

**Children in Poverty** became a particular focus of study and ministry initiative for American Baptist Churches during the 2005 biennial held in Denver, CO. For the last two years National Ministries, various regional groups and local churches have been growing in their awareness around children's issues and particularly those of children in the growing area of poverty. It is time for ABCOPAD to see how God is leading and equipping us around this ministry need. We are forming a new task force being facilitated by area minister, Dale Miller. As we begin a threefold approach is being considered:

1. Develop a team of teachers from across ABCOPAD to serve as a ministry taskforce. Teachers have a unique understanding, access to and ministry with the children of our region. We want to form a "think tank" of how with our teachers and local congregations we can have direct impact on children in poverty. Interested teachers or nominations should contact Rev. Dale Miller at [drmillerse@aol.com](mailto:drmillerse@aol.com).
2. Encourage local congregations to explore ways they can partner with or adopt local public schools to provide encouragement, support, tutoring and ministry. We have several congregations from across our region doing significant work in this regard.
3. Increase the support of and networking with our Neighborhood Action Centers like Baptist Children's Services in Philadelphia and SE Pennsylvania and Rankin Christian Center in Pittsburgh. We need to revitalize our awareness of and support of these strategic ministry programs working with children. We also want to be more aware of local churches and other programs reaching children.

Please begin to pray. Pray for our children...all of them, but particularly those in need. If you are a teacher or know of a qualified teacher to serve on the task force be in touch with us. Begin to dream and explore how your congregation might venture into new areas of ministry in this regard. If your church is doing something strategic with children in poverty or creatively working with a local public school share the story! We would love to encourage you and provide examples of what other congregations might want to follow.

"Seeing the Children" an article from the Christian Citizen Magazine of National Ministries (Vol. 4 2007) reports the following statistics:

- One child is reported abused or neglected every 11 seconds
- One is born into poverty every 43 seconds...nearly 12 million are poor
- One is born without health insurance every minute
- One child or teenager is killed by gunfire every two hours

Prayer for Children by Rebecca Davis:

"I pray for children who sleep peacefully in safety knowing they are protected by a loving family. I pray for children who cry themselves to sleep because their family has abandoned them. I pray for children who awake from bad dreams to have a calming voice telling them, 'It's OK, I'm here.' I pray for children whose nightmares come in the daytime and who have no escape or refuge."