

CAMP ARRAH WANNA LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

By Ken Howe, Chair of Arrah Wanna Board

Most of you are now aware that Chris Roush has submitted her resignation as Executive Director of Arrah Wanna, effective September 18, 2009. Chris had given the Camp Board indications of this possibility as early as January of this year but it was not until our July meeting that she stated her decision as being definite.

This six month duration of time allowed the Board opportunity to pray, discuss the matter together and to gain a consensus in our minds and hearts. It was also to Chris that we looked for advice and welcomed her perspective. Believing Laura Young, who had been serving as Chris' assistant and the on-site manager of Arrah Wanna, was now well equipped to take on new responsibilities, we unanimously chose Laura as Director of Arrah Wanna Ministries. We made this decision with the blessing of Chris which helped to make it not only easy but right. We then sought and received a confirmation from our ABCO Executive Minister, Steve Bilis. During the decision making process, we included Laura in some of the discussion. On the one hand, Laura feels she has gained much helpful experience and is anxious to take on this added responsibility, but on the other hand, she is "scared to death." Both attitudes, we feel, are healthy. We know Laura will need to hire some individuals to assist her in areas she has previously covered, but we sense a genuine peace in our decision and welcome Laura's acceptance.

In leaving Camp Arrah Wanna, Chris Roush is heading for Arizona where she has been asked by the leadership of Rainbow Acres to minister with them in an executive position. I doubt that any of us envisioned what was ahead for Camp Arrah Wanna, in 1999, including Chris, when she accepted our request to serve as the Executive Director. The physical needs at camp were great but the building and improvements have been phenomenal; the number of annual campers had doubled and the annual income has also doubled. This turn-around from a camp manager concept to that of an Executive Director was a real step in faith for Oregon Baptists. God sent Chris to us and then used her to take us to the next phase of our camping ministry. We will always be thankful for the faithful ministry of Chris Roush. Now, as she begins a new ministry with Rainbow Acres, we pray that for Chris, her husband, and her daughters, that God will bless each one in a unique way. And, of course, we hope they will come to visit us from time to time.

Editor's Note: On Sunday, September 13, a reception was given at Judson Baptist in Salem to honor Chris for her many years of service to the ABCO family.

GRANT PARK HOSTS "NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS"

Free lunch, free light bulbs, free prizes, bike helmets, corn rows and face painting for kids, lead testing, buttons and opportunities galore to learn about "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" was the theme of a recent Saturday event hosted by Grant Park Church, Central Northeast Neighbors, Hollywood and Grant Park Neighborhood Associations.

Bags of food came in throughout the day. 480 pounds were then given to Northeast Emergency Food Bank. This will give 30 families a food box when needed. QFC and Trader Joe's made generous contributions to help with the day. The church family was grateful for the opportunity to place bags with flyers on 400 plus doors. Keep us in your prayers as we continue our church restart while trying to be "The Hands and Feet of Christ" in our neighborhood.



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Dates to Remember

Annual Gathering in Portland Oct. 16-17

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RESPONDING TO THE CALL OF GOD

By Steve Bilis, Executive Minister of ABCO

Scripture records the responses of many individuals to the call of God.

"Who, me?" When God called Moses to confront Pharaoh and to lead the children of Israel from captivity, Moses responded with "Who, me?" (Exodus 3:9-11)

"Why me?" When the Lord reminded Jeremiah that, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart and ordained you to be a prophet to the nations", Jeremiah questioned God's choice. "Why me? I'm just a kid. I can't speak."

"Not me!" When the word of the Lord came to His prophet, Jonah, and said, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city and cry against it . . ." Jonah's response was a clear "not me!" as he "arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

"Send me!" When Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" his immediate response was, "Here am I! Send me!"

In the case of Moses and Jeremiah their responses reflected a concern that they were inadequate for the task and calling that they were receiving. God was able to assure them that they would be given the words to speak and the courage to confront whatever power or circumstance that they might encounter.

Isaiah had already learned that "God does not call the qualified; God qualifies the called."

In the case of Jonah he both feared and hated the Ninevites and frankly, didn't want them to heed God and avoid the consequences of their brutal and barbarous behavior. I hope that none of us are avoiding ministering to people we have judged to be unworthy of God's grace. In spite of his prejudice, Jonah responded to God's second call to preach the warning and miraculously, the Ninevites responded appropriately.

I find that most believers today who struggle with the call to discipleship or with the call to a specific task or ministry are reluctant to respond with an affirmative Isaiahish enthusiasm because they share the concerns of Moses and Jeremiah. We know who we are and what our weaknesses are and fear failure. Surely, we think, God can do better than to rely on me. This is healthy; at least it is better than being so cocky and self-confident that we don't realize that we are being called to something that we are, in and of ourselves, incapable of doing.

Hanani reminded King Asa in Second Chronicles 16 that when he relied on his strength or his human allies he was defeated, but when he relied on the Lord he was victorious. The principle he shared with Asa of is a valuable reminder to us, "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."

We don't have to be strong — because God is strong on our behalf.



**ABCO
ANNUAL
GATHERING
2009
October 16-17
Portland
(Worship Opportunities
on Sunday, Oct. 18)**

**Follow
the
Leader**

*"Whoever serves me must follow me..."
-- John 12:26*

FOLLOW THE LEADER 2009 ABCO ANNUAL GATHERING

October 16-17, 2009 American Baptist churches from all over Oregon will be coming together at Word of Life Community Church in Portland to celebrate this year's Annual Gathering. The theme for 2009 is "Follow the Leader" based on John 12:26.

At the Gathering this year we will be installing our new Executive Minister, Rev. Steve Bils. The installation speaker for this special service will be Dr. Joe Kutter, the current Executive Director of the ABCUSA Ministers Council. In addition to Dr. Kutter, Ed Noyes, an American Baptist missionary from the Congo, will be speaking at Friday evening's worship celebration. The worship music all weekend will be led by the worship team from First Baptist Church, Gresham.

There will be a number of events run in conjunction with the Annual Gathering. On Friday afternoon, October 16, Joe Kutter will be leading a continuing education event, sponsored by the ABCO Ministers Council entitled, "Community- A Better Way of Ministering." On Friday evening, before the

evening worship service, there will be an All-Gathering Dinner. And on Friday and Saturday there will be a Youth Lock-in hosted by First Baptist Church, Oregon City. Following the activities on Saturday, there will be a networking meeting for all youth and children workers. At 2:30 on Saturday afternoon Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church of Portland has invited all Gathering participants to join them for the groundbreaking of their new building (see the story below).

It will be a wonderful weekend that you won't want to miss. Contact your local church for registration materials.

MORNING STAR MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH GROUNDBREAKING

Since the tragic fire that destroyed the edifice of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in 2007, Senior Pastor A. Wayne Johnson has given very strong leadership to the Holy Spirit-inspired rebuilding effort. At the same time, he has led them to continue to minister to their community as a worshipping congregation at an off-site location.

As a part of our ABCO Annual Gathering weekend celebration, Pastor Johnson and the congregation at Morning Star have invited the ABCO family to join them at 2:30 on Saturday afternoon at 106 NE Ivy Street for the Groundbreaking Ceremony for their new edifice.

Plan to join us as we celebrate with our brothers and sisters at Morning Star!

THE HART OF IT ALL

A diverse group of people recently gathered "roses" for Mrs. Willie Mae Hart, a long time American Baptist and resident of Portland. The roses were words of appreciation presented to Mrs. Hart at a special event in her honor on August 15, 2009 at the Grant Park Baptist Church, Portland.

The day's events, co-sponsored by Grant Park Baptist and the American Baptist Churches of Oregon, began with a silent auction followed by a formal luncheon and program of music and tributes to Mrs. Hart. Instead of a speaker, many personalities volunteered to bring brief comments about Mrs. Hart's contributions to their lives, the organizations she has served, and the influence she has had on her family. Anyone who knows Mrs. Hart knows that her family not only includes her children, but also includes a wide circle of extended family across Oregon and the nation.



Willie Mae Hart and Wayne Brown

Mrs. Hart, the granddaughter of a slave, has brought about reconciliation, peace, love, action, initiative, positive race relations and much more...all with a Christ-like demeanor. When asked why she has such love and a positive attitude she simply said, "Jesus said not to hate, but to love one another."

Space does not allow a full accounting of her activities, influence, and accomplishments over the years. She has seen so much, experienced so much, helped so much that not even those who know her best could tell all of it. Random snapshots of her life would reveal influence in helping establish the Oregon Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, giving political support and challenges at crucial times to government, mentoring young people with amazing results, and deep involvement with Church Women United. At the event it took a half hour just to mention the major involvements of her life.

Mrs. Hart gives credit for her successes to the Lord and the many who helped her on her way.

The invitation that was mailed out said it well. "Let it now be said that many owe her for the success of numerous organizations, committees, communities and causes. She is a woman of strength building bridges where none have been built before and opening doors that were once considered walls." Upon being asked what prayer support she needed, Mrs. Hart replied, "Pray that I will be able to continue serving the Lord and people for many more years." At age 93 she shows no signs of slowing down.



Many gathered on August 15, 2009 at Grant Park Baptist in Portland to honor Willie Mae Hart.

At the end of the special day's program, Mrs. Hart jokingly said, "With all these kind words and praise, you're gonna cause me to lose my Heavenly Crown!"

Not likely Willie Mae...not likely.