

The Call...

On the Web: www.casp.org

to be one in Christ



Special Edition
August 2009

A Unifying Voice in the Name of Jesus Christ for the Mission of the Gospel and the Wholeness of Communities

Violence Must End! Churches Must Respond!

“Violence is everywhere; it has become a pall of suffering, pain and death over our common journey through life. Daily we are bombarded with the ugly reality,” declared Council of Bishops and Judiciary Executives Chair, Dr. Wayne A. Yost as the leaders of Christian Associates held a press conference at Sixth Mt. Zion Baptist Church, East Liberty on Monday, June 22.

The reality is clear; violence is everywhere, in our urban neighborhoods and small cities, in our supposedly safe suburbs and in our isolated rural communities; and we are both victims and perpetrators! Today, we stand before you to renounce all that promotes and enflames hurtful passions among us.

Pittsburgh television stations KDKA (CBS), WPXI (NBC) and WTAE (ABC) covered the recent anti-violence press conference sponsored by Christian Associates.

The Council was responding to the proposals of the **Coalition Against Violence (CAV)**, a

predominantly African American initiative to address the youthful black on black violence in the region. “We are grateful for the challenge that has been presented to us by the Coalition Against Violence,” commented Rev. John Cook, Executive Secretary, Allegheny Union Baptist Association. “We call upon our constituents, the Christian faithful, to examine their ‘Strategies for Communities of Faith’ (b-pepinfo@b-pep.net or www.gspia.pitt.edu/cav) and find ways in which their congregations might step forward and engage anew their neighborhoods in positive actions to counter the destruction of young lives. We also affirm the efforts of the **Pittsburgh Youth Futures Commission**, led by former US Attorney and Buhl Foundation President

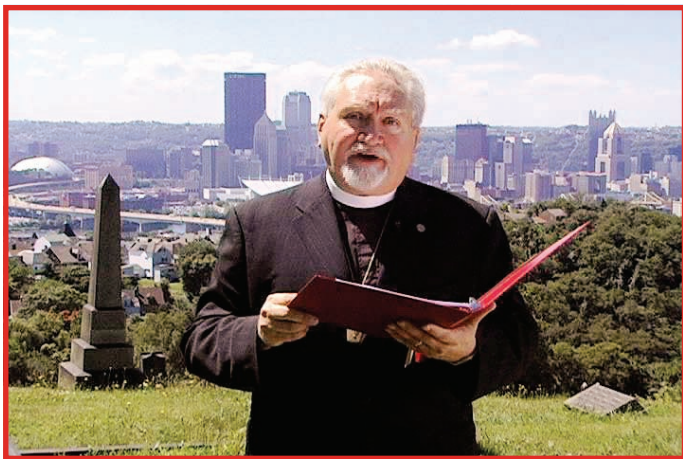
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Rev. John Cook speaks at the press conference.



Reflections Along the Way



We abhor violence not merely as a societal issue, but as central to our witness to God's love for all people.

Dear Siblings in Our Lord,

"...We are engaged in this ministry (of reconciliation) ... All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us this ministry of reconciliation..." (2 Cor. 4:1, 5:18)

On a recent summer morning the following headlines appeared on a local newspaper's website: *Fallowfield woman shoots husband; Driver shot in McKees Rocks; Teen shot to death in McKeesport; Boy 10, punches boy 9 who wouldn't steal smokes for him; Fayette man withdraws plea in newborn's drowning.*

As noted by the Council leaders of Christian Associates, violence is all around us. The presenting issue to the Council was how to respond to African-American initiatives to address youthful black on black violence in Pittsburgh. But as Council Chair, Dr. Wayne Yost noted, "Whatever the reasons, the reality is clear; violence is everywhere, in our urban neighborhoods and small cities, in our supposedly safe suburbs and in our isolated rural communities; and we are both victims and perpetrators!"

Our Christian leaders have issued a call to all of us to respond *"for the Mission of the Gospel and for the Wholeness of Communities."* As the Apostle Paul reminds us, we as disciples of Jesus the Christ are his ambassadors, bearing the good news of forgiveness and peace with God and neighbor to the world. We abhor violence not merely as a societal issue, but as central to our witness to God's love for all people. We are called to be Ambassadors for Christ. Peacemakers in Jesus' name. Agents of reconciliation wherever there is division, discord and death. That is our task both as ordained and laity.

One child at a time, one ambassador for Christ, encouraging, nurturing and supporting that child in the way of peace. This road takes us from merely denouncing violence and lamenting the loss of innocent lives to a positive response in support of that which is just and right. We become a witness to God's peaceable kingdom. That is the challenge to which we are called.

August is a month when our faithful are beginning to make plans for the fall. Our Christian leaders urge us to speak boldly, pray publicly, and recruit intensely in positive ways to prevent future violence among our youth. *The call for our people to "Be a 6th Grade Mentor" offers us the opportunity to reach across racial and economic barriers, to cross city-suburban boundaries, to build bridges across generations - indeed to model the sort of inclusive, diverse fellowship which is reflective of the whole body of Christ.*

I pray that even while you are seeking personal rest and renewal during summer vacations that you will express both passion and urgency in your efforts to join our response to violence among our youth.

In Christ's love and transforming grace,

Pastor Don Green

Pastor Don Green



Violence Must End! Churches Must Respond!...continued from front page

Fred Thieman. Youth Futures invites us to engage in a prevention strategy for our youth, namely mentoring. **'Be a 6th Grade Mentor'** (www.bea6thgradementor.org) is a collaborative effort supported by the Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania and the United Way to help foster positive relationships and prepare students for academic and career success."

We condemn the killings and violence as antithetical to the Gospel of love and reconciliation through Jesus the Christ.

We stand united together and with one voice in the name of the Prince of Peace call for an end to hurtful speech, denigrating actions, and violent deeds.

The Council called upon their 2,000 congregations and their faithful to become mentors in the Pittsburgh Schools. Mentors will spend 45 minutes a week with a student in the sixth grade. Suburban congregations will be encouraged to recruit mentors for the city's schools. But for those outside of Allegheny County, congregations are urged to seek mentoring opportunities in their own communities through the guidance of the **Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania** (www.mentoringpittsburgh.org).

Rev. Alan McLarty, Council Vice Chair, reiterated the challenge to the churches, *"We the Christian leaders of Southwestern Pennsylvania want to do more than lament the current realities of hateful speech, prejudiced actions, and violent deeds as being antithetical to the Gospel.* We call upon the Church in its diverse expressions in this region to be active agents of teaching and nurture, healing and wholeness, love and peace. Therefore we call upon our clergy and lay leaders to:

♦ **Respond with proclamations from pulpits and with prayers at altars**, with messages in newsletters and announcements in Sunday bulletins that speak out against violence in all its hurtful and deadly expressions. We especially encourage your prayers for our youth during the summertime when violence increases.

♦ **Review the Coalition Against Violence's "Strategies for Communities of Faith"** and seek ways to partner with others across racial and economic divides in constructive action that works for reconciliation and wholeness, and promotes productive lives, especially among our youth.

♦ **Recruit mentors** from our congregations to "Be a 6th Grade Mentor" preferably within the Pittsburgh Public Schools, but also in other schools where time and distance are prohibitive to serving in the city.

As Christians we have a responsibility to be witnesses to God's love for every human life. By word and actions

we need to bring God's wholeness and peace to our lives and our communities. As Bishops and Church Executives we speak out against violence and call upon all of our faithful to respond."

The Council of Christian Associates is grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with the United Way of Allegheny County in seeking a positive, preventive approach to youthful violence. Congregations are urged to specifically address the issue of violence and recruit volunteers from their congregations during the month of August.

Pray. Review. Recruit. Proclaim. Serve.

Thank you for your responses. Together, we are witnesses to God's love.

To learn more, visit these websites:

www.bea6thgradementor.org
b-pepinfo@b-pep.net or
www.gspia.pitt.edu/cav
www.mentoringpittsburgh.org
www.casp.org



United Way Contributor Choice #222845

Through the United Way Contributor Choice campaign, you may consider designating your contribution to Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania. Just check the box marked Specific nonprofit and fill in our name. Use the code number 222845 to assure that your gift will benefit our work. Thank you!

She needs more reality. And less reality TV. Share it.

Share your everyday life with a kid and it could change hers forever. Join the biggest mentoring project in the region's history and show our local kids that anything's possible when they know the education and career opportunities that await.

be a
6thgrade
mentor.org



THE MENTORING
PARTNERSHIP OF
SOUTHWESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA

Youth Futures
COMMISSION



To learn more or register online visit
www.bea6thgradementor.org
or call 412.281.2535.



God speaks through His Word . . .

Please consider using some of the following helps in your church as you discourage violence and provide practical plans for demonstrating love and caring.

BIBLICAL TEXTS FOR PREACHING

About Violence

Ezekiel 45:9 "...Put away violence..."

Isaiah 60:18 "violence shall no more be heard in your land"

Jeremiah 23:3 "Do no wrong or violence..."

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 The ministry of reconciliation

About Mentoring

Matthew 5:16-21 The Beatitudes, Salt and Light

Proverbs 4:1-9 "Listen, children, to a father's instruction..."

Luke 6:12-49 Jesus calls the 12, "teaches them" Sermon on the Plain

Ephesians 6:1-4 "fathers...bring them (children) up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Acts 16:1-5, 1 Timothy 1:1-2 Paul chooses and mentors Timothy.

1 Timothy 4:1-16 "If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be good servants."

2 Timothy 2:1-7 "my child.. what you have heard from me...entrust to faithful people."

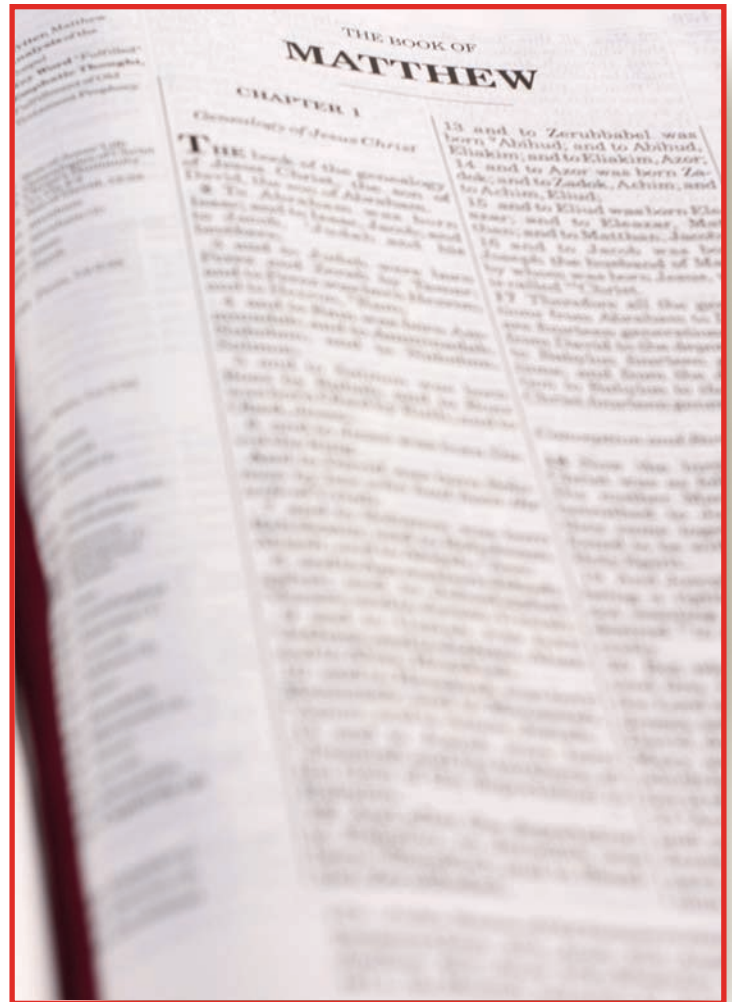
PRAYERS

Deliver me, O LORD from evildoers; protect me from those who are violent...Guard me, O LORD from the hands of the wicked; protect me from the violent who have planned my downfall. I say to the LORD, "You are my God; give ear, O LORD to the voice of my supplications."
(Psalm 140: 1,4,6 NRSV)

O loving God, to turn away from you is to fall, to turn toward you is to rise, and to stand before you is to abide forever. Grant us, dear God, in all our duties your help; in all our uncertainties your guidance; in all our dangers your protection; and in all our sorrow your peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Augustine of Hippo 354-430)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not seek so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.
(Attributed to Francis of Assisi 1181-1226)



Lord Christ, at times we are like strangers on the earth, taken aback by all the violence, the harsh oppositions. Like a gentle breeze, you breathe upon us the Spirit of peace. Transfigure the deserts of our doubts, and so prepare us to be bearers of reconciliation wherever you place us, until the day when a hope of peace dawns in our world. Amen. (Brother Roger, Taizé)

O Lord, our creator, by your holy prophet you taught your ancient people to seek the welfare of the cities in which they lived. We commend our neighborhoods to your care, that they might be kept free from social strife and decay. Give us strength of purpose and concern for others, that we may create a community of justice and peace where your will may be done; through your son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
(adapted from Book of Common Worship, PC{U.S.A.})

Suggestions for your Communications Pieces

PROPOSED ARTICLE FOR YOUR CHURCH'S NEWSLETTER

"Be a 6th Grade Mentor"

You can help our youth:

- ♦ become aware of jobs in the area;
- ♦ have a career dream that provides motivation;
- ♦ understand the relevance of completing high school and being able to read, write and do math adequately to achieve a career and lifelong goal; and
- ♦ have a positive adult role model providing encouragement.

Mentors make a year long commitment to spend 45-minutes per week during the school year –face to face with the mentee – to build caring and trusting relationships. Training and ongoing support for mentors will be facilitated by the Mentoring Partnership of Southwest PA. To "Be a 6th Grade Mentor" contact www.bea6thgradementor.org or www.mentoringpittsburgh.org

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

The "Be a 6th Grade Mentor" initiative seeks to recruit hundreds of mentors from all parts of the Pittsburgh region, both city and suburbs to be paired with students at eight middle schools in the Pittsburgh Public School District. Mentors who make a one year commitment will be trained and supported in their weekly 45 minute sessions with their mentee. To volunteer contact: www.bea6thgradementor.org.

If Pittsburgh is too far to travel to "Be a 6th Grade Mentor," then contact the Mentoring Partnership of

Southwest PA www.mentoringpittsburgh.org to volunteer to be a year-long mentor to a student in a school near to your home.

Violence in our neighborhoods and the death of our youth need not be the only news. Help prevent youth violence by becoming a mentor. "Be a 6th Grade Mentor" is your opportunity to have a positive influence on a student in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. For more details and to register contact: www.bea6thgradementor.org



Application to be a 6th grade mentor

Please PRINT clearly:

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____
(Street) (City/Zip)

Daytime Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Employer: _____ Church: _____

Occupation: _____

Why are you interested in becoming a mentor? _____

Please list your preference for placement by indicating 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice

PREFERENCE	SCHOOL	NEIGHBORHOOD	PREFERENCE	SCHOOL	NEIGHBORHOOD
1 2 3	Allegheny 6-8	North Side	1 2 3	Arsenal 6-8	Lawrenceville
1 2 3	Schiller 6-8	North Side	1 2 3	South Brook	Brookline
1 2 3	South Hills	Beechview	1 2 3	Sterrett 6-8	Point Breeze
1 2 3	Rooney 6-8	Brighton Hts.	1 2 3	Classical 6-8	West End

Thank You! If you are submitting this application on our website you will receive an email confirming receipt of your application with 24 hours.

Please return to:
The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania
2934 Smallman Street, 2nd Floor
Pittsburgh PA 15201
412- 281-2535
mentoring@uwac.org
FAX (412) 281-6683
www.bea6thgradementor.org

Please return this application as soon as possible or you may register now by contacting www.bea6thgradementor.org

Thank you for caring—and for sharing yourself with a sixth grader!



204 37th Street, Suite 201
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15201-1859
412-688-9070

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Show him a career option. Before someone on the street does.

Influences are everywhere. Which is why we're taking on the region's biggest mentoring project ever, designed specifically to show 6th graders the opportunities available to them. By staying in school. By staying focused. By staying with the program.

You can play an important role by being a mentor and sharing your time and career experience. Not only will a child gain important real-world understanding, you'll see the joy that comes with making a difference.

To learn more or register, visit
www.bea6thgradementor.org or call 412.281.2535.

