

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

President Ruth Spencer called the meeting to order at 10:03 am, and asked Susan Miller to lead the Board in a time of worship. Susan said, "God speaks to me through our natural world." On vacations in the Adirondacks, she takes along nature identification resources: for leaves and trees [asking Board members to identify some leaves, noting differences in shape, sizes, and structure], for identifying birds by sounds [books and audio CDs of bird songs, noting previous difficulty with books that tried to put bird songs into symbols], and for rock samples [using the hardness test, as, for example, your fingernail can't scratch quartz]. She then asked, "How are we identified as Christians? Not by shapes, sizes and colors, but by what people see in us and our actions. We have no unique 'call', but we do speak and others will know we are Christians by what language we use and what we don't use. There is no test for our 'hardness', but others can tell we're Christians by how we handle difficult times. They'll know by what they see, they hear, and how we handle situations. We have no identification book, but have the Bible." Susan suggested that we consider the "signs" of Christians in Romans 12:9-18; 21, closing with a prayer for the "business" of the church, for those suffering difficult times under Hurricane Ike, and for God's guidance of ministries and lives, that others may identify us as Christians by our practice, faith, and deeds.

Motion was made by Bob Town, seconded by Kathleen Danley, and carried, to accept the minutes of the June 13, 2008, meeting of the Board of Mission, as printed.

President Spencer called on Executive Minister, Bill Carlsen, for a "Ministry Moment", in which he began with a quotation Ecclesiastes 3:1, "There is a time for everything ..." and announced that the time had come for him to announce his retirement at the end of 2008 [letter filed with minutes]. He recalled that he has served as Executive Minister for over 15 years and was previously the region's World Mission Support staff for about the same amount of time. He was elected to serve on the ABC/NYS Board of Mission when called to the pastorate of FBC Rome, so has attended 32 years of BOM meetings. He stated that it has been a privilege to be able to serve in these ways. He plans to be present for the December BOM meeting for work on the 2009 Budget at that time. He will then take the rest of December as vacation time. He sees this as the beginning of another chapter in life and hopes to continue good relationships within an appropriate ethical framework. As he thanked the Board members for their partnership in ministry, they responded with an appreciative round of applause.

Motion was made by Lynn Sullivan, seconded by Joe Folckemer, and carried, that ABC/NYS celebrate the ministry of Bill Carlsen, wish him God's blessings and schedule a region-wide event in his honor.

Outdoor Ministries

John Buskey distributed a printed report, noting, "Over the past seven years Outdoor Ministries has been undergoing transformation, specifically in the scope and depth of how we have been doing ministry." In 2009, OM will change how they report out camping numbers and what they mean. While the printed report shows a trend of increasing attendance at camps [from 475 in 2007 to 507 in 2008], this is not a true picture: For example, "if a family comes to Family Camp, they are counted as one camper even if there were four or more in the family. Retreat groups were not counted, nor were special events on site that ministered to groups. So in the old accounting methods we would report 507 people ministered to. As we now count those who come to our sites for ministry, the real number is 1,170. This does not count our seminars and conferences held throughout the year."

John also reported that OM expects to finish the year \$500 or more "in the black". Also, a number of improvements are taking shape at the camps including the completion of the road work at Pathfinder, a new dishwasher, back hoe and post hole digger attachments for the tractor and new stairs and a ramp to the health lodge at Camp Vick, as well as a donation for a new maintenance building there.

John announced that he will be taking a sabbatical leave early in 2009 and will return to ABC/NYS to serve with new vigor and dedication. He said that he sincerely appreciates the mentorship of Bill Carlsen. John closed his report with a showing of pictures of Summer Camping – 2008.

American Baptist Youth

John Buskey introduced Jillene Narraway, Director at Camp Vick and ABY. Jill said that this was her first visit to the BOM after years of service. While camping is wonderful, we lose senior highs, but in her work with ABY, God has ignited a much-needed passion for ministry with high school students and youth. The Youth Cabinet of 13 [2 are college age] has chosen the theme, "Ignition", based on Romans 12:1 for the ABY Convention, November 7-9, 2008. They will help kids learn to give their lives to God in worship, with a devotional booklet helping them understand five Biblical Concepts, seeking to ignite passion for the Lord and give fuel to keep that engine running. Since it is harder to live for God in the real world than at camp or conference, they want to give them tools to continue passion for the Lord at home. Tim Moore from International Ministries is the main speaker. Churches should encourage their young persons to attend for the whole experience, if possible. There will be small group experiences and fellowship in a safe, positive Christian atmosphere for youth and adult advisors who attend. Material is on line at the website.

Ministers Council

Mark Caruana distributed a printed report, noting that Together In Ministry (TIM) Group 2009 applications are due by Monday, September 15. ABC/NYS has led the nation with the number of active TIM groups [11 in 2008] and the national Ministers Council has received another Lilly Grant to provide funding for another year or so. At the upcoming ABC/NYS Biennial, the Ministers Council will have a booth with free and low cost resources and hope to have a computer connection for national Ministers Council website. At the Monday 7:00 am breakfast, the Council will honor colleagues who have reached milestones in ministry and hear devotional reflections on the Biennial theme. During the Monday 10:45 am workshops session the Council will hold a special meeting to vote on proposed revisions to their Bylaws. The March 8-10, 2009, Retreat will be held at the Good News Center in Utica, with Brad Berglund as the resource leader. Also, Bud Adams has a dream of recruiting Jimmy Carter to come to upstate NYS for the 2010 Annual Ministers Council meeting.

World Mission Support

Bill Carlsen reported that that the 6th month report shows United Mission at 5.3 % over last year, but the July report shows UM increase at 2.9%, with overall giving down about 5.4 %. He said, "We anticipated decreasing income as we made our 2008 Budget, but the challenge ahead is that when fuel bills begin to arrive, the shock will have an impact on mission giving since history has shown that there will be a slowdown. We do not have a financial crisis in ABC or in local churches since our people have the capacity to respond positively if led to do so. A 3% level of giving would solve problems and a tithe would give us problems deciding what we would do with the excess. We can raise money for buildings and repairs, but find difficulty in raising money for general operations and mission." He suggested that we look at our regional ministries and possibilities in camping and youth work and get out the message.

The Youth Convention especially helps youth from the smaller churches. He said, "We must support these ministries that matter and get beyond 'survival mentality'".

Financial Reports

Bill Carlsen expressed appreciation to Dave Cook for preparing such helpful reports and analysis. Under "Income", he noted that the Second Quarter Report shows United Mission at 52%, but this was front-loaded from December giving and he still hopes that the estimate of 97% for year is lower than reality. Also, he is hoping that AFC receipts will increase by last quarter and that there will be a good response in the Regional Offering. Also, Line 21, "10% Program Administration" funds should be received in December. On the "Expense" side, we can expect to expend all that is budgeted by year's end making a deficit unless the property sale goes through. Regarding the Outdoor Ministries 6th Month financial report, Bill noted that the net difference was \$58,237 in the positive before camping expenses came in, with the goal that income and expenses will balance out by year's end. Thus the actual cost to ABC/NYS for camping is \$33,856.

When Bob King asked about the starting time for Vick natural gas development, Bill said, "It takes time for permits to be granted and drilling could begin by Winter of 2009, but the contracts promise us some financial return even before digging and the hope is that discovery will provide greater income with a return of possibly \$20,000 - 70,000/year." When Mark Caruana asked if priorities have been set as to what the greater proceeds from the drilling proceeds might underwrite, Bill said, "OM has some deferred maintenance in mind, but beyond that, resources should go to general ministries, and if we could endow certain parts of our ministries, it would be helpful". When Doug Deer asked if OM should be making these decisions alone, Bill said, "Only on limited basis, as they do with income from harvesting trees, but larger resources should be planned for by Executive Advisory Task Force and BOM. John Buskey said that \$18,000/year might be a more realistic income to expect from the drilling. Also, it will not disturb our camping program and will build needed access roads. He also observed that the consideration of offering drilling rights for exploration on camp property was all a result of the BOM asking OM to seek creative ways to raise funds.

Property Sale Update

Bill Carlsen reported that the sale of the **office building at Heritage Landing** has been completed and the mortgage holders have been repaid. All equipment was moved and old storage files were shredded. He and the Treasurer are in the process of shaking down expenses from the sale. There were no unexpected fees with the sale, and we were able to cover costs of the move.

Regarding the **North Hebron property**, Bill said that our lawyer has notified the buyer who made the initial offer to decide if he would close on an "as is" condition of property line, although he had wanted a clean deed. Another man has made an offer for same price with no concerns about the property line, so we should not lose the sale of the property. We could go to court and claim the six feet of land at issue but we would not seek to be adversarial and take on additional legal costs. It happens that the farmer who owns the adjoining land is not fond of the first buyer, but the second buyer is his best friend. Bill would like to see this sale completed by year's end and before he retires. Proceeds from the sale would help with the budget and cover the cost of some improvements at the new office site. Bill emphasized the fact that we are not seeking to inherit more buildings, but prefer to help congregations disburse their assets as they close.

Audit 2007

Bill noted that the Auditor's Report for 2007 only arrived during this past week. Questions are in order after review and will be welcome at the December BOM meeting. He observed that we no longer invite the auditor's representative to come to our meeting, but questions can be referred to him. When Sue Miller asked about the receipts from the Heritage Landing property sale [Note 6, on Page 12], Bill said that the gross sale price was \$280,000, but we had outstanding mortgages [in the area of \$100,000] and closing costs. He will provide a full report at the December BOM meeting. He also said that the North Hebron offer is for \$125,000 with no mortgages but modest closing costs.

Confirmation to ABC/USA General Board

Motion was made by Kathleen Danley, seconded by Hugh Tucker, and carried, to confirm the appointment of Holly Masters as a Nationally Nominated Representative to the ABC/USA General Board. Holly is a member of the Adams Village Baptist Church, daughter of Pastor Bud Masters, and is filling the national category of "Young Adult Representative". Her appointment needed to be confirmed by our Regional Board.

American Baptist Men

Joe Folckemer called attention to his report that was distributed in "Paragraphs for Partners". While Mike Gerega from Hilton, NY, has been elected as the new President of ABMen/NYS, Joe will continue on the BOM since Mike is from the Rochester/Genesee Region. The men are seeking new persons to serve as Area Vice Presidents and there is a great need for a new Treasurer to replace Harold Files who has held that position for many years. Joe will be pleased to receive suggested names for these positions. The ABMen/NYS have purchased a new disaster relief trailer that will be stored in the Capital Area. This smaller trailer can be pulled by a pick-up truck and some items are needed to supply this new vehicle. They are still seeking another trailer to be stored at the other side of the state for better response options and want to develop assessment teams to guide workers to areas of need. There will be a response team from ABMen/USA leaving Monday to provide disaster relief in the area of the most recent hurricane damage and many teams are already busy in their own states. Sue Miller said that we should all take home information and encourage local churches to take special offerings to help. The missions chairperson of her church thanked her for sharing information about this need. Jane Lang reported that she has received a request for assistance which she has distributed to her associations.

Recognition of Board Members Completing Their Terms

President Ruth Spencer read a listing of those for whom this is their last meeting as they are completing their terms on the BOM: Doug Thompson (CABA), Hugh Tucker(LW), Ivan Crossno(NABA), Joe Perry(NC), Kathleen Danley(WEGO), Doug Deer(FR), Caspar Green(At-Large), Bob King(At-Large), Ruth Spencer (President), Don Lawrence(Secretary), and Dave Cook(Treasurer). Board members greeted these retiring members with a round of applause and Mary Schwarz distributed gifts of appreciation to them. Ivan Crossno noted that he has served as General Board representative and NABA representative since NABA ceased to be a separate region. He recalled serving on the committee that called Bill Carlsen as Executive Minister and that the Region was in a severe financial crisis at that time.

President Spencer called on Patti Lawrence, who led the group in the "Superman Grace", often used at camp. 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.

Associations in Mission

Wayne Schultz reported that the **Wayne Association** is one of the smaller associations in the Region with twelve mostly rural churches. In the town of Walworth there are three Baptist churches, and two of them are struggling to continue. He said, "The greatest challenge of the Association is expressing to struggling churches they are also called to serve others outside of their own building. The second greatest challenge is convincing people that although they are small in number, they can still make a difference in the world." The Association began to think of doable outreach projects: "How can we make a difference in the world with so few people and funds? Maybe we're not equipped to change the world, but we have gifts that can bless individuals." His church has yearly mission encounter weekends, doing service projects in the local area: a soup kitchen, food pantry, yard work, painting downtown benches, visiting nursing homes. They invited the Association churches to share with them and this was a greater blessing. FBC, Williamson sponsored a trip to the Dominican Republic in 2007. They asked the Association to assist them and other churches did fund raisers, providing five suitcases of supplies. Thus, all the Association churches felt that they had made a difference. In the Dominican Republic, they began a relationship with small Baptist churches shortly before the hurricane came and flooded them out, destroying a church and day care center. \$1,000 was raised by the Association this past summer to help a DR church construct a new building, and in February 2009, workers from three of the Association churches will be heading back to the DR for a second mission trip, joined also by three members from the Broome-Tioga Association. Showing the power of networking, from ABC/USA, the Region, the Association, and down to local church, many of the Association's churches have experienced again the joy of serving and seeing how they can make a difference. Wayne showed posters about these mission trips and said that there is room for 3-4 more persons on February 2009 trip. Those seeking more information should contact him.

Kathleen Danley reported that thirteen churches between Rochester and Buffalo, Lakes Erie and Ontario make up the **WEGO Association**. They have a new Moderator and an active Association women's group. They sponsored a Work Day at Camp Vick this year. The Gaines-Carlton congregation is in the "New Song" process with Bob Shoemith, and there will be a Leadership Training Workshop in November. First Baptist, LeRoy, will celebrate their 190th Anniversary in October.

Denominational Family Matters

Bill Carlsen observed that this time between General Board meetings is focused on absorbing, understanding and deliberating the new denominational reorganization. They will next look at Bylaw changes needed to implement the plan at the 2009 ABC/USA Biennial. Presentations have been received without any great dissent expressed. Some feel that there is a need for a larger representation from the Regions that would add to the cost. Responding to a question raised at the June BOM meeting: "What percentage of the missional table would be required to be American Baptist?", Bill said, "No positions can be filled by non-ABC people. Consultants can be invited, but they will not be on the boards"

Regarding ABC/NYS staffing, Bill noted a process going forward to search for a part-time Area Minister for the Adirondack Area. He said that the current interim service is fine, but this search should go ahead.

American Baptist Women's Ministries

Joyce Whittaker, ABWM/NYS President, distributed a printed report, recalling the National Board Meeting and Gathering at the Green Lake Conference Center. There were 16 women from New York and a total attendance of 267. She appreciated the dynamic Bible Study

presentations by Regina.Pinto-Moura who challenged "us to go beyond the edge where God is calling us". They heard from missionaries, Karen Smith, of the New Life Center in Thailand, and Mylinda Baits, who works with the Costa Rica Baptist Foundation. Since Green Lake could only give a date in August for next year which would be too late for an AB GIRLS gathering, it was decided to hold the 2009 ABWM Conference, July 25-31, at Lake Williamson Conference Center, Carlinville, Ill., with the girls meeting at the same time. This will be "Coming to the edge" with a change of location. Joyce also gave an invitation to the ABWMinistries ABC/NYS Biennial luncheon, Monday, October 13, with speaker, Carol Sydnor, Missionary in Nepal.

Committees

ABC/NYS Biennial Ruth Spencer distributed copies of Keuka magazine featuring renovated Ball Hall dedication reminding Board members of the ABCNYS Biennial, Oct. 12-14, at Keuka College. There will be a time line showing 200 years of historical happenings including events in USA, NYS, key events of ABCNYS and the founding of ABC/NYS churches. Delegates will be given "Post-it-Notes" for adding interesting historical items to the time line about their local churches. During the sessions, Deborah Van Broeckhoven of the American Baptist Historical Society will do historical vignettes and some persons at the Family Diner will be dressed in period costumes. Transportation between buildings on campus will be available using a "glorified golf cart" to be run by Ed and Rita Castillo. Registration information will be sent out soon, and the best deals for meals will be on campus.

Validated Ministry: Community Missions of The Niagara Frontier serves many needy persons in Niagara Falls, NY, with food, clothing, and emergency housing. When asked about guidelines for organizations listed as "validated ministries", Bill Carlsen noted that these groups must have an American Baptist representative on their Board of Directors and are listed in our ABC/NYS Annual. When asked, "Who checks up on these groups to see if they still quality for support?" Bill said that the Validated Ministries program goes back to the time when the BOM had a committee for review, but this is now the task of the BOM as a whole. "Validated Ministry" status allows the agency the right to reach out to American Baptist churches for support. Mark Caruana observed that the Refugee Ministry at Tabernacle Baptist includes in its literature that it is Validated Ministry of ABC/NYS. They can thus reach out to members of the denominational family, allowing them to share in areas of ministry that they could not do by themselves. It also validates ministries American Baptists are doing at the local level.

Search Committee

President Ruth Spencer said that ABC/NYS Bylaws makes the search for an Executive Minister the responsibility of the Executive Advisory Task Force. The Search Committee is therefore to consist of the present EATF members and those to be elected at the October Biennial:

Elected ABC/NYS Officers [present and new ones elected], Presidents [or their designated representatives] of Auxiliary Organizations [ABMen, ABWM, and Ministers Council, Youth], and General Board Representatives. Also, one staff representative will serve without vote [to be selected by the staff]. The Search Committee will work with Jeff Woods [ABC/USA Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries], to secure an Interim and search for new Executive Minister.

When Mark Caruana asked "Who extends the call to the new Executive Minister?", Bill Carlsen said, "The EATF acts as the Search Committee on behalf of the Board of Mission. The Committee will recommend a candidate and the Board of Mission will affirm the call."

Sabbatical Policy Proposal [filed with minutes]

Bill Carlsen distributed a "Sabbatical Policy – Proposal" document which he had reviewed with the EATF. He said that he used the Ministers Council and other websites for suggested staff sabbatical policies and this composite includes full-time pay and health insurance coverage during that time, but no provision for ordinary travel and other expenses. When Mark Caruana asked, how the Region will cover John Buskey's responsibilities while he is away, Bill responded, "We hope to find ways for existing staff/volunteers to cover during his absence, and his camping responsibilities are decreased during the early months of the year".

In commenting on the Sabbatical Policy Proposal, Bill noted, "Six or seven years of service before a sabbatical is granted is standard, mostly in academia. In making a request, it is assumed that goals for time off will be listed, but perhaps this should be added explicitly in the text." When asked, "Does 'Executive Staff' include part-time area ministers?", Bill said that the proposal is intended for full-time staff, but could be considered case by case, noting, "Studies indicate that sabbaticals provide organizations with better people serving longer". Jane Lang observed, "If the Region has a policy for sabbaticals, field ministers can share this with pastors who are desperate for such an experience from their local church, and it sets a tone by saying to churches and pastors that you need this kind of opportunity for a high level of involvement.

Motion was made by Caspar Green, seconded by Mark Caruana, and carried, that the concept of a Sabbatical Policy be adopted and that the details in the draft proposal be revised for consideration at a future meeting. Bill Carlsen said that he will refine the proposal for review by the EATF and a copy of the revised document will be mailed with the BOM agenda.

Future Meeting Dates: December 5, 2008

Adjournment

After a closing prayer by Caspar Green, in which he offered thanksgiving for those who have served, especially Bill Carlsen, for John Buskey's ministry at camp, and other ministries among us, and asked for blessing for those trapped in storms, that God will be their shelter, President Spencer declared the meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald L. Lawrence, Secretary

Present: Janice (Robinson) Bourne, Cedric Broughton, John Buskey, William Carlsen, Mark Caruana, Ivan Crossno, Kathleen Danley, Douglas Deer, Joe Folckemer, Caspar Green, Jim Horton, Greg Johnson, Bob King, Bill Lang, Jane Lang, Donald Lawrence, Patti Lawrence, Sue Miller, Jillene Narraway, George Norton, Jr., Edward Pettibone, Jim Rice, Wayne Schultz, Mary Schwarz, Ruth Spencer, Lynn Sullivan, Bob Town, W. Hugh Tucker, and Joyce Whittaker.



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September 13, 2008

The American Baptist Churches of New York State
Board of Mission
Ruth Spencer, President
5865 East Seneca Turnpike
Jamesville, New York 13078

Dear Ruth:

There is a time for everything under heaven – the Bible says so!

With that injunction in mind I am officially notifying the ABC/NYS Board of Mission that it is my intention to retire at the end of 2008. I will attend the December 5, 2008 Board of Mission meeting and then take the rest of December as vacation time. This will allow for a final wrap up and also the presentation of the 2009 Budget for discussion and adoption.

I have been blessed with the privilege of serving as your Executive Minister for a bit more than fifteen years preceded by fifteen years as the World Mission Staff for ABC/NYS. I am not sure what God has planned for the next stage of my ministry but I am hopeful it will keep me in touch with the wonderful partners in ministry that are found on the Board of Mission and in the church families across ABC/NYS.

You will all be in my prayers as new leadership brings new vision and excitement to God's future for ABC/NYS.

Pray for Gail and me as we discover and celebrate this new chapter in our lives.

Faithfully in Christ service,

William A. Carlsen

WAC/h

SABBATICAL POLICY – Proposal

ABC/NYS will offer a paid sabbatical to its Executive Staff after each six full years of full time service to the region.

A total of two weeks per year served will be the time allowed with a maximum of one year being considered.

The request for Sabbatical will be given to the Executive Minister or in the case of the Executive Minister to the Regional President, six months before the time desired.

The timing of the Sabbatical will be negotiated with the Executive Minister and the Executive Committee to fit into the life of the region.

The request will be presented by the Executive Minister or the President to the Executive Committee for final review.

The BOM will receive the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It would be the expectation of ABC/NYS that Executive Staff will remain in service to ABC/NYS for a minimum of 12 months following a Sabbatical.

During the Sabbatical the staff member will have no responsibilities to the region.

Sabbatical time may include but not be limited to: personal spiritual renewal; strengthening family relationships; skill development and continuing education; time for rest and restoration; time for focus and sharpening ministry goals.

A report of the Sabbatical activities will be provided to the Executive Minister/President and shared with the Executive Committee.