Lakewood Avenue, Chicago. See above article for more information.

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

December 18—Community Forum hosted by Northwest Suburban Peace and Education Project, Arlington Heights Memorial Library, 500 N. Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights, 7 p.m. Special guest: Juan Torres, father of an American soldier who died in Afghanistan in 2004.

January 4-7—Together in the Lord ministry renewal conference, Orlando, Florida. Please go to <http://www.ministerscouncil.org/Together%20in%20the%20Lord/TITLinfolpage.aspx> for online registration and more information.

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

THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT THE COMMON GOOD

by the Rev. Larry Greenfield

"Sharing from the Same Cup"

Health care legislation has finally reached the Senate for action. It's been a long wait, since the relevant committees in the House of Representative took their action quite a while back.

And now, of course, the issue comes down to money. Who is going to pay? And how much?

I'm sorry, but did you think I was referring to legislation on health care reform that passed the Senate's Finance Committee with just one affirmative Republican vote — the proposal that would reshape how health care in the United States could be financed so that a lot more people would have access to it?

Reasonable mistake.

But I was actually referring to the health legislation that has a far larger and longer impact, and one that will, in the end, cost a lot more.

In the Senate it's called "Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act," although in the House it went by the "American Clean Energy and Security Act" back months ago when that chamber considered it. They could just as well have added "Global Health" to those titles.

What both bills do is limit carbon emissions that cause global warming and set efficiency and renewable energy standards far into the future for our nation. That's the good part.

One important point where the two bills differ is being crystal clear about who ends up paying for this, and how much. What's clear in both bills is that energy costs are going to rise. So the question is whether people who are in or right on the edge of poverty will have to pay for the rising costs at the same rate as those who are somewhat or a lot better off. The bill that the House of Representatives passed made specific provisions for those at the lower end of the economic spectrum. So far, the Senate bill contains only rhetoric in that direction — and we all know what happens when only rhetoric rules.

So people of faith and conscience who are concerned about economic justice have their assignment for contacting their Senators and making sure that the Senate legislation is as specific as the House's in making allowances for the poor and near poor.

It's a way of assuring that we are all drinking from the same cup in terms of the actual impact of this important legislation on everyone's economic well-being.

Something similar operates on a global scale as this U.S. environmental legislation and other U.S. environmental policies are brought to an international summit in Copenhagen in December.

The so-called "developed nations" have been taking advantage of a free ride on greenhouse gas emissions for decades and centuries — during those times, that is, when the problem of global

warming was not a recognized problem virtually anywhere. These nations have profited enormously from that free ride — which explains, in part, why they are so far ahead economically over other less-developed nations.

But now every nation has to be a part of reducing emissions and slowing global warming, since every nation would face disaster if nothing is done. The painful price has to be paid for those near-and-long-term actions.

Yet how could we seriously entertain the notion that poor and near-poor nations should bear on an equal basis with us the challenge we collectively face, given all the benefits the so-called developed nations have reaped over the decades and centuries?

To their credit, the so-called developing nations have let it be known that they aren't about to sign on to a treaty that would help the whole world address global warming unless they receive major assistance from the so-called developed nations.

And, to their credit, the so-called developed nations have said they agree.

But so far, it's all rhetoric – and we all know that happens when only rhetoric rules.

So people of faith and conscience who are concerned about both environmental and economic justice have still another assignment in these coming weeks: it is to make absolutely certain that our own country takes the lead in making specific and just proposals for funding an international program of action on the environment. That means contacting Senators and Representatives, as well as the White House, to insist that justice be done on our part, and in our advocacy toward other so-called developed nations.

In the Gospel of Mark (chapter 10, vv 35–40), a couple of the disciples ask Jesus for the favor of being seated by him when he enters into his glory — one on his right side and the other on the left. Jesus, in the end, tells the two disciples that it isn't up to him to make the seating arrangements at that glorious time to come. But what he does have the right to ask is whether the disciples are willing and able to drink from the same cup as he will drink on this side of glory.

That involves, Jesus suggests, making the self-sacrifices that will be costly in order that others will be served and saved.

The disciples, without fully knowing what this means, indicate that they are, indeed, willing and able to drink from the same cup.

I suspect those of us who are followers of Jesus today are in somewhat the same situation — not knowing exactly all that's at stake for us in advocating for justice on issues such as global warming. But at the very minimum it would seem to involve recognition that "sharing the same cup," not just with Jesus but with our fellow citizens of the world, requires some exceptional sacrifice, especially for those of us who have been able to avoid that sacrifice for so long.

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