

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 22, 2010



“You whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners,
saying to you, ‘You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off’;
do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.”
Isaiah 41:9-10

IN THIS ISSUE

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE MINISTER 2

ABCMC NEWS 2

Special Prayer Request for Iris Morales, American Baptist Missionary 2

Thinking Theologically 2

Ministers Council Fall Retreat 3

NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS 4

Lake Street Church Searching for Interim Minister 4

ABCUSA NEWS 5

Deadline Extended For Haitian Nationals to Seek Temporary Protected Status 5

Asian American Baptist Conference And Caucus Offer Inspiration And Enrichment 6

PRAYER REQUESTS 7

ABC CALENDAR 7

THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT THE COMMON GOOD..... 8

Losing the Lord’s Prayer 8

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE MINISTER

Over the next several days a number from our region will be heading west to attend the Baptist World Alliance meetings in Hawaii, and some of our sister and brother Baptists will be touching down in Chicago en route to those meetings. On Saturday, for example, I'll be hosting (on your behalf) 19 Baptists from Nagaland. For those attending from Chicago, we know you will represent us well.

But that makes me think that we have our own Baptist World Alliance in Chicago, at least in potential -- that is, all kinds of Baptists from all sorts of lands that should be more in alliance. That's something to think about and work on.

Let me know what you think.

In the cause of the Evangel,

Larry

ABCMC NEWS

Special Prayer Request for Iris Morales, American Baptist Missionary

Dear friends,

Many of you are aware that Iris Morales, American Baptist missionary in Bolivia, has been having serious health problems for several years and that she discussed her journey with cancer in her last online journal (copied below). With her family's permission, we want to share with you that Iris is now in critical condition at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston Texas. Please join us in praying for Iris and for Mario and their sons.

Yours in Christ,

Reid Trulson, ABC-USA

Thinking Theologically

In this week's *Thinking Theologically*, Executive Minister Larry Greenfield reflects forgiveness, the Lord's Prayer, and our society today, starting on page 8 of this eWind.

Ministers Council Fall Retreat



AN INVITATION TO JOIN US AT OUR FALL GATHERING

"Becoming a Stronger Spiritual Leader: Why Discipline Matters"

DATE: Monday, September 13, 2010
TIME: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. with dinner to follow
PLACE: Third Baptist Church of Chicago
Heritage Plaza Banquet Facility
1500 West 95th Chicago, IL
Free Parking in church parking lot
COST: * Members \$45.00 Non-Members \$75.00

FACILITATOR: Rev. Dr. Thomas Aldworth, Pastor
Morgan Park Baptist Church

Pastor Thomas Aldworth became pastor of Morgan Park Baptist Church in June, 2008. He served 33 years as a Franciscan priest before being led to marriage and ministry as a Baptist. He has served as a pastor in Louisiana, Ohio and downtown Chicago. He holds a Master of Divinity Degree; a Master Degree in Counseling and a Doctor of Ministry Degree in Spirituality. He is an award-winning author and a third degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do. He and his wife Beth live near the church.



HOW TO REGISTER

Step 1: Complete the registration form below and mail the form and your registration fee by **August 31st** to:

Rev. Carol Jamieson Brown
107 Westwood
Park Forest, IL 60466-1333

Step 2: If you have Internet access, please send an e-mail to pastorcarolbfc@yahoo.com indicating your plan to attend.

** A limited numbers of grants are available for those who wish to attend but are unable to pay. Please send your request to Carol Jamieson Brown at pastorcarolbfc@yahoo.com.*

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number to Reach You: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Number for Dinner: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee(s) enclosed:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Member(s) \$45.00 ea.; \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Member(s) \$75.00 ea.

*Please return this form and fee(s) by August 31<sup>st</sup> per the instructions above.*

President Carol Jamieson Brown - Past President Doug Harris  
Vice-President Wesley Sun - Secretary Rony Reyes - Treasurer Lynne Kelley

# NEWS FROM ABCMC CONGREGATIONS

## *Lake Street Church Searching for Interim Minister*

With Pastor Bob Thompson decision to step down as the senior pastor of Lake Street Church this coming fall, a search committee is hard at work to find an interim almost as spectacular as Bob. The announcement and position description are posted below. If you know experienced pastors who should be considered, please pass this material on to them and/or let the committee know of their talents.

Larry

### Job Opening **Interim Minister**

Lake Street Church of Evanston, Illinois is seeking a full-time Interim Minister to serve our theologically liberal, uniquely fabulous, socially progressive, and welcoming and affirming congregation beginning in November 2010. Interested parties are encouraged to explore the church's website, [www.lakestreet.org](http://www.lakestreet.org), where the full job description and directions for applicants can be found (also included below) and to contact [betsywilson@gmail.com](mailto:betsywilson@gmail.com) with any questions.

### Job Opening **Interim Minister**

Lake Street Church of Evanston is seeking a full-time Interim Minister to serve our theologically liberal, socially progressive, and welcoming and affirming congregation beginning in November 2010 through the search process and installation of a new Senior Pastor. The Interim Minister will have primary responsibility for preaching and worship leadership, will manage and lead the LSC staff, and provide support and guidance for the congregation as we thoughtfully refine our understanding of our identity and develop a vision for our future. Interested parties are encouraged to explore the church's website, [www.lakestreet.org](http://www.lakestreet.org), where the church Covenant and other pages provide more information about the theology, history, and life of the community.

This opening comes as a result of the retirement of the Senior Minister who has served Lake Street Church for 30 years, alongside an Associate Minister who has been serving for the past seven years. Under this leadership, the church has developed an inquiring spirituality, an appreciation of contemplative and mystical traditions of Christianity, and an engagement in social justice ministries. It is an intellectually vigorous congregation that draws upon the spiritual resources of many traditions and celebrates the common ground shared with other faith traditions.

The Interim Minister will be an experienced pastor with a well-developed sense of pastoral and personal identity to provide calm, thoughtful, and flexible leadership through this period of change. Strong skills in preaching, listening, communicating, networking, discernment, facilitating small groups, and conflict resolution are necessary. The ability to facilitate the congregation's self study through a variety of means is important, including in that discovery process our relationship with our denomination, American Baptist Churches U.S.A.

The Interim Minister reports to the General Board. The Interim Minister will not be a candidate for the permanent Senior Minister position.

#### **Specific Responsibilities Include:**

- Preaching and worship leadership of the church in conjunction with the Associate Minister, including special services and ceremonies throughout the year. (The Associate Minister preaches 20% of the sermons, spread out during the year.)
- Provide regular administrative oversight and direction to the five church staff members, with the goal of supporting or enhancing their ability to serve the ministries of the church without changing

the basic staff configuration.

- Provide pastoral care to the congregation, with the assistance of the Associate Minister, both directly and indirectly. This includes working with the Deacons and responding to e-mail and voice mail.
- Provide support to committees (with Associate Minister) and attend Board meetings.
- Work with the Associate Minister and the Board to present Lake Street Church to the larger community for general communication and to encourage inquiry from potential new members.
- Work with the Transition Oversight Team to fulfill the goals of the interim period, which may require leading specific study groups or other activities.

**Qualifications/Education/Experience:**

Ordination in a Protestant denomination and a Masters of Divinity or its equivalent are required. Training in interim ministry and previous experience in interim ministry work is highly recommended. Lake Street Church welcomes applicants of all genders, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and sexual orientation.

**To apply:**

Please submit a cover letter that emphasizes interim-ministry experience and training, a resume, and, if desired, copies of recorded sermons and published articles to:

Lake Street Church  
Interim Minister Search Committee  
607 Lake Street  
Evanston, IL 60201-4412  
or [betsywilson@gmail.com](mailto:betsywilson@gmail.com)

Applications will be reviewed as they are received, and applicants are encouraged to apply as quickly as possible. Interviews will be scheduled in late summer.

## **ABCUSA NEWS**

Visit the American Baptist News Service for complete articles and current ABC-USA news at <http://www.abc-usa.org/Resources/AmericanBaptistNewsService/tabid/79/Default.aspx>

### ***Deadline Extended For Haitian Nationals to Seek Temporary Protected Status***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 7/19/10)**—The Office of Immigration and Refugee Services of American Baptist Home Mission Societies seeks assistance from Haitian American Baptist churches to help spread the news that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has announced an additional 180 days for eligible Haitian nationals to apply for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a relief program launched in response to the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti earlier this year.

The new registration deadline is Jan. 18, 2011.

TPS registration permits eligible Haitian nationals to continue living in the United States and to obtain work authorization for the duration of the program. Waivers of the application fees are available to those who can demonstrate inability to pay.

Since the earthquake in January, the Office of Immigration and Refugee Services of American Baptist Home Mission Societies has partnered with Church World Service and worked closely with the Alliance of Haitian Baptist Church Leaders to provide resources and assistance to Haitian constituents who qualify and wish to apply for TPS.

"I commend USCIS for hearing the needs of displaced Haitians here in the United States and extending the TPS application deadline," says Rev. Aundrea Alexander in American Baptist Home Mission Societies Office of Immigration and Refugee Services. "We will use this additional time to reach more Haitians who have not yet filed for TPS or who have tried to file and encountered difficulties. I encourage all churches and regional offices to get the word out to the community."

For more information, contact Rev. Alexander at [Aundrea.Alexander@abhms.org](mailto:Aundrea.Alexander@abhms.org) or 1-800-222-3872, x2430.

## ***Asian American Baptist Conference and Caucus Offer Inspiration and Enrichment***

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 7/19/10)**—More than 130 people representing 14 different ethnicities gathered in Chicago in June for the Asian Pastors/Seminarians/Young Adults Conference and the Asian American Baptist Caucus Convocation. The conference—"Living in the Present...Facing the Future"—was sponsored by American Baptist Home Mission Societies.

Keynote speaker Rev. Katie Choy-Wong, pastor of New Life Christian Fellowship in Castro Valley, Calif., challenged participants to live life with a perspective that embraces a diversity of cultures. Her message inspired the pastors, seminarians and young adults in attendance to hold on to the faith that each person can accomplish the goals set before them.

The conference training event featured Dr. Jeff Johnson, American Baptist Home Mission Societies' national coordinator of Evangelism and Church Planting, who presented the six different personality styles outlined in his book, "Got Style? Personality-Based Evangelism." The conference also included: testimonies by pastors from different regions; morning devotions by Rev. Wungreiso Valui, pastor of Fort Wayne Baptist Church, which has a Karen Christian Fellowship totaling more than 200 members; and Regina Gonu Lapcevic, an emerging young adult leader from the Indian Telugu Baptist Church of Greater Chicago with a deep passion for second and third generation youth ministries.

Workshops offered enrichment about a variety of topics:

- "Christian Discipleship with Children & Youth" by Rev. David A. Dorapalli;
- "Missional Circle" by Dr. Mar Imsong & Rev. Ben Chan, International Ministries;
- "Balancing Ministry, Family and Church" by Chosen Gloria Chintapalli;
- "Immigration Reform Awareness" by Rev. Manuel de la Fuente;
- "Facilities Planning Skillshop" by Dr. Ben Greene;
- "Sound Congregational Administration" by Rev. Rothang Chhangte;
- "Nextgen Ministries" by Rev. Melanie Mar-Chow;
- "Mosaic Café—A Conversational Café" by Dr. Brenda Halliburton; and
- "Worship Style" by Dr. Biak Mang.

During the Asian American Baptist Caucus Convocation, the Karen Baptist Fellowship in the U.S. and the Chin Baptist Fellowship in America—two networks established by Karen and Chin Baptists—were voted into the Caucus body. The convocation's Friday evening multicultural talent show showcased different ages and cultural groups and provided opportunities for fun and fellowship.

For more information about Asian Ministries, please contact Rev. Florence Li, American Baptist Home Mission Societies' Asian churches strategist at [Florence.Li@abhms.org](mailto:Florence.Li@abhms.org) or 800-222-3872 x2468. For more information about ministries with refugees from Burma, please contact Rev. Rothang Chhangte, American Baptist Home Mission Societies' liaison for Burmese refugees, at [Rothang.Chhangte@abhms.org](mailto:Rothang.Chhangte@abhms.org) or 800-222-3872 x2426.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for Iris Morales, her husband Mario, their two sons Mario Jr. and Benjamin, and for members of the family.

Please pray for “a just and peaceful resolution to the situation between Israel and Palestine.” *General Sec. Medley*

Please pray for all of those affected by and perpetrating violence in Chicago and cities around the country.

Please pray for the people and the environment affected by the BP oil eruption.

Please pray for our country in the midst of the struggle for immigration reform and financial reform.

Please pray for the people of Haiti, the people of Chile, and people around the world who are suffering.

Please pray for world peace.

Please pray for our troops and our government.

Please pray for all persons facing job loss and job searches in the current economy.

Please pray for all children who are homeless and/or hungry.

Please pray for ABCMC staff and all ABCMC churches for effective Christian witness and service in 2010.

## ABC CALENDAR

**June 28 – August 27** – Free Meals, Ages 18 yrs and younger, Mon. – Fri., noon – 1:00 p.m. Irving Park Baptist Church, 4401 W. Irving Park Rd, Chicago

**August 16** – Specialized Ministers’ Meeting at the home of Rev. Connie Stone, 10:30am-1:30pm. More information to come.

**August 19 – 20** – *Women Together, Lifting and Encouraging One Another*, Conference for Female Clergy, New Prospect Missionary Baptist Church, Detroit, MI, [www.abwministries.org](http://www.abwministries.org) for more information.

**September 13** – Ministers Council Fall Retreat, Third Baptist Church of Chicago, 1500 W. 95<sup>th</sup> St. Chicago, IL, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. followed by dinner

**September 14** – One Hope United Charity Golf Outing, go to <http://www.onehopeunited.org/golf/> for more information.

**September 17 – 19** - Annual American Baptist Men/ABBoys – USA Leadership Training Conference 2010, Grotonwood Camp located at 167 Prescott St, Groton, Massachusetts, [www.abmen.org](http://www.abmen.org) for more information.

**June 24 – 26, 2011** – American Baptist Biennial, San Juan, Puerto Rico

# THINKING THEOLOGICALLY ABOUT THE COMMON GOOD

## *Losing the Lord's Prayer*

In Luke's version of Jesus giving the disciples a model of how to pray to God, the itinerant rabbi seems to assume – for that particular society in which he proclaimed and demonstrated the coming Reign of God – an understanding of humanity's moral condition. (Luke 11: 1-13)

Jesus assumes, that is, that human beings are evil.

According to some translations of the 13<sup>th</sup> verse, Jesus tells the disciples, "If you then, who are evil..." and in other translations that phrase is rendered: "As bad as you are..."

No surprise, right? After all, in proclaiming and demonstrating the coming Reign of God, Jesus is contrasting that Divine Domain with the corrupt and sinful nature of not just all human beings individually but also of the whole social, economic, and political character of the then known world.

That's why in the paradigmatic prayer Jesus teaches the disciples he prominently includes the petition to God to "forgive us our sins," as extensive and as deep-rooted as those sins truly are. In Jesus' way of thinking, asking for the forgiveness of sins is as important as the other two petitions: for daily bread to live on and for being saved eternally from the time of judgment.

But what level of human sinfulness, if we can put it that way, does Jesus assume here? Or we could ask more calvinistically: just how depraved does Jesus think human beings and their institutions are?

Well, certainly he thinks they are small and petty, spiteful and self-serving. More to the point: they are deserving of the terrible punishment that is sure to come. That is precisely why God's forgiveness is essential.

Yet in this pericope it is also abundantly clear that for Jesus, despite their sinful condition, human beings have the capacity to do what is expected of them in order to qualify as being human at the very minimum. And it is this capacity to meet the minimal standards that provides human beings, along with the recognition of their own deep sinfulness, an understanding of the abundance of God's mercy.

In the Lord's Prayer itself, for example, Jesus instructs the disciples to pray that God will forgive their sins, as deep and profound as they are, just as human beings forgive the debts that people owe them. Jesus, to be sure, is not here equating human debt-forgiving with God's sin-forgiving – they are of an entirely different order of magnitude. But, Jesus is teaching, if even evil human beings have this capacity to erase the debts owed to them, then imagine how great is the capacity of an entirely good and gracious God to erase the deep and profound sins of human beings.

(By the way, there is not a quid pro quo at stake here either. Jesus is not saying that only if we forgive the debts owed to us will God then forgive us our sins. No, the point again is that we can understand the awesomeness of God's forgiveness of our sins by comparing that divine forgiveness with our measly forgiving of the debts that others owe to us. All we need to do, Jesus says, is ask.)

To make the same point, but in a little more complicated way, Jesus tells the disciples a story about a person who raps on a friendly neighbor's door around midnight to ask for food so a hungry and late-arriving visitor will be able to eat, but gets turned down by the friendly neighbor because his/her house has already been locked up and his/her family is already in bed. But, as the story goes, the person keeps knocking on the friendly neighbor's door and finally the friendly neighbor gives in and provides the needed food, not out of friendship but rather because the friendly neighbor recognizes the basic need for food that must be met and that he/she would be put to shame for not meeting the minimal standards of being human if the food were not to be shared.

In this story the friendly neighbor is not a good person – the friendly neighbor is evil – but the persistent

door-knocker knows that even an evil person can be prevailed upon to do what is necessary to meet a self-evident need. How much more, then, will a good and gracious God respond with forgiveness to our sins if we are in a posture of seeking and searching for that divine forgiveness?

Finally Jesus asks his disciples if any one of them, or anyone they know, would give one of their children a snake if the child asked for a fish, or would give that child a scorpion if the child asked for an egg. Obviously, according to Jesus, no one would do that, even though all human beings are evil – “as bad as we are.” If, then, human beings are all capable of giving “good gifts” to their children, how much more, Jesus asks, will a good and gracious heavenly Parent give us what we need if only we ask?

Jesus paradigmatic prayer and the stories he told to explain the prayer evidently worked in that particular society in which Jesus lived – a society in which it was understood that human beings are evil, but still capable of meeting the minimal criteria for being human: forgiving debts, providing required food for the hungry and hospitality to the visitor, giving children what they ask for and need, etc. He could then draw on that minimal criterion for defining humanity to contrast it with the magnitude of God’s goodness and grace that is available to us just for the asking.

But will that prayer and the accompanying stories work in a particular society – ours – in which the minimal standards of what it means to be human have been downgraded so that families are losing their homes to foreclosure, caused by unscrupulous lenders, and receiving no debt relief from those who could provide help?

Will the prayer and the stories work in a particular society – ours – in which income relief for the unemployed in a disastrous economy is steadfastly opposed by so many politicians, based on their reading of their constituent’s opposition to this humanitarian and economically sensible relief? What minimal standards of being human seem to apply in this instance?

Will the prayer and the stories work in a particular society – ours – in which tax cuts are again proposed for the wealthy but a vocal part of the population and their politicians are demanding that basic human services for those in need be reduced or even eliminated in order to reduce the national deficit and debt? What defines the baseline standards for being human here?

Will the prayer and the stories work in a particular society – ours – in which the stranger, the immigrant, the sojourner is seen as the enemy to be denied not just hospitality but essential human services and basic human rights? How is the lowest possible common denominator of being human established in such cases?

These questions about the viability of the paradigmatic prayer and the accompanying stories are real because, for Jesus, we cannot begin to comprehend the awesomeness of God’s capacity to forgive our deep and profound sins if we do not also have some sense not just of our sinfulness but also our human capacity to do good at a minimal level.

But if the standard of minimal good for being human is set so low as if not to exist at all, how are we ever to contrast the measly human good with the magnificence of God’s goodness in forgiving our sins?

If that is our condition – or if that is increasingly becoming our condition – then we’ll have to admit that it will still be nice to recite that paradigmatic prayer by the itinerant rabbi but that the Lord’s Prayer will be, for all practical purposes, lost to us.

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 Thursday. We welcome your news, prayer requests and comments. Please send them to [office@abcmc.org](mailto:office@abcmc.org). If you spot a typographical error or other mistake in *eWind*, please let us know via email at [office@abcmc.org](mailto:office@abcmc.org).