

**2005 BIENNIAL MEETING OF THE
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE U.S.A.
July 1-3, 2005
Denver, Colorado**

OPENING SESSION - FRIDAY, JULY 1, 2005 – 3:00 p.m.

Afternoon Gathering

"Lift Up Your Eyes and discover who we are under the grace of God."

1. As people entered the hall, the **ABCUSA Vision Statement** was projected on the screen at the front of the Lecture Hall.

LIVING THE LOVE OF JESUS WITH PRAYER, PURPOSE AND PASSION

"American Baptists are a Christ-centered, biblically grounded, ethnically diverse people called to radical personal discipleship in Christ Jesus. Our commitment to Jesus propels us to nurture authentic relationships with one another, build healthy churches, transform our communities, our nations and our world, engage every member in hands-on ministry, and speak the prophetic word in love.

"As a people of prayer, purpose, and passion, we are in the forefront of creating a diverse community of faith where people of every race, nationality and culture gather as one in worship, witness and work.

"The heart of the gospel is God's redemptive love. In our life together, the world will see the power of forgiveness to overcome alienation, the strength of love to transform hate, the power of grace to break the bonds of guilt, the triumph of hope over despair, and the victory of faith over doubt.

"Through the cross of Christ we embrace the world as neighbor. Our vision for mission energizes a multitude of servant ministries of evangelism, discipleship, leadership, new church development, social justice, healing, peacemaking, economic development and education. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we work together in mutual trust, humility, love, and giving that the gospel might be preached and lived in all the world."

2. The **Exaltation Ringers**, from First Baptist Church, Topeka, Kansas, **played the prelude.**
3. The **praise processional**, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name", was **played by** Biennial Organist, **James Abbington**, as songleader **Karen Shipp** led the **congregation.** Chaplains & Pastoral Counselors Award recipients Chaplain **Thomas P. Azar**, Chaplain **Mang Tiak**, and Pastoral Counselor Rev. **Scott P. Kavanagh** were **escorted into the hall by** Rev. **George Langhorne**, of the Chaplains and Pastoral Counseling Service, National Ministries. They were

- accompanied by** representatives of the missionaries engaged in ministry as **Christian Center Directors, American Baptist Homes and Hospital Directors, Campus Ministers, National & International Missionaries.**
4. ABC President **Margaret (Peggy) Johnson welcomed** the attendees and **noted** that 30 **Regional Youth Representatives** from many regions and AB Girls were attending the Biennial. She encouraged delegates and visitors to meet and talk with these young people during the meetings.
 5. **Chaplain Thomas Azar, Chaplain Man Tiak, and Rev. Scott Kavanagh** next **led** the congregation in prayer.
 6. President **Johnson** next introduced the concept of worshipful work and **called to order** 2005 Biennial Meeting of American Baptist Churches (ABCUSA). She **announced** that as of 2:30 p.m., July 1, 2005, 1435 Delegates had registered. Therefore, for this Biennial Meeting, in accordance with the ABC Bylaws (Article IV, Section 3-b) 479 delegates (one-third of the registered delegates) would be the **quorum.**
 7. President **Johnson referred** the delegates to the “**Materials for Business Sessions**” printed in the Biennial Program Book. These materials included the “Rules of Procedure for the Conduct of the 2005 Biennial Meeting of Delegates”. The Rules note that *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* would govern the conduct of any business which came before the meeting, except where inconsistent with the ABC Bylaws and the Standing Rules, or the Rules of Procedure voted by the delegates to this 2005 Biennial Meeting.
 8. President **Johnson** also **called attention to** the “Rules of Procedure” document for the **Statements of Concern**, also in the Biennial Program Book. She noted that speaker registration for the Statements of Concern to be presented on Saturday and Sunday would be held from 2:00 to 2:30 p.m., and pointed out the registration location.
 9. **Adoption of the Rules of Procedure** was **passed** with the required two-thirds majority.
 10. President **Johnson introduced** Hank Pedersen, chair of the 2005 Biennial Program Committee.
 11. Chairperson **Pedersen welcomed** delegates and visitors to the Biennial Meeting and **thanked** members of the Local Arrangements Committee, the Biennial Program Committee and the Staff Advisory Group for their work in planning the Biennial.
 12. It was noted that since the 2005 Biennial Program Committee had completed its work, its members became the Order of Business Committee and Hank Pedersen the Chair of the Order of Business Committee. **Pedersen** also noted that an adjusted order of business for the Biennial Meeting had been given to delegates as they registered. On behalf of the Biennial Program Committee, he **moved the adoption of the adjusted provisional program**, subject to any changes the Committee on the Order of Business might recommend. **The motion passed.**
 13. President **Johnson introduced** the **Rev. Dr. Arlee Griffin, Jr.**, ABC Vice-President.
 14. Vice-President **Griffin introduced** the Biennial Meeting **Parliamentarian, Frank Christine.** He then noted that the information shared during the Saturday and Sunday afternoon Gatherings would constitute the information

sharing relating to the work of the General Board as called for in the ABCUSA Bylaws.

15. Vice-President **Griffin** noted that the **report of the ABC Nominating Committee** had been published in the Spring 2005 issue of IN MISSION magazine, sent to each American Baptist Cooperating Church and each Region. The report also appeared on the ABCUSA web site and was included in the 2005 Biennial Meeting Program Book. He then read Standing Rule 4.3.5 which deals with procedures for receiving nominations from the floor and announced that the deadline for submitting nominations from the floor had been extended until 7:00 pm that evening.
16. Vice President **Griffin** next indicated that “**Intent to Nominate from the Floor of the Biennial Meeting**” and “**Intent to Move to Amend**” Notices regarding the Number of Representatives and Resolutions on Bylaw Changes could be secured in the ABC Biennial Office, Room 608, and **would be received until 7:00 pm that evening.**
17. **Johnson** announced that the **election** of ABC Officers and Statements of Concern Committee members would take place at the **Saturday evening Gathering.**
18. **Karen Shipp** led the congregation in singing “*All Are Welcome*” by *Marty Haugen*
19. **George Langhorne**, Chaplaincy and Pastoral Counseling Services, **introduced** a video taped presentation by **Eric Holmstrom**, a chaplain serving in Germany.
20. Next, **Langhorne** gave an **introduction** for the afternoon’s speaker, **Dr. LeRoy Gilbert**, retired chaplain, currently serving as pastor of Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, Washington, DC.
21. **Joyce Sinclair Lake** sang a solo, “*Give Us This Day*”.
22. General Secretary **A. Roy Medley** read the scripture for the afternoon, Psalm 121.
23. **Leroy Gilbert** preached the afternoon message.
24. The **congregation** sang “*Here I Am, Lord*”, led by **Karen Shipp.**
25. **Leroy Gilbert** gave the **benediction**, which was followed by the postlude, played by the **Exaltation Ringers.**

SECOND SESSION - FRIDAY, JULY 1, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.

Evening Gathering

“Lift Up Your Eyes and discover where we are under the grace of God.”

26. **James Abbington** played the prelude.
27. Vice President **Griffin** led the **Call to Worship** and a **Regional Youth Representative** gave the **Invocation.**
28. **Griffin** introduced Biennial Program Committee Chairperson, **Hank Pedersen** who **welcomed** those present at the evening Gathering, **gave a brief overview of the Biennial schedule and introduced the Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister**, Interim Region Executive Minister of ABC of the Rocky Mountains, host region.

29. **Hoffmeister brought greetings** from the host region, and **introduced the Rev. Sandra Boyd** from the Colorado Council of Churches, who **also brought greetings** to the delegates and visitors present.
30. The congregation sang *"The Church's One Foundation"*, **led by Karen Shipp and the Biennial Massed Choir.**
31. President **Johnson** and General Secretary **A. Roy Medley presented** Cora and John **Sparrowk Presidents' Award** to **Charles and Barbara Chicks.**
32. **Charles and Barbara Chicks responded.**
33. **Regional Youth Representatives introduced** the Offering, which will be used to support Youth Programs and the Biennial Regional Youth Representative Program .
34. The **congregation sang** *"I Will Call Upon the Lord"* , *"We Have Come to This Place"*, and *"We Are One"* **led by Karen Shipp.**
35. Vice President **Griffin introduced** General Secretary **A. Roy Medley**, the evening's preacher, then **read** the scripture for the evening, **Esther 4:6-14.**
36. **The Biennial Massed Choir Sang** *"Balm in Gilead"* and *"Total Praise"*.
37. A **video greeting from Tony Campolo** was played as introduction for the evening preacher.
38. **A. Roy Medley preached** the evening message. At the end of the message, Dr. **Medley asked the congregation to pray with him.** The **congregation** then spontaneously **sang** *"They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love."*
39. **A. Roy Medley gave the benediction.**
40. **James Abbington played** the postlude.

Saturday Morning, July 2, 2005 – 11 a.m.-12 Noon

A Praise and Worship session of Taizé music was led by Brad Berglund and others from Calvary Baptist Church, Denver, CO.

THIRD SESSION - SATURDAY, JULY 2, 2005 – 2:45 p.m.

Afternoon Gathering

"Lift Up Your Eyes and discover who this God is that we worship and serve."

41. Biennial Song Leader **Karen Shipp led** the congregation as they sang *"My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"*, *"Give Me a Clean Heart"*, and *"God, We Thank You for Our People."*
42. President **Johnson called the business session to order** and reminded people where they could register to speak. She then indicated that the **minutes of the 2003 Biennial Meeting**, held in Richmond, Virginia, had been reviewed by members of the 2003 Biennial Program Committee, and appeared on the ABCUSA web site. They will remain on the ABCUSA Archival Reports Page of the web site, and a file copy of the minutes is kept in the Office of the General Secretary.
43. Vice President **Griffin introduced** six (6) resolutions presenting proposed **changes to ABCUSA Bylaws:**

The **FIRST proposed Resolution** to amend the ABCUSA Bylaws is a recommendation by the General Board to the Delegates to the ABCUSA 2005 Biennial Meeting relating to the authorization of telephonic Board of Committee meetings. The General Board recommends the following new Paragraph (f) be added to Article X, Section 3, of the By-laws to read as follows:

“(f) Conference Telephone Meetings. Any one or more members of the General Board or any committee thereof, may participate in a meeting of the General Board or any committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.”

The FIRST Resolution PASSED.

SECOND proposed Resolution to amend the ABCUSA Bylaws:

Due to the dissolution of the Board of Educational Ministries, the Bylaws will need to be altered to eliminate references to BEM and make other necessary changes in Article XI, Section 3, paragraph (b).

The SECOND Resolution PASSED.

The **THIRD proposed Resolution** to amend the ABCUSA Bylaws also relates to the dissolution of the Board of Educational Ministries – recommended by the General Board to the Delegates to the ABCUSA 2005 Biennial Meeting. The ABCUSA Bylaws will need to be altered to eliminate references to BEM and make other necessary changes in Article XIII, Section 1.

The THIRD Resolution PASSED.

The FOURTH proposed Resolution to amend the ABCUSA Bylaws relates to Associated Ministry Organizations – recommended by the General Board to the Delegates to the ABCUSA 2005 Biennial Meeting.

In order to maintain continuity between the ABCUSA Bylaws and ABCUSA Standing Rules it is being recommended that the current Article XVII be replaced with the new Article XVII:

ASSOCIATED MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

An Associated Ministry Organization (AMO) must be a national or sectional American Baptist or other religious organization that indicates its willingness: to support the statement of purpose in the Bylaws of the ABCUSA, to cooperate whole-heartedly in such

relationships and projects at all levels of denominational life which seem advisable, and to be identified as an organization related to and participating in the life of the ABCUSA by use of name and/or logo.

The FOURTH Resolution PASSED.

The **FIFTH proposed Resolution** to amend the ABCUSA Bylaws relates to how the number of Biennial Delegates will be chosen – recommended by the General Board to the Delegates to the ABCUSA 2005 Biennial Meeting.

In light of the recent changes made to the Common Budget Covenant, changes needed to be made to the ABC Bylaw Article IV, Section, 2, Paragraph (a) which delineates how the numbers of Delegates to Biennial Meetings are determined.

In order to determine the number of delegates for those regions who selected the United Stewardship Plan and the regions that selected the Flexible Stewardship Plan, other changes are proposed.

An amendment was presented by James T. Oldham, Columbia Baptist Church, Columbia Station, OH, to refer the FIFTH Resolution back to the General Board.

The AMENDMENT PASSED – 721 Yes; 454 No - therefore, the FIFTH Resolution was referred back to the General Board.

The **SIXTH proposed Resolution** to amend the ABCUSA Bylaws relates to changes made to the Bylaws of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board – and would make the ABCUSA Bylaws consistent with these changes.

The SIXTH Resolution PASSED.

44. **Karen Shipp led the congregation singing “Will You Come Follow Me?”**
45. **The Program Boards reported on their activities (1st of 2 parts).**
46. **Statements of Concern Committee members Bruce Pullen, Mark Basil, Jan McCormack, and Ingrid Dvirnak presented a skit to introduce the first Statement of Concern, “A Call to Responsible Action”.**
(1065 Affirm; 103 Not Affirm; 3 Abstain)

STATEMENT OF CONCERN: A CALL TO RESPONSIBLE ACTION

Christians face many choices. What standards guide us in our choices? As people of the Word, American Baptists rely upon the Bible to give us direction. Jesus teaches us how we are to live responsibly in a secular society. “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (Matthew 22:21, NRSV)

Likewise, pioneering Baptists such as John Clarke, Roger Williams, and John Leland looked to the Bible in developing the principle of separation of church and state. Through the efforts of early Baptist, this principle was adopted at a time when state-sanctioned religions were supported by taxes. Baptists believe that government must neither establish nor promote religion. We have worked diligently to protect this principle. Nevertheless, some people act irresponsibly by asking government to regulate the way we worship and live in relationship with the God in whom we believe.

Living out our faith in community requires all of us to act responsibly. Responsible action in a secular society calls us to recognize and speak to the tensions between church and state. We are to act in Christian love in all of our choices and challenges.

We have neglected and abdicated our responsibility to witness to our faith in our communities, to teach our children what it means to be a part of the family of God living in a secular society, and to practice our faith with more depth than superficial symbols. Christ-like behavior and faithful declaration of the Christian message has the power to change the moral fiber of the world. Individuals and nations are not permanently changed by enforced laws but by the indwelling of the Spirit of God in their hearts. IN the words of Paul, “...you a letter of Christ,...written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” (II Corinthians 3:3, NRSV)

Therefore, American Baptists are called to:

- Teach and model prayer in both private and public life.
- Become change agents that enable the love of God to be placed in human hearts and not expect any government to assume what is our responsibility.
- Disciple one another in the skill of living a Christ-centered life in secular society.
- Engage in public ministry in their community.

- Advocate our core belief of separation of church and state as inspired by Scripture and tradition.
- Study God’s Word to discern God’s will for Christians in the secular society.
- Address our governments at all levels to refute interference in religious life.

47. Statements of Concern Committee members introduced the second Statement of Concern: “ Re-affirming the Association Principle.” (940 Affirm; 356 Not Affirm)

STATEMENT OF CONCERN: RE-AFFIRMING THE ASSOCIATION PRINCIPLE

Historically, Baptists have gathered together for common ministry, in groups such as the General and the Particular Baptists, in order to further the cause of the Gospel. As American Baptists, we have a long history of coming together in association for common ministry and mission. For example, in 1707, twenty-nine churches came together to form the Philadelphia Baptist Association. In 1814, American Baptists formed a missionary society to support Ann and Adoniram Judson as they ministered in Asia. In 1907, Baptists in the North united to create a denomination which encompassed the earlier separate and autonomous mission societies.

Throughout the twentieth century, American Baptists adopted many forms of association, including election districts, regions, and other organizations, in order to cooperate more effectively. As we stand at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we continue to build on this heritage for the sake of effective, faithful ministry and mission to the nation and to the world, in Jesus’ name.

Our denomination began with a common vision for world mission. Support for the Judsons, Lott Carey, and others who came after them, became a focal point for our association. Foreign mission inspired people of diverse backgrounds and cultures to engage in a common purpose at home and abroad. By working cross-culturally, we have experienced what Paul wrote about when he said:

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews.
 To those under the law I became as one under the law
 (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might
 win those under the law. To those outside the law I
 became as one outside the law (though I am not free
 from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) so that I
 might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I
 might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by
 all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may
 share in its blessings. (I Corinthians 9:20-23, NRSV).

Like Paul in the first century and the Judsons in the nineteenth century, we find ourselves in a similar situation. Churches have historically associated for common ministry, mission and theology. The many differing opinions among churches have become more of an issue than the ministry to which Christ Jesus calls us. As a result, our energies are focused on the internal dynamics of our life together rather than God's call to ministry in the world. This shift has diminished our commitment to Jesus Christ. We seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we redefine the way local churches come together.

Pursuing shared ministry requires a commitment to working across cultural and theological differences. Our struggle to deal with the challenges of this diversity has generated tensions within our American Baptist family. We seek God's will to remove unhealthy tensions in our associations while acknowledging that sometimes tension helps us grow spiritually. Although we relate in different ways, we are still partners in ministry. We can work together for the sake of the wider vision of the Reign of God.

THEREFORE, we call upon American Baptists to:

- Practice the historic Baptist principle of voluntary association at all levels.
- Encourage leaders to foster a variety of ways to work together under the guidance of God.
- Recognize that diversity exists within our American Baptist family and celebrate the many ways we cooperate in service to God.
- Witness that the body of Christ consists of many different members, that not all members are alike, and that each member is necessary for the healthy functioning of the church.

There were 5 Pro speakers and 7 Con speakers in response to this statement.

48. Peggy **Johnson closed** the afternoon session with a benediction.

FOURTH SESSION - SATURDAY, JULY 2, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.

Evening Gathering

"Lift Up Your Eyes and discover who this God is that we worship and serve."

49. As attendees entered the Lecture Hall video presentations of the Baptist World Alliance and the ENCOUNTER Youth Gathering were shown.
50. **Karen Shipp and Paul Gibbs led the congregation singing** *"We Come to Praise You,"* and *"Creator of the Mountains"*.
51. President **Johnson introduced** the Chairperson of the ABC Nominating Committee, **Manuel Luquin, who presented the report of the ABCUSA Nominating Committee.** The report included the nominees for ABC Officers (President: Rev. Dr. Arlee Griffin, Jr.; Vice President: Rev. Dr. Mary Hulst;

Budget Review Officer: Rev. Dr. Lloyd Hamblin) and six (6) members of the Statements of Concern Committee - five (5) members of the Class of 2009 and one (1) member of the class of 2007.

52. There being no nominations from the floor, **Luquin called for the delegates to vote for the slate of nominees.** Ballots received by the delegates as they entered the Lecture Hall for the evening session were collected to be counted, with results to be announced at the next session.
53. President **Johnson led the congregation in a responsive Invocation.**
54. **David Blythe**, president of National Ministries, **introduced Dr. Aidsand Wright-Riggins, III**, executive director of National Ministries and **Dr. James Carpenter**, recipient of the **NEW LIFE 2010 Award**. The New Life 2010 Award was established to recognize excellence in ministry that has led to congregational transformation through church planting, evangelism or caring ministries.
55. **James Carpenter responded.**
56. Biennial Music Consultant **Constance Sauls Wilkins led the Multi-Cultural Choir and the Say Amen! Gospel Choir** in singing "*Kum BaYa*" and "*All Nations of the Earth.*"
57. General Secretary **Medley introduced Dr. Denton Lotz**, executive director of the Baptist World Alliance, who made a presentation highlighting the BWA anniversary and its programs throughout the world.
58. **Medley next introduced the offering** which will be given for support of the Baptist World Alliance ministries.
59. Following an **offertory** by the **Say Amen! Choir** from First Chinese Baptist Church, San Francisco, California, **Medley introduced Dr. Molly Marshall**, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary, the preacher of the evening.
60. **Dr. Donald Ng**, senior pastor, First Chinese Baptist Church, San Francisco, California, **read the evening scripture:** Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 28:18-20; II Corinthians 13:13; 1 John 5:7.
61. **Following special music by the Haitian Alliance Massed Choir, Molly Marshall preached** the evening sermon.
62. **Karen Shipp and Paul Gibbs led** the congregation singing "*How Great Thou Art.*"
63. **Medley and Marshall officiated at communion** as **Heartstrings** played in the background.
64. **Rev. Charles Jones**, executive director of International Ministries, **gave the benediction.**
65. **James Abbington played** the postlude.

Sunday Morning, July 3, 2005 – 11 a.m.-12 Noon

A Praise and Worship session was held featuring the Covenant Players and members of Calvary Baptist Church, Denver, CO.

FIFTH SESSION - SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2005 – 2:45 p.m.

Afternoon Gathering

"Lift Up Your Eyes and discover the path that God wants us to follow."

66. **James Abbington played** gathering music.
67. **Karen Shipp led** the congregation singing *“Be Now My Vision”*.
68. **Results of the Election of ABCUSA Officers and members of the Statements of Concern Committee** were shown on the screen. The slate presented by the ABCUSA Nominating Committee was elected. This included President: Dr. Arlee Griffin, Jr.; Vice President, Berean Baptist Church, Brooklyn, New York; Rev. Mary Hulst, Calvary Baptist Church, Denver, Colorado; Budget Review Officer: Lloyd Hamblin, Jr., South Parkersburg Baptist Church, South Parkersburg, West Virginia.
69. Vice President **Griffin moved the resolution from the General Board concerning the number of Representatives to be elected for the 2006-2007 biennium. David Blythe**, president of the Board of National Ministries, **seconded** the motion. The text of the resolution is as follows:

RESOLUTION OF GENERAL BOARD RECOMMENDING NUMBERS OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR NEXT BIENNIUM 2006-2007

WHEREAS, as amended at the 1991 Biennial in Charleston, West Virginia, Article III, Section 2(1) of the ABC/USA Bylaws states that there shall be sufficient numbers of Representatives, as determined by the Biennial meeting upon recommendation of the General Board, to perform the functions of the General Board;

WHEREAS, as research by numerous scholars has demonstrated conclusively, a smaller board functions much more effectively and also produces much greater satisfaction and sense of accomplishment; and Representatives have confirmed that research by reporting that their work in smaller bodies is more satisfying, more productive in setting policy, and more effective in holding staff accountable;

WHEREAS, each Representative can participate more fully in work of smaller boards, and smaller plenaries will make debate more manageable, enabling a larger proportion of the membership to speak and facilitate shorter meeting times;

WHEREAS, smaller boards are more cost efficient in that travel, food and lodging expenses are reduced both directly because fewer people travel and indirectly because smaller, less expensive meeting sites become feasible and because shorter meetings reduce the demand for food and lodging;

WHEREAS, the Representative Process Review Commission (RPRC), in 1991 concluded, after extensive investigation and study, that a smaller General Board and therefore smaller national program boards (because the membership of each national program board is approximately one-third of the General Board) would be more effective and efficient, would constitute better stewardship of the Denomination’s resources and would not impair

representation or communication; and the General Board, after thorough consideration, approved the RPRC Report;

WHEREAS, as costs continue to increase and revenues continue to decrease, better stewardship of the Representative Process Budget becomes more and more imperative;

WHEREAS, the RPRC recommended that the General Board be reduced by attrition from approximately 210 to 160, comprised of 111 Election District or Regionally Nominated Representatives, 37 at Large or Nationally Nominated Representatives, and 12 ex officio or designated Representatives, and the General Board approved that recommendation;

WHEREAS, the 1995 Biennial in Syracuse voted to begin the process of reducing the size of the General Board as recommended by the RPRC and therefore to fix the number of Regionally Nominated Representatives at 143 for 1996 and 130 for 1997 and the number of Nationally Nominated Representatives at 46 for both 1996 and 1997, producing a total General Board of 201 in 1996 and 188 in 1997;

WHEREAS, the 1997 Biennial in Indianapolis voted to continue the process of reducing the size of the General Board by attrition and therefore to fix the numbers of Regionally Nominated Representatives at 126 for 1998 and 123 for 1999 and the number of nationally Nominated Representatives at 42 for both 1998 and 1999, producing a total General Board of 180 in 1998 and 177 in 1999;

WHEREAS, the 1999 Biennial in Des Moines voted to continue the process of reducing the size of the General Board by attrition and therefore to fix the numbers of Regionally Nominated Representatives at 114 for 2000 and 111 for 2001 and the number of Nationally Nominated Representatives at 38 for both 2000 and 2001, producing a total General Board of 164 in 2000 and 161 in 2001.

WHEREAS, the 2001 Biennial in Providence voted to continue the process of reducing the size of the General Board by attrition, and therefore, to fix the numbers of Regionally Nominated Representatives at 111 for both 2002 and 2003 and the number of Nationally Nominated Representatives at 37 for both 2002 and 2003, producing a total General Board of 160 in both 2002 and 2003;

WHEREAS, because of the pending dissolution of the American Baptist Board of Education and Publication resulting in one less program board, the General Board approving a new Budget Covenant with significant budget implications, and the proposed reduction in number of representatives, the 2003 Biennial in Richmond voted that the number of Regionally Nominated Representatives be fixed at a number no greater than 111 and no less than 90 in 2004 and no

greater than 111 and no less than 86 in 2005; and, that the number of Nationally Nominated Representatives be fixed at no greater than 37 and no less than 31 for both 2004 and 2005, producing a total General Board of no more than 160 and no less than 133 in 2004 and no greater than 160 and no less than 129 in 2005 (totals include the standard 12 ex officio or designated Representatives;

NOW THEREFORE, the **General Board recommends** to the 2005 Biennial Meeting that the number of Regionally Nominated Representatives is fixed at a number no greater than 81 and no less than 75 in 2006 and no greater than 78 and no less than 75 in 2007; and, that the number of Nationally Nominated Representatives be fixed at no greater than 27 and no less than 25 for both 2006 and 2007, producing **a total General Board of no more than 120 and no less than 112 in 2006 and no greater than 117 and no less than 112 in 2007. (These totals include the standard 12 ex officio or designated Representatives.)**

70. The **motion passed** by a rising vote.
71. **Karen Shipp led** the congregation singing “*Guide My Feet*”.
72. The **Program Boards reported** on their activities (2nd of 2 parts).
73. **The Rev. Douglas Copeland**, First New Life Missionary Baptist Church, Phoenix, Arizona, a member of the Statements of Concern Committee, **introduced the third Statement of Concern**, “Becoming Discipling Communities.” There were two respondents to the statement. (1001 Affirm; 46 Not Affirm)

STATEMENT OF CONCERN: BECOMING DISCIPLING COMMUNITIES

Life on the Way

“How can I understand unless someone helps me?” This was the question asked of Philip by the Ethiopian court official seeking faith on the Wilderness Road (Acts 8: 26-40 CEV). Modeling obedience to Jesus Christ’s Great Commission to the Church to make disciples, Philip walked alongside this seeker and guided him in the faith.

In an increasingly secular society, a similar set of questions can be asked of the Church by seekers and new believers: *How do I live an authentically Christian life? Where can I find the guidance that leads to a mature faith?* Too often the church’s response is short term: a pastor’s brief course on baptism, membership, and the organizational life of the church. It is hoped that new believers will “pick up the rest” in Sunday School and worship. The reality is that many new believers come from different religious and secular backgrounds and lack the resources that will nurture their spiritual lives for the long haul.

Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is the first step in a lifelong spiritual journey. Many new believers lack a depth of understanding of the Bible and of Christian faith. Mentors are needed to lead and nurture them from

acceptance by faith to a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ. Mature believers share their faith through evangelism, social witness and mentoring others.

Furthermore, the need and longing for spiritual guidance is shared by believers of all ages and at all stages in the Christian journey. The entire priesthood of believers needs ongoing discipling relationships that help us connect faith to all of life. All Christians need relationships to help them daily “take up the cross and follow [Jesus].” (Matthew 16:24 NRSV)

Congregations are the primary communities for such discipling relationships where Christians grow in faith. The increasingly secular and materialistic contexts of our lives call for a more intentional response. Moving beyond new member assimilation, we need to become discipling communities.

Such a response would represent a shift in how some churches make disciples and engage in service to those outside the congregation. In discipling communities, believers find guidance and growth through relationships with fellow sojourners on the Way. Discipling communities understand the Christian journey to be a lifelong adventure. As the Spirit works, God brings about transformation in our lives. We then use our spiritual gifts to help others become disciples of Jesus equipped for ministry.

Churches must be creative in form and methodology to meet the needs of seekers and long-time Christians. Clergy and laity can facilitate discipling relationships in formal and informal settings. Priscilla and Aquila, disciplined by Paul, took it upon themselves to disciple the believer Apollos toward a more mature faith. (Acts 18:1-3, 24-28) Congregations can provide intentional guidance that will lead to deeper and more engaged faith through one-to-one relationships, small groups, or larger forums.

Call to Action

In the spirit of Phillip, who followed God’s leading to disciple a seeker on his journey; and in the spirit of Priscilla and Aquila, who disciplined a fellow Christian toward a more mature faith; we call upon our American Baptist congregations and communities to:

- Provide discipleship opportunities for mentoring new believers who come from secular or non-Christian backgrounds.
- Provide teaching and spiritual guidance for the church family as they continue their walk with Jesus.
- Provide additional opportunities to practice the disciplines of Bible study, prayer, witness and service.
- Support the lifelong spiritual growth of long-time Christians and ministerial leaders through discipling relationships within and beyond the congregational community.
- Collaborate with regional and national staff for resources in discipleship training.

- Provide financial support for regional and national staff to develop and make accessible more discipleship resources.
74. Next up for consideration was a **Signature Statement of Concern**, “Upholding the Purpose of Our Association”. At least 150 signatures were secured to bring this statement before the delegates. **Ralph Wagner**, Chairperson of the Statements of Concern Committee, **served as moderator during the response time**. There were 8 Pro speakers and 9 Con speakers responding to this statement. This signature statement will be referred to the Statements of Concern Committee for further discussion, possible editing, and possible presentation at a future Biennial.
75. Vice President **Griffin recessed the meeting** until 7:00 p.m.

SIXTH SESSION - SUNDAY, JULY 3, 2005 – 7:00 p.m.

Evening Gathering

“Lift Up Your Eyes and discover the path that God wants us to follow.”

76. **James Abbington played** the prelude as scenes from the previous days of the Biennial were shown on the screens.
77. **Liturgical dancers/choreographed by Lynda Walker** entered carrying a variety of colored banners each representing different Key Ministry Areas, as the congregation sang “*Bless the Lord, O My Soul*”. The dancers placed the banner poles in holders on stage, before leaving the hall.
78. President **Johnson welcomed** delegates and visitors to the final Gathering of the Biennial Meeting, then **introduced the newly elected ABC Officers**: President-elect Rev. Dr. Arlee Griffin, Jr.; Vice-President-elect and Rev. Dr. Mary Hulst. Budget Review Officer, Rev. Dr. Lloyd Hamblin, Jr. was unable to be present due to illness.
79. President-elect **Griffin addressed** the delegates and visitors.
80. **Curt Lucas sang a solo.**
81. President **Johnson introduced Dr. Daniel Vestal who brought greetings from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**. President **Johnson also noted** that ABCUSA and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will be worshipping together when their meeting schedules will overlap in Washington, DC in 2007.
82. **Dr. C. Jeff Woods**, Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries, **introduced new region executive ministers** who have come to their positions since the 2003 Biennial in Richmond, Virginia: Dr. David Carrico, West Virginia Baptist Convention; Dr. Marcia Patton, Evergreen; Dr. Charles Revis, ABC of the Northwest; and Dr. Larry Swain, Pittsburgh Baptist Association. Rev. Judy Allbee, ABC of Connecticut and Dr. Tony Pappas, ABC of Massachusetts, were unable to be present.
83. Local Arrangements Committee Chairperson **Dr. Paul Martin introduced the evening offering**, which will be used to support the local ministry of the Curtis Park Christian Center.
84. **Karen Shipp sang the offertory, accompanied by James Abbington.**
85. **The Edwin T. Dahlberg Peace Award**, given in recognition of an American Baptist’s deep commitment to issues of peace and justice, was **presented to the Honorable Charles Z. Smith, Esq. By Dr. Aidsand Wright-Riggins, III.**

86. **Charles Z. Smith responded.**
87. **The West Virginians from Alderson-Broadus College provided special music.**
88. **A. Roy Medley introduced Philip Yancey, the speaker of the evening.**
89. **Rev. Herschell Daney, All Tribes Community Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma, read the scripture.**
90. **Philip Yancey spoke.**
91. **Manuel Luquin, President of American Baptist Men, led a time of prayer, accompanied by Heartstrings.**
92. **President Johnson led a litany of blessing for the ministries in which the people present are involved, asking people to stand and respond as their particular ministry was mentioned. The ministries mentioned included: Discipleship; Evangelism; Leadership; Church Planting; Youth; Peacemaking; and Social Justice.**
93. **A. Roy Medley and the President- and Vice President-elect gave the benediction.**
94. **Karen Shipp led the congregation singing "Bless the Lord, O My Soul" as liturgical dancers carried the banners from the hall.**
95. **James Abbingtion played the postlude.**

REGISTRATION REPORT FOR THE 2005 BIENNIAL

Registered Delegates	1,565
Registered Visitors	388
Staff	<u>156</u>
Total	2,109

2005 Biennial Program Committee :

Keiko Chew, Oakland, CA
The Rev. Herschell Daney, Sand Springs, OK
Jessica Echard, Arlington, VA
The Rev. Dr. Priscilla Eppinger, Lamoni, IA
The Rev. Dr. Paul Hayes, Noank, CT
Manuel Hernández, Portage, IN
Manuel Luquin, Stanton, CA
Sue MacDonald, Ronks, PA
The Rev. Hank Pedersen, Chair, Warwick, RI
Kevin Rose, Indianapolis, IN
The Rev. Francine Stark, Chicago, IL
Larry Willison, Canvas, WV
The Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister, ABC of the Rocky Mountains
Peggy Johnson, ABCUSA President
The Rev. Dr. Arlee Griffin, Jr., ABCUSA Vice President

Staff Advisory Group:

The Rev. Beverlee Everett, Office of the General Secretary,

Assistant Biennial Program Coordinator
The Rev. Dr. Perry Hopper, MMBB, Associate Executive Director
Annie Marcucci, Office of the General Secretary, Director, Travel and
Conference Planning
Karen Mason, International Ministries, Director, Special Events and
Promotion
Laura Miraz, National Ministries, Associate Executive Director, Ministry
Support Services
Richard Schramm, Office of the General Secretary, Biennial Program
Coordinator

Consultants:

David Greenfield, Production Coordinator, Bloomington, IN
Chris Ross, Technical Director, Goshen, IN
Constance Sauls Wilkins, Music Consultant, Denver, CO

Local Arrangements Committee:

The Rev. Dr. Paul Martin, Chair, Pastor, Macedonia Baptist Church, Denver,
CO
The Rev. Dr. Louise Barger
Laurie Cuthbertson
Mike Davisson
Pam Faulkner
Paul Gleason
Clara Henderson
Dynell Hilton
The Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister
Maxine Gatewood
Kevin Lowe
Emily Mankin
Agnes Martin
The Rev. Jan McCormack
Steve McCormack
DeWayne Moore
Linda Scherr
Cornelius Scott
Barbara Shannon-Banister
Sharon Taylor
Ahao Vashum
Constance Wilkins
Rosalie Williams
Jess Willis

Statements of Concern Committee:

Mark Basil, Cincinnati, OH
The Rev. Gordon Braun, S. Plainfield, NJ
The Rev. Douglas Copeland, Mesa, AZ
The Rev. Dr. George Cummings, Hercules, CA
Ingrid Dvirnak, Pueblo West, CO
Angela Farrar, Seattle, WA

The Rev. Jan McCormack, Aurora, CO
The Rev. Michael-Ray Mathews, San José, CA
Edna Pincham, Youngstown, OH
Dr. Bruce R. Pullen, Westfield, MA
The Rev. Russell Steiner, Melba, ID
The Rev Ralph W. Wagner, Chair, Laurenceville, NJ
The Rev. Harry Williamson, Geneva, NY