

## **Report of BGM Director to ABHMS**

Jim Wolfe

The Board of Directors of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies held its biannual meeting November 14-16, 2016 in Valley Forge. ABHMS introduced a new mission strategy that will enable the organization to relate to a larger number of partners and increase mission engagement across the southern part of the United States.

The new strategy— “Connect. Cultivate. Change.”—will focus on: increasing the capacity of American Baptists to impact U.S. society; forecasting and influencing trends impacting Christian leaders; and publishing and promoting high-quality resources.

The presentation of “Connect. Cultivate. Change” was made by members of the strategy development team: Maria Aguilar, the Rev. Lisa Harris-Lee, Gina Haas, Joshua Kagi, the Rev. Florence Li, the Rev. Salvador Orellana and Sarah Strosahl-Kagi. Additional team members are Derrick Gilbert, the Rev. Dr. Jeff Johnson and the Rev. Kristy Moeller.

In other business, the Rev. Dr. Eddie Cruz, associate executive director of Mission Advancement, announced the America for Christ Offering 2017 theme— “Cultivating Leaders”—undergirded by Luke 4:18-19: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Offering materials should be received in churches in December.

The board affirmed calling three new directors: Sanetta Ponton, First Baptist Church, Englewood, N.J.; Lacey Alford, Wheat Street Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.; and Xyomara Medina Ramos, Primera Iglesia Bautista de Castañer, Puerto Rico.