

**American Baptist Churches of New York State
Board of Mission – June 13, 2008**

President Ruth Spencer called the meeting to order at 10:00 am, and asked Randy Palada to lead the Board in a time of Worship. Following the singing of "It Is Well With My Soul", Randy said that many people appreciate his use of a visual presentation in worship services, especially in connection with a children's story. He will be leading a workshop on this type of presentation at our Biennial Meeting. He followed with a number of clever and inspirational drawings, which often began with the suggestion of a familiar object and then were transformed into something else. For example "Spring Flowers", with a face like a person then could be inverted to look like a hat on a person. "The Liberty Bell – 1776" became a picture of George Washington, but Randy noted, "Jesus is greater in giving freedom than Washington". Under the subject of "Growth and Milk", he turned "M O O" into a cow, noting "You can't just drink milk, as you must grow up too". After asking, "What is the biggest sea animal?" and drawing a whale, he turned it into the biggest land animal, an elephant. Talking about getting married, he said we first "Get a wedding ring with a diamond" and turned this into a baby with a hat. With the command, "Do not judge", he showed how a "Rabbit with question marks could become a duck, "QUACK", reminding us that "sometimes we judge by appearance", calling our attention to the text, 1 Samuel 16:7. He noted that we have conflicts and become angry because we don't look at something in the same way. While making a drawing that looked like either a mouse or a man, he stated that two individuals can be right or wrong or both right in what they thing they see. He called attention to 1 Corinthians 13, where, although there may not be agreement, love is patient, kind, not self-seeking, etc., and we must just love each other. Saying, "It is hard to get the devil out of the system when we don't have the love of Christ", he covered a devil picture with words of love, saying, "we must always focus on love and in seeking to form an association of churches; we cannot legislate, but must focus on love". Randy closed with a prayer that we may share insights in love for the Region, the member churches, and remember the ties that bind us. He then led in the singing of, "This Is My Father's World".

Motion was made by Jim Horton, seconded by Randy Palada, carried, to accept the minutes of the March 8, 2008, meeting of the Board of Mission, as written. Don Lawrence expressed his thanks to Mary Schwarz for taking the minutes in his absence.

American Baptist Men

President Joe Folckemer could not be present but provided printed information on the 76th Annual Men's Gathering at Keuka College, August 8-10, 2008. The Theme will be "Developing Good Habits", with keynote speaker, Rev. Bill Dodge, from the Utica Rescue Mission. He also distributed a flyer, "2008 Disaster Relief Initiative", describing the new ABMen/NYS Disaster Relief Cargo Trailer which, being smaller than the original one, "will have the advantages of being able to be towed by a pick-up truck, being able to respond faster and respond to areas inaccessible by the larger trailer. This will give us trailer coverage in the central and eastern portions of the state." Churches wishing to sponsor or donate materials for the new trailer may contact Rev. John Tharp at 315.536.9821 (pyfbc@peoplepc.com) or Art Sabourin at 518.371.0412 (deerslyr@nycap.rr.com).

Outdoor Ministries

John Buskey distributed a printed report in which he reported, "Registrations are currently seven lower than last year at this time. Our special needs camps are almost filled to capacity." He shared the story of a recent teenage retreat at Pathfinder where a young man sat off to one side but John and others made sure that they talked with him. His youth leader has since reported that he couldn't stop talking on the way home and his foster parents have seen a change, which the young man says is because he "met Christ". John told the Board members, "Camping produces fruits!" John asked for prayer: for nurses, for camps, for the camping program, and for campers. He noted, "There is a record number of volunteers this year." John also expressed thanks to the ABMen for splitting wood at Pathfinder and reported, "The road is completed at Pathfinder Lodge and there is a new dishwasher at Camp Vick."

John showed a video on last year's "Extreme NY" program, "Go Deeper Into Your Faith" and said that with the new name of "Activate – Extreme NY Mission", the program [Aug. 1 – 10] still has four openings for teens who want to grow in their faith. An exciting list of mission sites as well as local churches has been lined up, but they are not announcing schedule ahead of time as this teaches how God leads us day by day. "More Than A Week" [National Youth Event] takes place in Colorado at the end of June; there are several NYS youth attending. Teens that attend this event will also have the opportunity to attend one of our camps for the \$ 75 registration fee.

American Baptist Youth

John reported that the ABY Cabinet has met twice. The ABY convention will be November 7-9; materials will be out to the churches by late summer. They have a commitment from a speaker and are close to locking in a praise band. Plans for the weekend schedule will be finalized in their August meeting.

World Mission Support

Bill Carlsen reported that receipts through the First Quarter would indicate a huge challenge ahead, with United Mission behind 5.3 %. However, receipts through May show that giving has moved to ¾ % to the positive. He warned that since older church buildings will have much higher heating costs ahead, this may impact mission giving.

Financial Reports

Dave Cook distributed the **First Quarter Report** projecting an end of year deficit of \$40,000. He noted that First Quarter receipts were the lowest in 10 years. Under "Expenses", he observed that "Moving Costs" were high but will be reimbursed from proceeds of the office property sale. In the Outdoor Ministries' First Quarter Report, Bill noted that the upper portion showed "Operational Expenses" with Income exceeding Expenses by \$ 10,082 and in the lower portion, "ABC/NYS Investment in Outdoor Ministries" represented "Core Staff Expense" of \$ 16,428.

Property Sale Update

Bill Carlsen reported that the **office building** is under contract to be sold but the buyer has the busiest real estate attorney in the area and this has caused delay. We do collect rent until closing, but hope for the closing to take place soon. At **North Hebron**, a new survey shows that the fence is not on the property line and even some of the church wall may be on wrong side of the line. The lawyers have drafted papers to resolve line issue, but the owner of the adjacent farm and the proposed buyer are not on best of

terms. However, another offer for the same amount has come from a "friend" of the farmer -- so our attorneys have put a "time is of the essence claim" on the initial buyer's offer. Bill said, "If they can work it out, the initial purchase offer will go ahead, but if that offer is withdrawn, the second person will buy at the same price. When Ivan Crossno asked, "How long has the Region held the property", Bill said, "Since 1967, and we do pay taxes and insurance at an annual cost of less than \$ 2,000. The Region has paid this for about 18 months, after the Association's residual money to sustain property was used up. We have probably spent about \$ 2,200 to date but since the church that used the property put much money into upgrading the church, we will be selling for \$130,000 less fees". When Ivan asked whether we should continue to assume properties of closed churches since this is also a burden on staff time, Bill responded, "NYS Religious Corporation Law makes related church property default to us anyway". He added that when possible, as a church plans to close, he seeks to meet with the remaining trustees to encourage their choice of a trust to receive the assets and thus continue important ministry choices of the church.

Action on Sale of Assets

Bill Carlsen noted that according to our Bylaws, subject to Board action, the Executive Minister can act to buy and sell Regional assets, but he suggested blanket action to expedite these transfers. The process will, however, be simpler when we have moved all assets to the American Baptist Foundation.

Motion was made by Bob Town, seconded by Kathleen Danley, and carried, to authorize William Carlsen, Executive Minister, to take appropriate action regarding transfer of Regional assets for investment. In each case, when a transfer is to take place, the Region's Secretary will sign a form to indicate authorization for that transfer and the Board of Mission will subsequently receive a report of the action.

Bill reported that we have entered into a contract for a gas/oil exploration lease on the Camp Vick property. There are now productive wells in the neighborhood of the camp. With the receipt of a bona fide offer, a lease has been reviewed, revised, accepted; signed with the Ardent Resources Corporation of Pittsburgh, PA. He said that it takes 12 or more months to get permits for drilling, but they will pay \$ 4,000 - 5,000 for privilege to dig. We will receive certain amount of gas for our use/or the equivalent dollar value. Initially, this will be treated as a managed Camp Vick asset, somewhat like harvesting trees, to be used by Outdoor Ministries for deferred maintenance, etc. However a vastly greater income from this source would become a greater Regional asset. When Dave Trasoras asked if this will be unsightly, John Buskey said, "They can drill on back lands, will use about 1/4 acre of land; most of the work will be underground, and they will restore any damage. They will build and maintain whatever access road they use according to agreements with camp staff. Prime drilling is during the winter so will not do work when kids are on site". When Joe Perry asked about health risks, John said, "There are none; the most dangerous time is during actual drilling, and the company will carry adequate insurance". When Kathleen Danley asked, "As we move toward a year-round facility, could there be 'stranger danger' issues?", John said, "By lease, they can come in to maintain and monitor, but must notify us in advance about who is to be on site", and Bill Carlsen added, "New York State regulation of their kind of business is very stringent". Mark Caruana added that this should have a

minimal impact such as he has noted at Houghton College, which is now heating their whole facility with gas found on site.

Motion was presented by the Executive Advisory Task Force "That the Board of Mission confirms the signing by Bill Carlsen of the contract for oil/gas drilling on Camp Vick lands" and carried.

Confirmation to ABC/NYS Committee on Ministry

Motion was made by Susan Miller, seconded by Joseph Perry, and carried to confirm the appointment of Jerrie Matney as Capital Area representative to ABC/NYS Committee on Ministry, replacing Linda Rackliffe, who has moved into another association.

American Baptist Women's Ministries

Joyce Whittaker, President, distributed a printed report, noting that they had a successful 60th Annual Convention, April 25-27, at the Double Tree Hotel in Syracuse, with the Theme: "Come To The Edge – Step Out in Faith". There were 309 present and 24 were AB Girls. Following a new set of rules similar to those for state ABGirls Conference, there had to be an adult in each room with girls. Friday evening's program was an inspirational concert by Damaris Carbaugh and Teri Peacock, a Christian dramatist, was the guest performer for the weekend. Six Past Presidents were honored at the Saturday night banquet. There will be three area conferences this year: The Western Conference was held June 6-7, Houghton College, The Central Conference is June 13-14 at Delta Lake Conference Center, and the Eastern Conference will be September 18-20, at Christ The King Spiritual Life Center in Greenwich. NYS ABGirls Conference will be at Keuka College, July 1-6, for those in 6th-12th grade. The National ABW Conference will be at Green Lake Conference Center, August 9-15 and Joyce will represent ABWM, NYS.

Associations in Mission

Bob Town reported for the **Madison Association** that Tamara Davis, from North Manlius United Church, was Ordained in April. She graduated from Northeastern Seminary and is now doing a CPE program before beginning work in a women's chaplaincy ministry this fall. Aidsand Wright-Riggins will be the speaker for the Association Fall Convocation the first weekend of November.

Cedric Broughton reported that the **Mohawk-Oneida Association** co-sponsored a Youth Retreat at Pathfinder Lodge, May 2-4, with 42 youth and adults present. A number of their men helped with the ABMen's wood cutting project at Pathfinder. The Ordination of Pastor Daniel Htoo was recognized at the Spring Annual Meeting and Bob Martin was recognized as a Certified Lay Minister. Tom Hast, Cedric, and Daniel Htoo team-taught a New Testament survey course at Tabernacle Baptist, Utica, for Karen students. He said that this was a cross-cultural experience for students and teachers. The Boonville church provides rice cookers for newly-arrived refugees. Over 500 more refugees are expected by fall and Utica has also become a site for folks previously settled elsewhere to relocate. NYS has single largest number of Burmese refugees and housing in Utica is becoming filled. The Association has a regular monthly clergy breakfast for sharing needs and support, which is well attended by pastors of the 19 Association churches.

Susan Miller reported that over 65 persons attended the **Iroquois Association's** mini world mission conference on May 3. There were good speakers and displays.

Denominational Family Matters

Bill Carlsen reported that he represented ABC/NYS at the funeral services for Mrs. Louise B. Rea, who died just shy of her 95th Birthday. As a child, she received a scholarship to go to church camp in Virginia, so established the Louise B. Rea Trust Fund to provide similar good experiences for others. Bill noted that this is the weekend of the Ball Hall Restoration dedication at Keuka College. Dr. Harvey Ball, a Baptist pastor, established Keuka College as a place for children of ministers and missionaries to receive education. Keuka maintains an important mission to provide resources for first generation college students.

President Spencer called on Mark Caruana, who offered a prayer of thanks for the day, the many ministries of Region, and for the food to be shared. He asked God to strengthen us in order that we may strengthen others. Board members then adjourned for fellowship and a delicious meal prepared by the First Baptist Church of Manlius, who also provided the use of their building for the meeting.

Bill Carlsen shared a power point presentation, "THE FUTURE IS BEFORE US" on the model for restructuring ABC/USA, which will be shown to the General Board members at their next meeting. The presentation listed the Criteria for Evaluating the Model and the Organizational Principles underlying the Proposed Model. It suggests a "Federation" model with legally independent entities networked together. The National Office is to be a "Service Center" with responsibilities for "Brand Management". The new structure will include the "Mission Table/Summit" [leveraging resources for greater mission impact], "Board of General Ministries" [a core group operating the mechanics of the denomination with 16-22 members, but not a replacement for the current General Board], "National Boards", "Regions", "National Staff Leadership Council" Associated Ministry Organizations", and the "Biennial" [which, like a Mission Summit gathering, will formulate topics for the work of the Mission Table]. Also, a "National Leader Development Pool" will identify present and emerging leaders for denominational service; develop leaders; maintain a database through a common profile. The National Boards will be interrelated but not interlocking, with the agreement that the Boards cannot separate from ABCUSA. Bill distributed an "Organizational Matrix" sheet on the proposed structure.

When Don Lawrence asked, "Will this be more costly to our Budget?" Bill responded, "We in ABCNYS currently have not used all of our staff travel budget. Also, with a smaller board membership, there will be an attempt to use less costly meeting facilities". Mark Caruana observed, "As the structure is downsized, there is a continuing concern that the impact of local churches is reduced, and when he asked, "Since this looks like a typical corporation structure, where is the Biblical-Theological rationale?" Bill answered, "This was incorporated into the assignment, so we will probably receive a 'White Paper' in the future with this spelled out, and if we exercise representation through electronic means, we could have improved communication of the concerns of local churches". Mark commented, "The whole issue of 'branding' seems potentially powerful both positively and negatively", and asked, "Will this be limiting to related groups in their actions?" and Caspar Green asked, "Could this also be limiting to local churches?" Bill responded, "This issue has not been clearly raised but it is not explicitly intended to be restrictive in this".

When Ivan Crossno asked, "Where does local church get its voice?", Bill responded, "There is no one in the system who is not part of a local church". He said that the restructuring proposal will go to the General Board for a First Reading in June and a Second Reading in November, with Biennial action expected in 2009. From November to the Biennial there will be an educational process for the churches. If it is approved at the Biennial, every Regional Board will have to buy into the Covenants and 100% affirmation will be required. Bill also distributed the ABCUSA General Board Digest, Volume III, Issue 3, June 2008.

When asked for an update on the former Pacific Southwest Region, Bill said that 55 or 56 churches are with "Transformational Ministries" [the organization that left ABCUSA], about the same number have affiliated with Los Angeles City Society, and 150 or more have done nothing. The former PSW is not nearly as strong as they thought they would be and several other groups have stayed in ABCUSA with no intent to leave. Churches in Transformational Ministries are still supporting International Ministries, which initially worked out a continuation agreement with TM.

Ministers Council

Mark Caruana, the new Ministers Council President [elected to fulfill the remainder of the term of Susan Panek-Polizzi, who has moved out of state] reported that the Annual Meeting was a good event with Roy Medley as speaker. At that time it was announced that the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church in Wappingers Falls had a fire by arson, so the group took an offering of nearly \$ 600 to help them. Bill Carlsen added that the question of insurance reimbursement is still up in the air but the church received a gift from OGHS funds. Mark said that the Ministers Council will host a breakfast at the ABCNYS Biennial at Keuka and will present at a proposed revised Bylaws for the Council. At the Biennial exhibits they will have a resource table with pastoral and church resources available and a computer setup to help pastors and local church leaders access the Ministers Council website -- www.ministerscouncil.org. In 2009, Brad Berglund will lead the Spring Retreat at the Good News Center in Utica with the Theme, "How We Worship". At the Green Lake Senate this summer there will be a celebration of Kate Harvey's 14 years of service, before she retires. An Interim Executive Director has been appointed. He also reminded clergy members of Together In Ministry Groups that applications for 2009 are due in September and there is information available on the website.

Withdrawal from ABC Membership: Meredith Baptist Church

A communication from the Fransego Association stated that the Meredith Baptist Church voted on May 15, 2005 to withdraw from the Fransego Association, ABCNYS, and ABCUSA, and notified the Association in January 2008, of this action. The Fransego Association voted to accept their withdrawal on April 7, 2008. Doug Deer reported that the church's pastor has led them in conservative, non-ABC practice, such as not allowing women to speak, and they have not attended Association events in 15 years

Motion was made by Lynn Sullivan, seconded by Jim Horton and carried to accept the withdrawal of the Meredith Baptist Church with regret.

Committees

ABC/NYS Biennial Ruth Spencer reminded the Board members of the ABCNYS Biennial, Oct. 12-14, at Keuka College. The Planning Committee is looking for historical

information from each church to be shared. She said that registration information will be sent out soon, and noted that the best deals for meals will be on campus

Validated Ministry: Racetrack Chaplaincy

A pamphlet was distributed on the Race Track Chaplaincy of America, featuring Rev. Vincent Harris, Chaplain at Thistledown Race Track in Cleveland, Ohio. Mary Schwarz said that Chaplain Harris is a product of Hazel Roper's work in ABCNYS, a graduate of CRCDS, and was a resource person at the recent Mission Advocates Meeting. The pamphlet states, "The Race Track Chaplaincy of America was organized in 1971 to recruit and coordinate the work of racetrack chaplains. They offer racetracks and the horsemen's association a holistic program of service to all people employed in the racing industry, especially to those who work in the stable area. This program includes helping meet the religious needs of all employees, regardless of race, creed or language. Today there are 35 RTCA chaplains serving in more than 65 racetracks across America". Bill Carlsen added that there are Racetrack Chaplains at Saratoga and Belmont in New York State.

Future Meeting Dates:

September 13, 2008 (A change to allow people to attend the Mission Conference in Connecticut on September 20.)

December 5, 2008

Adjournment

After a closing prayer by Janice Robinson, President Spencer declared the meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Donald L. Lawrence, Secretary

Present: Cedric Broughton, John Buskey, William Carlsen, Mark Caruana, Ivan Crossno, Dave Cook, Kathleen Danley, Douglas Deer, Caspar Green, Jim Horton, Bob King, Donald Lawrence, Sue Miller, George Norton, Jr., Randolph Palada, Joseph Perry, Edward Pettibone, Jim Rice, Janice Robinson, Mary Schwarz, Ruth Spencer, Lynn Sullivan, Bob Town, David Trasoras, and Joyce Whittaker.