



The Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists

# Associational

An Ongoing eNewsletter from the Executive Director

Issue 34 ~ September 1, 2007

## From the Executive Director:

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Good news! We "lack nothing" in our work of advocating for the full inclusion of LGBT-Allied people in the life, mission, and ministries of Baptist congregations!

In Walter Brueggeman's book *Deep Memory Exuberant Hope* is a marvelous chapter entitled, "The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity." Consider these excerpts:

- "The power of the future is not in the hands of those who believe in scarcity and monopolize the world's resources; it is in the hands of those who trust God's abundance" (pg. 71).
- "The gifts of life are indeed given by a generous God. It's a wonder, it's a miracle, it's an embarrassment, it's irrational, but God's abundance transcends the market economy" (pg. 71).
- "And the story of abundance says that our lives will end in God, and that this well-being cannot be taken from us . . . Neither life nor death nor angels nor principalities nor things - nothing can separate us from God" (pg. 72).
- "(Jesus) demonstrated that the world is filled with abundance and freighted with generosity. If bread is broken and shared, there is enough for all. Jesus is engaged in the sacramental, subversive reordering of public reality" (pg. 74).
- "The closer we stay to Jesus, the more we will bring a new economy of abundance to the world" (pg. 75).
- "The creation is infused with the creator's generosity, and we can find practices, procedures, and institutions that allow that generosity to work" (pg. 75).

Herein is AWAB's challenge. . . to find practices, procedures, and institutions that allow God's generosity to work. Because of God's generosity, AWAB will equip new leaders, start new churches, launch new Baptist Youth Camps, engage in new media initiatives, create new vehicles of communication, and host new events that YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS! We lack nothing for the job God has given us to do!

Lovingly,  
Ken Pennings

608-255-2155  
[ken@wabaptists.org](mailto:ken@wabaptists.org)

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## AWAB Mentoring Connections Project

AWAB is starting a Mentoring Project, and we would like to invite you to become a participant in this endeavor. Sixteen churches already have signed on to this project. Our first goal is to try to connect an AWAB church with any church that is in the process of being disfellowshipped, is

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### About Associational

Associational is published monthly by the Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists, an organization of churches, groups and individuals that advocate for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons with Baptist churches.

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Barbara Hulsing, Editor

608-255-2155, [mail@wabaptists.org](mailto:mail@wabaptists.org)  
PO Box 259257, Madison, WI 53725

experiencing a difficult time because of this position, or has just joined AWAB and would like to be connected with another AWAB church. We also are trying to develop ways that we can be supportive of one another. One way is for churches to purchase a candle that will be lit the fourth Sunday of the month in support of a specific church or individual experiencing difficulty because of LGBT issues. I will inform AWAB churches which church/churches or individual(s) to pray for, and that church or individual will be told that this is happening. Churches that are close geographically might want to exchange pulpits, which also might include members of the congregations who could share their activities in promoting the welcoming stance.

Another suggestion has been to connect LGBT seminarians who are seeking ordination and placement with other LGBT-allied professionals for support. Some churches already are doing this.

We are in the infant stages of this Mentoring Connections Project and welcome any ideas you may have for further development. If you would like to participate in this endeavor please contact Betty Detwyler at [bdetwyler@nycap.rr.com](mailto:bdetwyler@nycap.rr.com), by "snail mail" at 2333 Barcelona Road, Schenectady, NY, or by phone at 518-346-6849.

What a wonderful opportunity for us as fellow Christians!

## Rift Over Same-Sex Unions Reflects Battle New to Black Churches

*Washington Post* Staff Writer  
Sunday, August 19, 2007

Never in a "million years" did Robert Renix think he would find a Baptist church that would accept someone like him: a black Baptist gay man. Never mind one that would allow what happened one Saturday last month, when a tuxedo-clad Renix stood in front of the pulpit at Covenant Baptist Church in Anacostia, exchanging vows with his partner, Antonio Long. It didn't turn out to be that simple, though.

About 140 members jammed into the fellowship hall a few weeks later for a tense meeting about the recent decision of Covenant co-pastors Dennis and Christine Wiley to conduct same-sex union ceremonies. Some expressed their opposition through Bible verses, saying they were worried that Covenant was getting a reputation as a "gay church." Others wept as they defended the Wileys, said people who were there. "I don't care who does it in their bedroom with whom," said Yvonne Moore, a longtime member who left the church over the same-sex ceremonies. "But don't bring that foolishness into my church."

Other heterosexual church members defend the Wileys and their actions. "It's never been a traditional church," said Jeffrey Canady, a lifetime member who lives in [Takoma Park](#). "That's the beauty of the church. It has always been at the forefront of change."

The split reflects a tug of war that is developing between a few black churches willing to welcome gays and black denominations that consider homosexuality a sin. For years, disputes over homosexuality have convulsed predominantly white Protestant denominations -- Lutheran, Methodist, Episcopalian and Presbyterian -- but they have only recently hit black churches. "It's going to be a real challenge," said the Rev. Carlton W. Veazey, minister at Fellowship Baptist Church in the District and founder of the annual National Black Religious Summit on Sexuality. "We're just beginning to really deal with it." Most major historically black denominations have taken strong stances against homosexuality.

The National Baptist Convention USA Inc., the nation's largest predominantly black denomination, and the [African Methodist Episcopal Church](#) forbid clergy from officiating at ceremonies for same-sex couples, and Pentecostal denominations such as the Church of God in Christ consider homosexuality a sin. The Progressive National Baptist Convention, of which Covenant Baptist is a member, has not taken a stand on homosexuality or same-sex unions.

The Wileys say the backlash in their church caught them by surprise. For years, they have preached that homosexuality is not a sin. Despite the objections, they performed another same-sex union ceremony Aug. 10, for a lesbian couple.

Covenant Baptist works with the [Human Rights Campaign](#), a gay rights organization, on outreach to black churches and is the only Baptist church listed with the city's Office of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and

Transgender Affairs as being welcoming to homosexuals.

[www.washingtonpost.com/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/).

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## Career Opportunities

### Pastor Position

New Hope Fellowship Church (NHFC) in Dallas, Texas, heartily invites applicants for the position of Pastor. We are an open and inclusive, small, non-denominational, evangelical church located in the heart of the Oak Lawn and Uptown communities.

New Hope is a diverse community that connects people to Jesus Christ through expository Bible teaching, personal study, heartfelt worship, earnest prayer, honest relationships, and care for those in need. **We are a congregation consisting primarily of homosexual men and women who long to spread the gospel to all who seek Him in the Dallas area.** We seek a pastor committed to preaching and teaching, skilled in counseling, passionate for outreach, and eager to seek God's vision with us.

We hope the character of NHFC, as exhibited at <http://www.nhfcdallas.org/>, conveys a community of sincere believers actively seeking the heart of God that matches your ministerial calling. Our passion lies in building up the diverse and integrated Body of Christ.

Interested parties may contact us at [pastorsearch@nhfcdallas.org](mailto:pastorsearch@nhfcdallas.org)

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Associational is a periodic e-newsletter of the Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists, a network of 66 churches and hundreds of individuals who have joined together to advocate for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons within Baptist communities of faith. Please forward this e-newsletter to interested friends. Copy relevant information into your organization's bulletin and newsletter. To subscribe, send an e-mail to [subscribe@wabaptists.org](mailto:subscribe@wabaptists.org) with SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. To be removed from this list, send an e-mail to [unsubscribe@wabaptists.org](mailto:unsubscribe@wabaptists.org) with REMOVE in the subject line. To read back issues of Associational, go to: [www.wabaptists.org/associational.htm](http://www.wabaptists.org/associational.htm).

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