

Presbytery of Boston

January 2009 E-Connection

Reverse the Curse

By Rodney L. Petersen, Moderator, Presbytery of Boston

Commonly reserved for Fenway Park, this made-in-Boston slogan might carry into our national life. With the election of Barack Obama to the presidency, the United States has “reversed the curse” of 40 years ago.

It was 40 years ago, in 1968 that Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy were assassinated – and the riots of Chicago and other cities ensued. In 2008 Barack Obama delivered an acceptance speech in that same city of uncommon eloquence to the presidency of the United States of America, after an election that might have been a global mandate for leadership.

40 years of wandering in the wilderness has been ended with the challenges of full participation in national political life for Americans of African descent. While political pundits are filling radio talk shows, editorial pages and blogs, we might think how to evaluate theologically the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States, a man with half brothers in Kenya and school mates in Indonesia.

First, his election is certainly a part of an ongoing “rights movement” in western culture that has now caught up the world. Without going all the way back to the struggle of the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Reform, this movement has certainly included such benchmarks as the American Declaration of Independence, the Civil War between the northern and southern states of the United States and the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Such names as John Witherspoon, William Lloyd Garrison and Jacques Maritain and Charles Malik are names that carry a certain degree of theological resonance with each of these events in the evolution of human rights consciousness.

Apart from human rights as a domain in itself, there is, second, the issue of their promotion through national governance, and this with respect to the careful balance in our national polity through checks and balances, of the interests of states’ rights versus national policy. Here, ever since the days of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, compounded by the programs of Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, the rights movement

(Continued on page 2)

has been promoted by means of national policy standing in contrast to states' rights. The governance of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, while not necessarily in opposition to those rights in themselves, has bent toward their promotion or inhibition by states rather than by centralized programming from Washington. While we are a long way from Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and its caution concerning human cupidity, we are not distant from scandal and misrule.

Then there is the question of religion in national life, seen pointedly in Colin Powell's endorsement of Obama and with reference to his faith. Powell's reply to the question of Obama's faith: "*Well the correct answer is, 'He's not a Muslim, he's a Christian, he's always been a Christian'. But the really right answer is, 'What if he is?' Is there something wrong with being a Muslim in this country? The answer is 'No', that's not America.*" This exchange exemplifies and challenges prevailing civil religion in the United States even more so than as recognized by Will Herberg in 1955, drawing in Catholics and Jews into what had once been Protestant hegemony. The likely place for further treatment of this topic will come in Obama's Inaugural Address, January 20, 2009 – and this seems more interesting than even the Red Sox victory in the World Series of 2004, 86 years after "the curse of the Bambino."

Remembering Jimmie Beverly

Elder Jimmie Beverly, of the former John Gloucester Memorial Presbyterian Church, died January 13 after suffering a massive stroke the previous Thursday. Her family surrounded her as she passed from this life into life eternal. Funeral arrangements have yet to be made. But many in the Presbytery knew Jimmie and will mourn her passing.

Family address is the same: 6 Oswald St., Boston, MA 02120-2813

Her mother, Pauline Armstrong, son, James, and daughter, Sherrille, as well as the extended Beverly family, are in need of prayer.

Elder Jimmie Beverly was a staunch Presbyterian who worked tirelessly in the interests of preserving the Gloucester Presbyterian Church. Prior to the church's closing, she was permitted to serve communion. Jimmie was instrumental in the conversations related to merging the Gloucester and Roxbury Churches. She was firm in her conviction that the name of John Gloucester (the first black pastor in the USA) not be lost.

Contact Mary Bailey, mother of Jane Bailey and Yvonne Powell, all of Roxbury, for further information.

Thanks to Alison John and Perry Smith for the above information

Prayer for a New Year

A monthly column for the church-at-large by The Reverend Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

January 2009

Lord, go with us as we travel once again into a new year. It stands before us like an untraveled road, full of promise and adventure. Give us the confidence to know you will be there, whether we travel far or wander on the scenic route.

We acknowledge that we are burdened with the scars and scrapes of the past year. Let them not hinder us from new opportunities to see stars and gifts that point us to a new reality.

Help us to remember the many times in days past when we were full of despair – how you never left our side, but sent your Spirit to quicken our hearts with hope and courage.

We will spend this new year with many people – some will be easy to love and others will be hard to like. Remind us that our witness for you should be that we see all people as your children and relate to them as sisters and brothers in Christ.

Strengthen our hands to do the work of bringing your justice and mercy to this world. Open our ears to the cries of the homeless, the hungry, the sick, and victims of war. Show us new opportunities to serve you with hammers, pots, medicine, and our own presence.

Give us the voice to be a ready witness to the good news of your son Jesus Christ. Break through our polite shyness and help us to share how much your gift of faith means to us. Let our eyes sparkle with the joy of your salvation.

Lord, grant us new vistas of faith. Give us a heart that experiences a mountaintop vision in the midst of our daily work. Show us the Christ in the other and help us to hear the wisdom of those on this pilgrimage with us.

In all things we give you thanks and praise. Amen.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Appeal

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“For surely I know the plans I have for you...to give you a future with hope.” Jer 29:11

All people impacted by the current violence in the Middle East are facing overwhelming humanitarian needs as a result of the continuing violence. The most basic needs—safe shelter, medical care, food, water, electricity—are well beyond the reach of many of

those caught in the crossfire. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is in consultation with our partners in the region to make aid available to those most in need.

When Jesus walked these very lands, by his words and his ministries he told all who would listen to care for: the children, the old, the poor, the sick, the most vulnerable. . . . In this moment of crisis, while leaders strive to find a path to lasting peace, our priority must be caring for those left vulnerable by the violence.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

GIVE to help the PC(USA) and our partners meet the physical needs of those in all the areas where violence leaves them vulnerable, and the emotional and spiritual needs of the many more who have been traumatized by that violence. Mail your church's gift to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Church Remittance Processing, P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700, or give through your congregation's normal giving channels. Write "DR000081-E1" on the check or remittance form so that we can ensure your gift is designated to meet these urgent needs. You can also give online at www.pcusa.org/pda/

PRAY for all those whose lives have been and continue to be affected.

STAY INFORMED with regular updates on the situation, how your church is responding, and to find available worship resources at www.pcusa.org/pda or by calling PresbyTel at 1-800-872-3283.

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

Sara.Lisherness@PCUSA.ORG

PILP

Construction work is going well, but there have been significant changes necessary for the KCB Education and Community Center. This has resulted in an increase in the loan approved by PILP. Investments with PILP designated to support KCB can help reduce their costs by providing an annual rebate on loan payments, which could mean a savings of an additional \$20,000 or more. To reach the next level for a 3/4% rebate an additional \$360,000 in CD investments is needed. Information on investing and current interest rates are included in the packet, and information brochures will be available at the presbytery meeting. Thanks to all of you who have invested on behalf of Roxbury and KCB.

Wayne Parrish

Synod's *Nor'E-News*

The Synod of the Northeast's newsletter can be downloaded from the Synod's website at <http://www.synodne.org/mediagallery/album.php?aid=38&page=1>.

You might consider using it in one or more of the following ways:

1. Print and include with next church newsletter.
2. Attach front and back side by side to one or more bulletin boards.
3. Send as electronic attachment to the church mailing list.
4. Make copies and leave them in prominent places for people to pick up such as in a magazine rack, in the narthex, or at the rear of the sanctuary.
5. Use as bulletin insert on Sunday morning.
6. Print multiple copies for use as placemats during congregational dinners.

The newsletter contains the following articles:

- ✠ Congregations Going Green
- ✠ New Congregations in New England and New Jersey
- ✠ Human Resources that Help Congregations Focus Mission
- ✠ Enough for All Creation: Ecumenical Advocacy Days
- ✠ Valuable Insights in New England PPG Campus Ministry Study

Nancy Lomberk

Presbytery of Boston Meeting Calendar

January

15 – Personnel 12:30, Needham
CEM 6:30, NPC
COM, 7:00, NPC

26 – Presbytery meeting at Quincy Young Sang, Quincy, 7:30 p.m.

February

3 – Nominating 11:30, NPC
5 – COM 7:00, NPC
9 – ICL 3:30, NPC
11 – CPM 5:00
CS&D 7:30
19 – CEM
26 - Council

Prayer Celebrations & Concerns

Prayers for the family of Jimmie Beverly, who passed away earlier this month (see page 2 of the newsletter for more information).

Prayers for Nancy Hollomon, who is recovering from knee surgery.

Prayers for Emadel Ramsay, who is experiencing health problems

Wren Collé asks for your continued prayers for her family, especially for her father, who is now receiving hospice care.

Web Brower took a Designated Pastor position in May 2008 for two yoked congregations in South Dakota. It is a two-year contract with the possibility of renewal or morphing into a regular called position. Web's installation will take place on January 25th.

Ordination Anniversaries

Kevin Ford	1/6/91	18 years
Judson Dolphin	1/14/73	36 years
Ara Heghinian	1/16/94	15 years
David Currie	2/3/85	24 years
Sidney Maxwell	2/5/56	53 years
Abigail Henrich	2/10/02	7 years
Wayne Parrish	2/16/86	23 years
Justus Fennel	2/25/57	52 years
Dennis Friedrich	2/25/79	30 years
Leslie McKinney	2/25/01	8 years
Alice Hageman	3/9/75	34 years
John Malcolmson	3/15/60	49 years
Diane Cusumano	3/16/97	12 years
Susan Gleason	3/26/00	9 years
JoAn Bott	3/27/60	49 years
Hurmon Hamilton	3/29/92	17 years

Congratulations and thank you!

Empowering Leadership Workshop III

Feb. 6-7, 2009

How might pastors and session leaders develop the trust to truly share effective leadership? Alban Institute Consultant Ed White will be with us again to focus on Leadership vs. Management. Last year we viewed 5 Dysfunctions of a Team – summary below. It would be helpful (though not necessary) if sessions could view this before attending. The DVD, book, and study guide are available; just contact the office at 617-244-4766 or presbyteryofboston@verizon.net. Information on the location will be forthcoming. See the January presbytery meeting packet for details and registration forms.

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Dysfunction 1: Absence of Trust

Dysfunction 2: Fear of Conflict

Dysfunction 3: Lack of Commitment

Dysfunction 4: Avoidance of Accountability

Dysfunction 5: Inattention to Results

Upcoming Events

January 25 – Service at 2:00 to celebrate and rededicate the recently renovated sanctuary at **Needham Presbyterian Church**.

February 6-7 – **Empowering Leadership III with Alban Institute Consultant Ed White**. Information about location, time, etc. will be forthcoming.

February 18-19 - *Presbyterian Global Fellowship Winter Gathering* at Peachtree Presbyterian Church. Reggie McNeal will be the featured presenter. Schedule and more details will be updated at www.pgconference.org. East Boston Fund scholarships are available. Contact the Presbytery Office if you are interested or need more details.

March 6-7 – Synod Design Consultation, Stony Point, NY

March 9-11 – “Stewardship Kaleidoscope” Presbyterian Stewardship Conference. Kansas City, MO. See: www.heartlandpby.org/kaleidoscope.

March 13-16 – “*Enough for All Creation*” in Washington D.C. Join us at the 7th annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days, as we explore ways to bring about a world with 'Enough for All Creation'. Learn about the connections between climate change, migration and poverty in the U.S. and around the world. Come together with faith-based advocates and activists from across the United States in the nation's capitol as we discuss the abundance of our world and how it can be allocated in a way that is fair and just for all Creation. Register now at www.advocacydays.org

March 14 – **Discussion of Amendments to the Constitution (Location TBD)**

March 15-18 - "*Conversations on Renewal and Transformation in Mainline Congregations*" with Diana Butler Bass, Marcus J. Borg, and Brian D. McLaren.

Louisville Seminary will welcome this celebrated trio of church leaders/scholars at the Seminary's annual Festival of Theology. Register online.

March 28 – **NE Form of Government discussion group**

(Continued on page 8)

April 23-24 – *Presbyterian Writers' Conference* at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA. For more information, contact Steve McCutchan at steve@smccutchan.com or Twila Belk at twilabelk@mchsi.com.

April 25 – NE PPG

May 16 – **Conflict Resolution Workshop** (Contact David Dorer for more information).

June 2-4 – 2009 Interim Ministry Network Conference, Pittsburgh, PA. See:

<http://www.imnedu.org/>

June 11-13 – *The Big Tent*. Event to feature conferences by ten PC(USA) ministries and groups. (New Website with promotional video just launched at

[https://www.pcusa.org/bigtent/.](https://www.pcusa.org/bigtent/))

Classifieds

Train to Use to the PREPARE/ENRICH Pre-Marital/Marital Counseling

Program Saturday, January 31, 2009 - BU School of Theology (green line); 8:30 a.m.-

4:00 p.m. ; tuition including all materials: \$155 seminarian; \$175 clergy and counselors.

Morning coffee/ baked goods provided, bring your own lunch. Professional seminar director Rev.

Robin Zucker teaches students, clergy and counselors to use a series of respected, religion-neutral counseling programs with pre-marital and marital couples at all stages of relationship. This tool

will expand ministerial competencies, and enrich counseling and family ministry options for years to come. Additional trainings in March (Newton) and May (Cambridge). Information,

registration and on-line payment option at: <http://www.flowingforce.com> Contact the Rev.

Zucker at flowingforce@comcast.net, 978-468-7245.

Mission Project

for your congregation



Eyeglasses and Cell Phones



No longer usable to the owner,
They may be valuable to some one else.

Your congregation can begin the new year
collecting eyeglasses and cell phones.

Eyeglasses will go to Eyes for the Needy
where volunteer opticians evaluate, sort, repair and
eventually make them available to those not able to purchase new
eyeglasses.

Cell Phones will go to an animal shelter
and a facility for aging services.
They will be dismantled, recycled and the money from their sale will support
these agencies.

It's not hard.
Put a box in your church. Advertise that these items are useful to others.
Collect them over a month or two and
Bring them to the March Presbytery Meeting
where these gifts will be dedicated.