

Addendum

Excerpts from the 2009-2010 Wisconsin State Assembly Legislative Session Opening Prayers

Explicitly and Overwhelmingly Christian Sectarian Nature of the Opening Prayers/Sermons of the Wisconsin State Assembly Representatives and their Christian Clergy-Proxies

By Reverend Doctor Steven Nelson, Senior Pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN on 01 05 09 (rare case of no introduction by Representative):

"Old Testament, 2 Chronicles 1:10. It's the story of Solomon becoming King of Israel, following in his father David's footsteps. God appears to Solomon in the night and, almost like a genie, says, 'Ask what I should give you.' Solomon replies, 'Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people; for who can govern this great people of yours?' (2 Chronicles 1:10)

"Solomon was wise enough though to know that governing could only be done with knowledge and wisdom.

"As an old Christmas card once said, 'May the Baby Jesus open your mind and shut your mouth.' Ah, the road to knowledge! Listening and learning.

"Solomon knew that wisdom comes from outside of us. He asked God for wisdom.

"Holy God, you graced your servant Solomon with great knowledge and wisdom, and you stand ready to give us the same."

By Representative Daniel LeMahieu (R) Oostburg – 59th District on 02 18 09:

"We thank you for hearing our prayers; we know that we come before you humbly, not because [sic] deserve your presence, but because your Son, Jesus Christ, earned that for us with his death on the cross.

"In Your Name we pray. Amen."

By Father Lance Schneider of St. Dennis Catholic Church in Madison on 04 23 09 (rare case of no introduction by Representative):

"We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen."

By Father Eric Nielsen from St. Paul's University Catholic Center in Madison, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Peter Barca (D) Kenosha – 64th District on 04 28 09:

"I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen."

By Representative Daniel LeMahieu (R) Oostburg – 59th District on 04 29 09:

"We just thank you for the reminder we had several weeks ago of the Easter season, of the death of your Son and his rebirth, his resurrection. We thank you for what that means for us as individuals.

"There are many people suffering and we ask your blessing on them, your comfort to them through your Holy Spirit.

"In the Name of Your Son, Jesus, we ask these things. Amen."

By Pastor Bob Smallman of Bible Presbyterian Church in Merrill, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Donald Friske (R) Merrill – 35th District on 05 13 09:

"... for I pray in Your Sovereign Name. Amen."

By Representative Barbara Toles (D) Milwaukee – 17th District on 06 18 09:

"As I thought about today's prayer, a popular hymn popped into my mind, and that hymn is, 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus.'"

"We ask these blessings in Jesus' Name. Amen."

By Pastor Nancy Carmichael, Immanuel United Methodist Church, Jefferson, Wisconsin, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Andy Jorgensen (D) Fort Atkinson – 37th District on 09 17 09:

"And, I had been thinking about that hymn On Eagles' Wings. A hymn based in part on Isaiah 40:31: 'But, those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint.'"

"Let your Spirit enfold and empower us,..."

By Representative Phil Montgomery (R) Green Bay – 4th District on 09 22 09:

"In Jesus' Name. Amen."

By Reverend Tim Anderson, Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, Baraboo, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Fred Clark (D) Baraboo – 42nd District on 10 20 09:

“And, we ask this in Jesus’ Name. Amen.”

By Father William Hayward, Saint Peter’s Parish in Kenosha, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Peter Barca (D) Kenosha – 64th District on 10 29 09:

“... the Rosary leads us to ponder the great events nestled in the Bible, one of them being the prayer, which Mary, the mother of Jesus, offers when she visits her kinswoman, Elizabeth. It is a prayer that acknowledges the depth from which prayer can come, from any of us. It is a prayer that acknowledges that God exalts those whom he chooses, that he exercises mercy, that he cares for the poor. And, remembers the great work that he has done in his fulfillment of him. So, I offer this prayer this morning, and invite you to make it your own. Mary said, ‘My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God, My Savior, for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day, all generations will call me blessed. The Almighty has done great things for me, and Holy is His Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm. He has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant, Israel. For he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.’ May God bless this great Assembly and the work you do for the great state of Wisconsin. Amen.”

By Representative Daniel LeMahieu (R) Oostburg – 59th District on 11 03 09:

“In Your Name we pray. Amen.”

By Representative Richard Spanbauer (R) Oshkosh – 53rd District on 01 19 10:

“In Jesus’ name. We thank you for it. Amen.”

By Reverend Martin Childs, Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Barbara Toles (D) Milwaukee – 17th District on 02 16 10:

“As they carry out their duties, may they have the faithfulness of Abraham, the boldness of Moses, the empathy of Queen Esther, the vision of Joshua, the tenacity of Nehemiah, the gift of Jeremiah, the tenderness of Ruth, the courage of King David, the gratitude of Paul, the aptitude of King Solomon, the fortitude of Deborah, and the power, grace and love of Jesus the Christ.

"As we lift them before you, in the Name of our Lord and our Savior, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen."

By Pastor Walter Harvey, Park Lawn Assembly of God, Milwaukee, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Barbara Toles (D) Milwaukee – 17th District on 02 25 10:

"I pray, Father, for unity within our state, the kind of unity that Jesus prayed for, in John Chapter 17.

"In the Name of your Son. Amen."

By Representative Kitty Rhoades (R) Hudson – 30th District on 04 13 10:

"We've all been through the Catholic school together.

"So, they will sing the prayer. We will do the pledge. And, then they will do On Wisconsin, and, since their name is O'Brien, the Irish Blessing."

By Representative Pat Strachota (R) West Bend – 58th District on 04 15 10:

"I had asked my pastors, Father Jeff Haines and Father Nate Reesman, from Saint Frances Cabrini Parish in West Bend to come today, but, unfortunately, they were not able to make it. And, so, Father Nate sent me a prayer, based on Chapter 9, the Book of Wisdom. This passage, as originally written, is based, is believed to be King Solomon's calling out to God for wisdom. While King Solomon was revered for being an extremely wise leader, he understood that man is fallible.

"God of my Fathers, Lord of Mercy, who have made all things by your Word, . . ."

By Pastor Krystal Williams-Oby, Northside Christian Assembly, Madison, WI, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Annette Polly Williams (D) Milwaukee – 10th District on 12 15 10:

"Father, your Word tells us that this is the day that the Lord has made, and that we should rejoice and be glad in it.

"Father, and we thank you and we praise you that everything that we set our feet to do, Father, it will prosper In Your Name.

"To our God, in Jesus' Name, Amen."

Exploitation of the Prayer Opportunity to Exhort Citizens to Pray, to Pray in the Name of Wisconsin Citizens, and to Religiously Indoctrinate Wisconsin State Citizens and Visitors to the Wisconsin State Assembly Chamber

By Pastor Chris Buckingham-Taylor, First Congregational Church of Christ in Fort Atkinson, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Andy Jorgensen (D) Fort Atkinson – 37th District on 01 27 09:

Representative Andy Jorgensen's Christian clergy-proxy appeared to believe that he had been called to the Wisconsin State Assembly to represent the religious community of the 37th Assembly District in an official capacity when he said, "In fact, I'm very proud to represent the Fort Atkinson religious community in the 37th Assembly District to kind of open our session for 2009 . . .". He also implored the Christian deity to move the Wisconsin citizenry to support their Representatives by praying for them when he said, "And lead all of the citizens of Wisconsin to uplift them with their prayers, encouragement, and efforts."

By Dr. Don Norman, Southern Baptist Minister, Whitewater, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Kim Hixson (D) Whitewater – 43rd District on 03 24 09:

Representative Kim Hixson of the 43rd Assembly District's Christian clergy-proxy spoke on behalf of the entirety of the Wisconsin citizenry when he proclaimed, "Gracious Father, before these Representatives and The People of Wisconsin begin their work this day, we pause to be in your presence."

By Father Eric Nielsen from St. Paul's University Catholic Center in Madison, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Peter Barca (D) Kenosha – 64th District on 04 28 09:

Representative Peter Barca of the 64th Assembly District's Christian clergy-proxy likewise spoke on behalf of all citizens of the State of Wisconsin when he implored, "Almighty God and Heavenly Father, We The People of Wisconsin are grateful for our freedom and civil liberties . . .". Apparently those civil liberties, for which We The People of Wisconsin are grateful to Jesus, don't include the right to be free from State-sanctioned religious indoctrination.

By Reverend Scott Prinster, First Unitarian Society, Madison, WI, Clergy-Proxy of Representative Kelda Helen Roys (D) – 81st District Madison on 06 11 09:

Representative Kelda Helen Roys of the 81st Assembly District's clergy-proxy spoke on behalf of the University of Wisconsin campus, initially, then on behalf of all persons living in the State of Wisconsin when he exhorted them, "May our citizenry, too, do their part, . . ." He made a universal call for prayers, "I invite all who witness

to this moment to join me now in a moment of silence, that we might each offer up our additional hopes and prayers for this body and this land.”

By Pastor Michael Schuller, First Unitarian Society, Madison, WI on 12 16 09 (rare case of no Representative introduction):

Pastor Michael Schuller of the First Unitarian Society of Madison reassured the body of Wisconsin State Representatives that, “Work well, and know that The People’s faith, their fortunes, and their prayers go with you.”

By Pastor Walter Harvey, Park Lawn Assembly of God, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Barbara Toles (D) Milwaukee – 17th District on 02 25 10:

Representative Barbara Toles of the 17th Assembly District’s Christian clergy-proxy was ostensibly under the impression that Representative Toles represents her church in a political capacity at the Wisconsin State Assembly. He said, “Thank you, Representative Toles, who is not only the Representative for our church, but also my personal Representative for where we live. It’s a pleasure to be here and to the Wisconsin State Assembly.”

By Carol and Ralph DiBiasio Snyder, First Congregational Church of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Christian Clergy-Proxies of Gordon Hintz (D) Oshkosh – 54th District on 04 20 10:

Representative Gordon Hintz of the 54th Assembly District’s Christian clergy-proxies called upon the people of this state to set an example for our nation. They also pointed out that even nonbelievers speak the language of God, “the language of love and grace.”

Exploitation of the Prayer Opportunity for Implicit Politicking, Lobbying or Proselytizing, as well as Advocating for a Christian Theocracy

By Reverend Doctor Steven Nelson, Senior Pastor of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN on 01 05 09:

Representative Thomas Nelson of the 5th Assembly District invited his father to speak. His father said, “If you are wondering why the leadership had to go to St. Paul, Minnesota to find someone to do the invocation, it’s because I’m Thomas Nelson’s Dad. When he asked me to do it, he told me I could be the Rick Warren of Wisconsin, at least for a day. Who could resist that?”

By Representative Daniel LeMahieu (R) Oostburg – 59th District on 02 18 09:

Representative Daniel LeMahieu of the 59th Assembly District espoused a troubling take on the constitutional obligations of our President and global politics when he, invoking Jesus, made the following claims, “We pray that his heart (Barack Obama) will be receptive to your leading in the coming weeks and months. We pray that you would be with our country, with our state. We know that you have blessed this country more so than many other countries. We just thank you for that, but we do acknowledge that we do have some problems right now in our country and in our economy . . .”. He also suggested that the purpose of a state legislature is to “honor and glorify” the Christian deity.

By Dr. Don Norman, Southern Baptist Minister, Whitewater, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Kim Hixon (D) Whitewater – 43rd District on 03 24 09:

Representative Kim Hixon of the 43rd Assembly District’s Christian clergy-proxy announced that Wisconsin State Representatives are doing the work of God, for which they “need your presence.” He said, “Thank you for hearing our prayers and for touching us each in this moment. Ready these representatives now to be about your work, this day. Amen.” He also asked God to bless the enemies of the United States, but “not that they conquer us.”

By Monsignor Dan Ganshert, Diocese of Madison, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Keith Ripp (R) Lodi – 47th District on 03 26 09:

Representative Keith Ripp of the 47th Assembly District’s Christian clergy-proxy proclaimed that God made and owns all Wisconsin citizens.

By Father Lance Schneider of St. Dennis Catholic Church in Madison on 04 23 09 (rare case of no introduction by Representative):

Father Lance Schneider of St. Dennis Catholic Church in Madison claimed that legislators are appointed by Jesus. He also claimed that legislation is only promulgated by the Wisconsin State Legislature if it be the will of Jesus, including seat belt legislation, minimum drinking age legislation, and criminal penalties for drug dealers.

By Father Eric Nielsen from St. Paul’s University Catholic Center in Madison, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Peter Barca (D) Kenosha – 64th District on 04 28 09:

Representative Peter Barca of the 64th Assembly District’s Christian clergy-proxy asked Jesus to ensure that the decisions of the Wisconsin State Assembly be “in accordance with your will.” He also asked Jesus to bestow grace upon the state

legislators and that their actions as private citizens, not public officials, be examples of "true citizenship."

By Representative Daniel LeMahieu (R) Oostburg – 59th District on 04 29 09:

Representative Daniel LeMahieu of the 59th Assembly District wasn't content to pray for an American Christian theocracy only once. At his second turn at the prayer podium, he proclaimed on behalf of our President, "... but we pray also that his heart (Barack Obama) would be open to your leading, that he would seek your guidance as he leads our country, as he makes decisions. Be with our Governor, Governor Doyle, and this body, this legislature, that we too would be open to your leading and that the decisions we make would be pleasing to you." And, he finished off his prayer/sermon by saying that Wisconsin State Legislators serve Jesus when he exclaimed, "But, we pray that as a body, our decisions, our actions would be pleasing to you, because you are the one that we serve." He seems to be under the misapprehension that state legislators serve Jesus Christ rather than the citizens of Wisconsin.

By Pastor Bettsy Miller Rubin, Trempealeau United Methodist Church, Trempealeau, Wisconsin, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Chris Danou (D) Trempealeau – 91st District on 09 16 09:

Representative Chris Danou of the 91st Assembly District's Christian clergy-proxy seemed to believe that she was preaching in a church, not the Wisconsin State Assembly Chamber when she beseeched the Holy One to "remind us all that we stand on holy ground."

By Pastor Nancy Carmichael, Immanuel United Methodist Church, Jefferson, Wisconsin, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Andy Jorgensen (D) Fort Atkinson – 37th District on 09 17 09:

Representative Andy Jorgensen of the 37th Assembly District's Christian clergy-proxy claimed that U.S. freedoms are "God-given."

By Representative Phil Montgomery (R) Green Bay -- 4th Assembly District on 09 22 09:

Representative Phil Montgomery of the 4th Assembly District exhorted his fellow legislators to pray to Jesus to determine Wisconsin State Legislation when he preached, "Lord, as we do business of The People of Wisconsin today, let us know that there are resources for all of us out there, that we need just take it to the Lord in prayer. In Jesus' Name. Amen."

By Reverend Tim Anderson, Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, Baraboo, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Fred Clark (D) Baraboo – 42nd Assembly District on 10 20 09:

Representative Fred Clark of the 42nd Assembly District's Christian clergy-proxy lobbied for specific Senate and Assembly Bills on behalf of Jesus Christ. He also stated that the state legislature should act to glorify Jesus Christ. This is a flagrant and blatant abuse of the *Marsh* exception.

By Representative Daniel LeMahieu (R) Oostburg – 59th Assembly District on 11 03 09:

Representative Daniel LeMahieu of the 59th Assembly District completed a prayer hat trick during the 2009-2010 legislative session when he joked that he only agreed to deliver the prayer in exchange for a guaranteed vote upon his offered amendments. He finished with an apparent plea for Christian theocracy in the State of Wisconsin when he sermonized, "And, we pray that all things we do would honor and glorify you. In Your Name we pray. Amen."

By Representative Richard Spanbauer (R) Oshkosh – 53rd Assembly District on 01 19 10:

Representative Richard Spanbauer of the 53rd Assembly District seemed to believe that honoring and benefiting Jesus is a higher priority of the Wisconsin State Assembly than honoring and benefiting Wisconsin citizens when he preached, "We live in the best state in the best country. Lord, we honor you today, hopefully, with the things we do are for your benefit as well as the people in this country."

By Reverend Martin Childs, Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church, Milwaukee, WI, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Barbara Toles (D) Milwaukee – 17th Assembly District on 02 16 10:

Representative Barbara Toles of the 17th Assembly District's Christian clergy-proxy preached to the Wisconsin State Assembly Representatives to please and honor Jesus when he said, "Dear God, may you be pleased and may you be honored in everything that is said and done in this Assembly. As we lift them before you, in the Name of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen."

By Pastor Walter Harvey, Park Lawn Assembly of God, Milwaukee, WI, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Barbara Toles (D) Milwaukee – 17th Assembly District on 02 25 10:

Again, Representative Barbara Toles of the 17th Assembly District's Christian clergy-proxy prayed for the moral strength of the state of Wisconsin as well as the strength of the hands of the state legislators to do Jesus' work as part of their official government duties.

By Representative Pat Strachota (R) West Bend – 58th Assembly District on 04 15 10:

Representative Pat Strachota of the 58th Assembly District lamented the sorry state of affairs in which the Wisconsin State Assembly finds itself when she preached, “For we are weak servants whose lives are short, and we are always lacking in right comprehension of justice and of law.” But, she sermonized, there is hope yet for the State of Wisconsin. If only our state legislators will pursue “what conforms to your commands,” then they will be made “ever more into your sons and daughters of grace.” Wisconsin State Representatives need only recognize that they “have no power, honor, or authority apart from you, oh Lord.”

By Pastor Ramie Bakken, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Black River Falls, WI, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Mark Radcliffe (D) Black River Falls – 92nd Assembly District on 04 22 10:

Representative Mark Radcliffe of the 92nd Assembly District’s Christian clergy-proxy named the “Almighty and Eternal God” not only the creator and redeemer of our world, but also the creator of the Wisconsin State government.

By Pastor Krystal Williams-Oby, Northside Christian Assembly, Madison, WI, Christian Clergy-Proxy of Representative Annette Polly Williams (D) Milwaukee – 10th Assembly District on 12 15 10:

Representative Annette Polly Williams of the 10th Assembly District’s Christian clergy-proxy (her daughter) claimed that the Wisconsin State Assembly should legislate to thank and praise Jesus, so that “everything that we set our feet to do, Father, it will prosper In Your Name. . . . To Our God, In Jesus’ Name. Amen.”