



ABCUSA Board of General Ministries Meetings Conclude

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 11/10/12)—The American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) Board of General Ministries meetings concluded on Saturday, November 10, following its third meeting in 2012 under the new ABCUSA structure. The Board met at the Crowne Plaza in Valley Forge, PA. This meeting marks the third time that the Board of General Ministries is meeting following the denominational bylaws changes passed by the former General Board in June, 2011.

“We are in a period of re-building and re-knitting ABC with a renewed sense of empowerment by the Spirit,” said Roy Medley, general secretary of ABCUSA. “Our responsibility is to lead with a big picture perspective, while holding Transformed by the Spirit before the denomination as we serve as the hands and feet of Christ.”

The ABCUSA Board of General Ministries voted to adopt the 2013 budget presented by budget review officer James R. Ratliff. ABCUSA President Ruth Clark gave the Report of the BGM Executive Committee, and board director Wesley Roberts gave the Report of the Credentials and Caucus Committee.

During a presentation by Ken Kho, serving as a representative for the Intercaucus, the appreciation of members was expressed for the money that comes to them from ABCUSA and the Board of General Ministries. “Money that goes to Caucus Administration is being translated to programs and activities and is used in forging and forming relationships. That money returns to us tenfold, and even more, as we all contribute to the life of our denomination.”

The BGM received an update on the Transformed by the Spirit initiative on Friday afternoon from General Secretary Medley. More information can be found about Transformed by the Spirit by visiting the ABCUSA website at www.abc-usa.org.

Rev. Alan Rudnick, pastor of First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa, NY, said, “Transformed by the Spirit is not a ‘boxed ministry plan,’ but rather a process in which churches think about their future in light of the challenges they face. It is a spiritual process and not a process in which the outcomes are already planned or known. This is what we see in scripture. God calls people to a journey and the journey is just as important as the destination. That is what Transformed by the Spirit is about.”

In a Friday evening session, Reg Mills gave Board members an update about the Mission Summit/Biennial, which will take place June 21-23, 2013 in Overland Park, Kansas. He shared about the important anniversaries and key pieces that Board members can look forward to when they attend the Mission Summit/Biennial. He introduced the new church registration policy, created to make it easier for individuals to be able to attend the Mission Summit/Biennial. He encouraged them to visit the event's website at www.americanbaptists2013.com.

The Report of the American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS), given by Trinette V. McCray, president of ABHS, introduced ABHS' Visioning and Strategic Plan, as voted on by the ABHS Board of Managers in September 2012. The plan highlights brand recognition, as well as a goal to become a premier Baptist Historical Society, and the hiring of a new full-time staff person.

At different points during the plenary sessions, reports were shared with directors by the BGM representatives to the Boards of American Baptist Home Mission Societies, International Ministries, and Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board.

The full Board of General Ministries received reports and proposals from the six Response Groups made up by Board members, which resulted from Thursday's and Friday's break-out sessions. The committees are the Committee on Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations, Committee on Congregational Renewal, Finance Committee, Committee on Mission Resource Development, Committee on Missional Response and Committee on Professional Church Leadership.

The final agenda item was a presentation of the new ABCUSA website, given by Bridget Holmstrom, Web Manager/Communication Specialist for ABCUSA. It was announced that the new denominational website will go live on Wednesday, November 14.

In closing of the meeting, a commissioning prayer was given for the members of the Board who will be attending upcoming trips to the Middle East.

American Baptist Churches is one of the most diverse Christian denominations today, with 5,500 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members, across the United States and Puerto Rico, all engaged in God's mission around the world.