

## From the President

### Cleaning House

Anglican bishop Mark Dyer calls it a giant rummage sale: every 500 years the Christian Church casts off the things that restrict its growth. And that phenomenon is underway right now, says Phyllis Tickle, author of the book *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*. It's a worthy read.

Declining church membership, the breaking down of denominational loyalty and barriers, the rise of new "emergent" churches that blend ancient rituals, litanies and hymns together with contemporary forms of worship and renewed calls for social, economic and environmental justice—something is happening out there. But what is it? And why is it happening now? It's as old as religion itself, says Tickle.

During these times of rearrangement and upheaval, the institutionalized Church throws off things that are restricting its growth. When that mighty upheaval happens, history shows that at least three things always happen.

First, a new, more vital form of Christianity emerges. Second, the organized expression of Christianity, which up until then had been the dominant one, is reconstituted into a more pure and less ossified expression of its former self. Finally, every time the encrustations of an overly established Christianity are broken open, the faith has spread dramatically, thereby increasing the range and depth of the church's reach.

If we are indeed in the midst of another great "rummage sale" it might be time to ask about the place and priority the ecumenical and interreligious movements. Is the church putting us up for sale? Or will we be part of the next *Great Emergence*?

--Scott Anderson

## NAEIS President



Scott Anderson  
Executive Director  
Wisconsin Council of Churches

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### 2011 NAEIS Annual Gathering

**Welcoming One Another:  
The Promise of Community"**

Feb. 4-7, 2011

**Oblate Retreat Center  
San Antonio, Texas**

- Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations
- Welcoming Young Adults
- Immigration Reform
- And more...

More information to come in the fall.

## 1910-2010: A Century of Progress?



*By Clark Lobenstine,  
NAEIS Board Member*

The 1910 International Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, Scotland has been described as the most important meeting of its kind in the 20th Century. Present were 1215 Delegates chosen by mission boards, their numbers determined by the budget of each mission board used in evangelizing work among non-Christians. Another 6000 persons came to Edinburgh (a few already lived here) because of the excitement of the missionary enterprise. My grandfather, Rev. Edwin C. Lobenstine, was one of those other guests, coming from China where he had gone in 1898 as a Presbyterian missionary! It is my joy and privilege to follow in his footsteps, both as Executive Director of the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington for the past 31 years, and to Edinburgh for the Centenary Celebration of the 1910 conference.

About 250 persons spent 3 days together for the 2010 conference. Mostly missiologists and other academics, they did come from a greater variety of Christian traditions than were present in 1910. A few hundred more of us joined them on Sunday afternoon June 6th for the Centenary Celebration. The Celebration was knit together mainly by the songs we sang, from many continents, and by an opening choir of African Christians living in Edinburgh who had come together for this occasion. The sermon by the Bishop of York, England (who comes from Ghana!) was challenging but came at the end of a three hour service!

Certainly we've made significant progress since 1910 and certainly we have a long ways to go. The conviction of the planners of 1910 that the gospel of Jesus Christ could take root in any culture and nation has been born out, even as their myopic view excluded Africa and limited the participation of persons from "younger" churches, e.g. converts in the countries being evangelized, to just 20 persons out of 1200!

Certainly the focus on strengthening the leadership of these persons from "younger" churches has grown from being a conviction of some of the delegates in 1910 to being the practice of mission boards around the world.

### Find NAEIS on Facebook!

To join the new NAEIS Facebook group, simply:

- 1) log in to Facebook;
- 2) search for 'National Association of Ecumenical and Interreligious Staff' and select our group; and
- 3) click on the "Request to Join" button.

All NAEIS members and others who want to relate to NAEIS are more than welcome!

### Receiving this newsletter for the first time?

NAEIS is in the process of updating its national database. In the last four months we have added over 200 new local, regional or national ecumenical/interreligious staff people with e-mail addresses. Welcome to our on-line community!

### Having Trouble Viewing this E-Mail?

A PDF version of the NAEIS newsletter is online at [www.naeis.org](http://www.naeis.org).

### NAEIS Contact Info



P.O. Box 95949  
Seattle, WA 98145-2949  
206-625-9790 ext. 12  
FAX: 206-625-9791  
E-mail: [info@naeis.org](mailto:info@naeis.org)  
Web: [naeis.org](http://naeis.org)

But denominationalism still is rampant in our country and many others. We have a LONG way to go to realize the prayer of Jesus that we shall all be one as He and God are one which is shared poignantly at each Week of Christian Unity prayer service in cities and towns around the globe and in many other settings.

In many places, interfaith work has become or is becoming the challenge of this century. In others, ecumenism is still a long ways off. My wife, The Rev. Carole Crumley, discovered this in Seoul, South Korea, when she and The Rev. Tilden Edwards, the founder of the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, led the first ecumenical (Protestant only, please, as with Edinburgh, 1910) contemplative prayer retreat in Seoul just two years ago.

1910 to 2010: A Century of Progress? In some ways, YES. In other ways, we still have a long ways to go!

### **NAEIS News Highlight: Immigration Reform Work in North Carolina**

Over the last year, the North Carolina Council of Churches has been conducting clergy breakfasts on immigration issues around the state. At each breakfast, the Council has featured two speakers -- one to talk about theology and immigration and another to talk about what's happening in local immigrant communities. These breakfasts are designed really as conversation starters, and as a way to get some helpful resources into the hands of our clergy. The response has been terrific!

In 2009, about 220 clergy and faith leaders attended nine events. 95% of evaluation respondents said they would recommend a similar event to their colleagues. So far this year, we've had an additional 130 at 4 events, including 55 at a recent event in Greensboro, NC.

For more information about the North Carolina project, go to [www.welcometheimmigrant.org](http://www.welcometheimmigrant.org) . North Carolina Council of Churches staffer Chris Liu-Beers is coordinating this work. Chris can be reached at 919-828-6501 x508

### **Local and Regional Ecumenism Visioning Consultation**

#### **The Promise of Ecumenical Community: Visioning Our Future**

Thu. Nov. 11, 2010 at 12:00  
noon  
through  
Fri. Nov. 12, 2010 at 3:30  
p.m.

New Orleans, Louisiana

More information at  
[www.nccusa.org/lre](http://www.nccusa.org/lre) .

Organized by  
State Ecumenical Executives,  
NAEIS, and  
the NCC Ecumenical Networks  
Committee.

Associated with the  
Centennial Ecumenical  
Gathering  
convened by the  
National Council of Churches,  
Nov. 9-11, 2010.

To sign up for e-mail updates,  
contact  
Ammon Ripple at  
[aripple@nccusa.org](mailto:aripple@nccusa.org)  
or call 646-596-4750.

## NAEIS Welcomes New Board Member- -Rev. David Alger



An ordained Presbyterian minister, David Alger served as Executive Director of Associated Ministries of Tacoma/Pierce County (AM) for 30 years, retiring in July of 2009. Under his leadership AM grew from 2.5 staff to 27 with over 20 programs and projects serving 160,000 people annually. The budget grew from roughly \$75,000 to just over \$3,000,000, making AM the largest ecumenical agency in the state.

Associated Ministries' wide range of programs included theological dialogue, religious education, interfaith dialogue (including partnering for a successful interfaith youth camping program), wide-ranging services for the homeless, direct services (including mentoring) for low-income families, Paint Tacoma/Pierce Beautiful, neighborhood community organizing, peacemaking, social justice advocacy, Moments of Blessings at homicide sites, local and state-wide disaster response, domestic violence chaplaincy and training, and asset-building. AM also played a critical role in creating some significant nonprofits, including Pierce County Habitat for Humanity, Pierce County AIDS Foundation, the Emergency Food Network (distributes in excess of \$12M worth of food), Indochinese Cultural and Service Center, and the Puget Sound Youth Interfaith Camp.

In his retirement David continues to preach and is very active in his denomination. He serves several boards and commissions. He is still an avid handball player. Most of all, he is enjoying the additional time he spends with his wife Sally.

Welcome to the NAEIS Board, David!

## Call for Nominations: NCC Local and Regional Ecumenism Committee

A new Local and Regional Ecumenism Committee of the National Council of Churches is forming. If you would like to nominate someone to serve on this committee, please view the call for nominations at [www.ncccusa.org/lre/nominations.html](http://www.ncccusa.org/lre/nominations.html) . Feel free to nominate yourself!

The committee is charged "to facilitate relationships among and between local, regional, and national expressions of the ecumenical movement" in the U.S. It will be representative of the diverse local and regional ecumenical community and will meet twice a year, adjacent to the NAEIS gathering and the NCC/CWS General Assembly. The first meeting will be in February 2009.

## NCC Calendar to Highlight Local and Regional Ecumenism

The 2011 Calendar of the National Council of Churches will highlight the ecumenical and interfaith work being done in local and regional arenas in the U.S. Local and regional ecumenism is a central theme of the presidency of Peg Chamberlin, the first state council executive to serve as NCC President.

Call for Submissions: If you have photos, stories, prayers, or anything else to share from your organization or an informal ecumenical group, please contact Ammon Ripple at [aripple@nccusa.org](mailto:aripple@nccusa.org) or 646-596-4750 by September 1.

The calendar will include a list of all known local and regional ecumenical and interfaith organizations with a call for financial support for these organizations.

## Bereavement Booklet Available

The New York Life Foundation is offering a guide for adults to help children through the loss of a parent, sibling or caregiver, entitled *After a Loved One Dies - How Children Grieve*. Written by Dr. David J. Schonfeld, director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, this booklet helps parents, teachers, coaches, and other people working with kids understand children's reactions to death and offers strategies for helping them cope. Please go to [www.nylgriefguide.com](http://www.nylgriefguide.com) for a free PDF copy or to order printed copies for only the cost of shipping.

## Job Posting: NRPE Search for New Executive Director Begins

The National Religious Partnership for the Environment (NRPE) recently announced the retirement of its founding Executive Director, Paul Gorman. Gorman retired on April 30th after 20 years of outstanding service.

The National Religious Partnership for the Environment was founded by senior U.S. Religious leaders from the Catholic, mainline Protestant, Jewish and Evangelical communities in 1993, with a mission to encourage people of faith and the organizations that serve them to weave and integrate values and programs of care for God's creation across the entire fabric of religious life.

The NRPE has selected Phillips Oppenheim to assist them in the search for a new Executive Director. Walt Grazer assumed the role of Executive Director for the interim starting on May 1, 2010. Grazer served with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops for 26 years and headed up their Environmental Justice Program. Recently, he was a consultant to the Partnership as a Special Adviser.

For more information about the application process and a position description, go to [nrpe.org/whatisthepartnership/ed\\_jobdesc\\_2010.htm](http://nrpe.org/whatisthepartnership/ed_jobdesc_2010.htm) .

**News From NAEIS** is published monthly. News items should be sent to newsletter editor Scott Anderson at [sanderson@wichurches.org](mailto:sanderson@wichurches.org) .