

American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware



Celebrates our 18th BIENNIAL
Together in Ministry and Mission for the Glory of God

Philippians 1:4-6 NIV "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

October 24-26, 2008
Blair County Convention Center
Altoona, Pennsylvania
www.abcopad.org

**American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware
18th Biennial Meeting
Blair County Convention Center
Altoona, Pennsylvania**

**Opening Session, Friday, October 24, 2008
6:30 p.m.**

Prelude/Gathering Music: Mr. Frank “Buzzy” & Mrs. Lois Clark

Welcome/Invocation: Rev. Mary Lewis

Mary welcomed everyone. She told us that we have been praying for over a year for our people and this weekend, that we have seen God’s power in our partnership together in our relationships and our fellowship in one another. We hope that we can continue to work together so we can go back to our churches and continue to go forward in partnership with God. Mary closed her remarks with prayer.

A brief “meet and greet” followed.

Adoption of Program: Sue MacDonald

The program was adopted by common consent.

Sue introduced Rev. Frank Frischkorn, our Executive Minister, who in turn introduced our staff.

Introduction of Staff: Rev. Frank Frischkorn

Our theme is the “Power of Partnership.” Frank expressed his joy at working with a group of people who work well together and who complement one another perfectly. To them, it is about ministry, not turf. Our staff includes the following people:

Carol Bicking	Eastern Office Coordinator	17 years
Caryl Casey	Treasurer	22 years
Frank Frischkorn	Executive Minister	14 years
Don Girdwood	Area Minister	15 years
Eric Kraihanzel	Youth Ministries	6 years
Richard McIntyre	Area Minister	2 years
Mark Mahserjian-Smith	Area Minister, Web Site	7 years
Jim Oldham	Area Minister	9 months
Alan Selig	Area Minister	3 ½ weeks
Denise Veselicky	Western Office Coordinator	23 years

From the MMBB, we are served by Ken Stout in the west and Betty Wright Riggans in the east.

Greetings from Philadelphia Baptist Association: Dr. James McJunkin, Jr.

Frank introduced Dr. McJunkin.

Dr. McJunkin stated that the churches in Philadelphia send their love. He expressed his appreciation for the indwelling Lord in each of us and the work we do for

those in need in this economy and the meaningful support provided. He asked that we continue to pray for the Philadelphia churches and for the work being done there as there are needs unique to that city just as there are needs unique to other areas. He expressed his gratitude for being invited to attend the Biennial.

Greetings from Alderson-Broaddus College: Dr. Michael Clyburn

Dr. Clyburn thanked us for the opportunity to bring greetings from Alderson-Broaddus College, the college of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Delaware in West Virginia. He believes in the theme of the power of partnership and there is no better partnership than that between a Christian college and the local churches.

Dr. Clyburn asked two things of us. First, he would like us to send them names of perspective students. Due to a very successful fundraising campaign, the college has more scholarship funds available than ever in its history.

Secondly, he would like us to pray for the faculty and students every Thursday at 11:00 because they have a prayer service at that time. They view their school as a mission effort and ask for our prayers with that in mind.

Dr. Clyburn introduced Linda McIntyre, one of the trustees of the school.

He concluded with the story of a student who had gone on a mission trip to Zambia in Africa and the effect that had on her and those to whom she ministered.

Nominating Committee Report: Mrs. Linda Shypulefski

The following slate of nominees was presented to the congregation:

Mary Lewis	President
Ardell Thomas	Vice President
Janice Swope	Recording Secretary
Sue MacDonald	Past President
Janet Coddington	At Large Member
Chris Hamilton	At Large Member
Sherry Willison	At Large Member
Kate Preston	At Large Member
Sue Fitzgerald	AB Women's Ministries
Robert McQue	AB Men
Margie McCarty	AB Ministers' Council
Kay Stencil	Abington Association
Mike Culver	Allegheny Association
Cory Hartman	Centre Association
Bruce Montgomery	Harrisburg Association
Jay Freudenberg	Pittsburgh Association
Mardy von Harten	Reading Association
Jeffrey Evans	Riverside Association
Robert Mooney, Jr.	Ten Mile Association
Barbara Slocum	Tioga Association

French Creek Association will be having their meeting at the end of the month and will be sending us the name of their representative at that time.

The slate of nominees was accepted by common consent.

Craig W. Martin Excellence in Ministry Award: Margie McCarty

The recipient of this award is a man who is a faithful leader, has a strong commitment to Jesus Christ and the church, is compassionate, has been a part of the Ministers' Council for a number of years, and truly is a partner in ministry. That person is the Reverend Doctor Paul Fitzgerald. The award, presented by Leila Martin, was accepted by Sue Fitzgerald.

Recognition of New Pastors and CLI Graduates: Margie McCarty

Margie recognized the following new pastors to our region:

From the Northwest area: Michael Poindexter, Michael Bartlett, Gerald Walton, Robert Klecken, Raymond Merritt, Terry Smith, David Leninski, Vincent Seen, John Smith, Dan Kurlen, Edward Hiller, Robert Weaver, Rocky Hammond, Donald Hess, Jim Craig and Charles Kolosky.

From the Pittsburgh area: Howard Irwin, Norman Melser, David McFarland, Mark Schollert, Bruce Moses, Ralph Prinkey, and Jay Freudenberg.

From the Southwest area: Charles Bowser, Scott Hoppe, Richard Patton, and Gary Whipkey.

From the Northeast: Kory Hauser, Chara Ayers, Jason Reed, Mitchell Lindquist, James Breese, and Sean Walker.

From the Central area: Cory Hartman, Eleanor Siegrist, Paul Carter, John Staje, Robert Ayars, Thomas Brokaw, David Jones, Ron Turner, George Walters, Bill Harrell, and Chris Coakley.

We did not get a list of names from the Southeast due to the transition in leadership in that area, but Margie asked them to stand and be recognized as well.

Margie next recognized the new CLI graduates from our region. From the CLI-NE: Lee Austin, Melanie Russell, Earl Cattrell, Jacquelyn Simmons, and Laura Wedemeyer.

From the CLI-W: James Carpenter, Daniel Cass, Brad Hogue, Ellen Johnson, Suzanne Petrell, Kathy Rickard, JoAnne Wilson.

From CLI-Harrisburg: Samuel Geiger, Hani Khouri, Tawanna Jackson, Vera Krall, Gerald Richardson, Sandra Richardson, Adrian Robinson, Annie Sparks, Dionne Sproule-Hunt, Ralph Stimeling.

Facing Children in Poverty Initiative: Rev. Dale Miller

Dale began by relating a story told to him by Peggy, a moderator from Pottsville, PA, whom he was attempting to get to know. Peggy was a third grade school teacher and this story was about a little girl who wore a pair of yellow boots to school every day and wore them all day long. When spring came she continued to wear them. As it turned out, they were the only footwear the little girl had.

This story again brought to the fore in Dale's heart a great concern for the poor children of Pennsylvania and Delaware. When he attended the 2005 National Biennial in Denver, there was very little that the attendees agreed upon, but one thing they did come to agreement upon was the issue of children in poverty. This became a significant focus.

Dale spoke briefly on Matthew 25:44. When did we see you, Lord? When do you see Christ in the context of the ministry in which he has placed you, in places of comfort, of great love, of great care, but also in places where children go daily without

family, without the things they need physically, and without spiritual and emotional guidance in their lives?

In Pennsylvania, there are 2,837,009 children, 466,274 of which are living in poverty. In Delaware, there are 193,506 children, 26,296 of which are living in poverty. Dale included several other disturbing statistics as well.

We call upon American Baptist churches USA and its constituent partners to make the issue of children in poverty a priority of prayer, advocacy, ministry, and stewardship. May it occupy us in our sanctuaries, our fellowship halls, our communities, and especially our halls of power.

Dale went on to say that he believed that God has placed each of us strategically in our context of ministry as a mission outpost and that God has already placed people in our community of Pennsylvania and Delaware who are gifted to make a difference in the lives of those children in need. We are a missional people and we can make a profound difference in the lives of these children.

Dale challenged us to go back to our home churches and communities and to actually look around us, to ask ourselves, “Lord, when did we see you?”

Dale closed in prayer.

Prayer Request: Frank Frischkorn

Mary received a message from her church that one of her elder congregation members had fallen, broken her neck, and been life-flighted to Pittsburgh. Mary had to leave to minister to her. Frank prayed for her safety as she traveled and for the church member.

Celebration in Music: Mr. Frank “Buzzy” & Mrs. Lois Clark

Sharing of Theme Verses: Sue MacDonald

Sue read the theme verses – Philippians 1:4-6.

Bible Study: Dr. Stan Slade

Stan began by expressing his appreciation of the comments of previous speakers.

Stan related the story of a young woman named Laura in black boots who slogged through mud in Nicaragua to meet the medical needs of people in the rural areas of that country. She was serving Jesus in that country in similar ways to the ways we serve Jesus here in our own region. He stated that foreign missions were very important and urged us to continue to give to world mission efforts. However, he continued to say, foreign missions were no more important than national, regional, or local missions. They are all frontier posts in the kingdom of God.

Stan called attention to the wide variety of ministries that had already been mentioned this evening. We need to recognize that this wonderful diversity is bound together because it all comes from the same source. Our partnership with one another is actually God’s creation. We work together because God first worked in us. We seek each other out because God first sought us out. God is the senior partner, and when this is true, anything can happen. God can take us places we did not expect to go with people we did not expect to meet and do things we cannot even imagine.

This point was illustrated with the story of the Apostle Paul. It was never in Paul's mind to go to Philippi. When he went to Jerusalem, it was to get an education. When he discovered that people were turning to Jesus, it was his intent to round them up and get rid of them, especially those who were spreading Jesus' words. He had no mind to go to Philippi. He had no interest in Gentiles. Even after he meets Jesus, regains his sight, and returns to Jerusalem, he simply goes home to Tarsus. He had no mind to go to Philippi. Even when he does start his ministry, he goes to places and people he knows. He still had no mind to go to Philippi.

Eventually, Paul makes his way to Troy wondering what God has in mind for him, when God gave him a vision, the Macedonian Call.

Stan's "Macedonian Call" came on his blackberry when Stan Murray called him and informed him that they had just gotten a call from Vietnam to take part in a strategic moment in the Baptist work there. In early October, they had received permission from the Vietnamese government to become a legal above-ground religious movement.

In 1959, the Baptist work began in Vietnam. However, in 1975, when North Vietnam defeated the U.S.A. and South Vietnam, the missionaries and many of the Baptist pastors chose to or were forced to leave. Those that chose to remain were sent off elsewhere. The Baptist groups were considered an illegal cult by the new Vietnamese government and if they were to survive, they had to go underground.

Some of the Baptist groups were disappeared. Others were able to survive. Some were even able to grow. One of the pastors, Nuguen Tung, continued to minister to his family and friends. In 1986 Vietnam loosened up its economic life. Pastor Tung was able to improve his working conditions and began working with the various pockets of Baptists. He also began working with the government in an attempt to get official recognition as a legitimate religious group. Finally in October of 2007, the Vietnamese government said that if he could accomplish certain tasks, the Baptists could receive official religious status. That is when Stan received his blackberry call.

Stan went to Vietnam to help with leadership training, but his "official" title was "tourist." He is planning to return this coming January.

When God is the senior partner, anything can happen. Stan had no idea that he would be in Vietnam when October began that year. Paul had no idea he would be going to Macedonia. God provides surprise after surprise after surprise in our journeys with Him. Where are the yellow boots in your community? What are the opportunities you have to bear witness to the name of Jesus Christ? How are you hearing the call of God – through your e-mail, your pastor's voice, the word of scripture, or the words that God brings to you as you pray? How is God calling you to do something unexpected?

Stan closed his message in prayer.

Partners in Ministry Offering: American Baptist Women

Sue MacDonald offered prayer for this collection.

Mini-Concert: Mr. Frank "Buzzy" & Mrs. Lois Clark

Announcements: Sue MacDonald

In addition to the regular announcements, Richard shared that there is a “prayer room” available for those who wish to take advantage of this. Soft music will be playing. Cards and pens will be available to write requests with a basket to place the requests in.

Prayer and Benediction: Rev. Don Girdwood

In recognition of Pastors Appreciation Month, Sue asked that all pastors, staff, and others in leadership positions stand. She read a brief poem to honor them and then asked everyone else to stand about them and pray audibly for them.

At the conclusion of those prayers, Don closed in prayer and gave the benediction.

The meeting concluded at 9:05 p.m.

Celebrating Partnership Reception:

The reception following tonight’s meeting was sponsored by the following:

Alderson-Broadus College

Christian Community Credit Union

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School

Saturday, October 25, 2008

8:45 p.m.

Prelude/Gathering Music: Mr. Frank “Buzzy” & Mrs. Lois Clark

Welcome and Prayer: Rev. Carol Ross Irwin

Carol welcomed everyone and opened the meeting in prayer. She read the theme verses – Philippians 1:3-6.

Bible Study: Dr. Stan Slade

Stan continued his session from the previous evening. He spoke on the emergence of the Vietnamese church from a persecuted underground church into a more modern open public church.

Once the Baptist church received their approval as a legal religious movement, the first thing they requested was to hold a public open air meeting. They were granted permission to do so and held that meeting in Central Park in Saigon on December 19, 2007. It was attended by 12,000 people and 1,500 people came to know Jesus Christ as Savior. These people are eager to evangelize and reach people in their country for Christ. They want to be allowed to act freely to do this. They want us to walk with them as they strive to form leadership for their 420 congregations as they have only 110 pastors (at the time Stan was there). These congregations are in 52 of 54 provinces. We have an opportunity to be part of this ministry, to walk with it as it is going to be an ongoing ministry developing over a number of years.

Stan also mentioned that he was excited about the mission work going on in Pennsylvania and Delaware and that it was equally as important as foreign missions. He

also said that missions should be a family affair. However, he confessed that the man of God got helped to see that by the woman of God.

Karen Selig is his pastor in Royersford, PA. Kathy, his wife, does not often travel with him because she has a “real” job. They became involved in international ministry in a sideways manner. They both attended Stanford University and during that time spent six months studying abroad. After graduation, they decided to give a year to the Lord. They took that year and became youth pastors in Guatemala City, Guatemala, even though they did not know a word of Spanish or anything of their culture.

One of the dramatic things that happened during that time was that they felt a calling to mission work. The call was as simple as a sick man in a hospital bed who just asked them if they thought about it. We need to be calling people to serve Jesus as pastors and missionaries. If you feel a nudge to say something to someone, then you should do it. Act on it. Take a risk. This might be a person that God is calling and you might be the instrument He is using.

The other thing that happened was that they determined while working with other missionary children and their families and became familiar with some of the difficulties that some of them were having making life transitions from mission high schools to colleges. They came to believe that should God grant them children, that when these children reached high school age, they should return to the states so that the children have an opportunity to learn about their own culture before attending college so that their transition to college life would be easier for them. Therefore, in 1992, Stan and his family left El Salvador and returned to Pennsylvania. Stan began working as support staff for International Ministries with the intent of returning to the mission field when the last child entered college.

When that time came, Stan tried to convince Kathy to return the mission field. They talked and prayed and took a trip or two, but Kathy was unconvinced. She felt that God had given her a ministry to poor women in Reading, PA. She spoke Spanish all day. They did not have good documents and were very vulnerable. They were on the margins of society. That was her ministry and she did not wish to leave it.

In International Missions, they decided to set up a group of missionaries with a great deal of expertise and make them global consultants. One of the most well-known ones is Lauren Bethall, who travels about speaking about trafficking in prostitution. Another is Dan Buttry, who deals with conflict transformation, even in places where the conflict involves shooting at one another. Another is Walt White, who works with Muslims who come to follow Christ. Stan gets to run around the world doing theological education, like the one that he did in Vietnam.

The shirt that Stan wore that day came from Burma. The Karen are here because of the terrible persecution in their country. The shirt was given to him by some Karen people in Rangoon, Burma, where he had been invited to be part of a renewal effort. One pastor there, Daniel Danbu, had a passion to see change come and so developed a school of Bible study. Stan showed us a number of beautiful slides from this area.

Stan read Philippians 2:12-13. In the previous verses, Paul encourages the church to pull together and follow the model of Jesus. God is the senior partner. He has chosen us to be His partner. He has chosen to rely on us to be His partner. When we mess up, when we fail to respond, it matters. God does not just want to save a bunch of individuals. God has a work to do on this planet, and that is to touch all human life in

every dimension; and we get a chance to be a part of it. As we are saved, we are invited to be working out that salvation, bringing to its full expression as a community of believers, the salvation that we have received from Jesus Christ. All of the ministries that we have mentioned, whose logos we have seen on the screen, are all about working out the salvation we have received from Jesus Christ, bringing to its full expression that which God has already launched. May God use you each day. May you say “Yes” to God each day to bring His salvation to completion every day.

Special Music: Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, Altoona

BREAK

The break began at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 10:25 a.m.

Celebration in Song: Mr. Frank “Buzzy” & Mrs. Lois Clark

Introduction of Jennifer Brown of the Convention Center: Sue MacDonald

Sue and Jennifer have been working together for over a year putting this event together. Jennifer welcomed everyone to the center and let us know that if there were anything that we needed we could ask anyone in a green shirt. She invited us to enjoy our weekend at the center.

Update on Mary Lewis’ Prayer Request:

The woman broke 2 vertebrae letting the dog out. She has an excellent attitude. She is doing very well. Mary expressed her appreciation of our prayers, especially for her travel.

Executive Minister’s Report/Vision: Rev. Frank Frischkorn

Frank has been here 19 months now.

Over these past months we have dealt with a number of issues. The first of those was the restructuring of our ABC-USA family. This restructuring will be voted upon in an upcoming meeting.

Changes have also been made in our region staff. Dave Skinner, our SW Area Minister, has retired. We closed the western office in Greensburg and so said good-bye to Dana Loucks and Barb Baston. Dale Miller also resigned his position as SE Area Minister to accept a position as senior pastor in Bethlehem. Nate Williams concluded his time with us as Area Minister of Pittsburgh Baptist Association. We welcome Mark Mahserjian-Smith in his new position as Center Area Minister, Web Site Coordinator, and Mission Liaison, Jim Oldham as the Interim Area Minister for the Pittsburgh Baptist Association, and Denise Veselicky in the Pittsburgh Office.

God has helped us partner together in significant ways, beginning with the *Regional Offering* becoming the *Partners in Ministry Offering*, with a mission emphasis.

Fanning the Flame National Pastors Conference is another new event coming out of this new effort to partner with one another. This was a wonderful experience with other pastors. The bus ride was definitely memorable. Another such event is being planned for May 24-27 of 2010 in Green Lake, WI.

New Pastors' Orientation is also a new event for us. This is an opportunity for us to come alongside new pastors to help and support them and to build relationships with them in our own region.

The Barnabas Network is also being developed with the help of the Ministers' Council. It is another means of coming alongside pastors to help them.

This biennial in itself is a wonderful new adventure for us. The development of the Habitat for Humanity Project has really been a gift from God in the many ways in which it has been provided for.

Lastly, Frank expressed his thanks and appreciation for the support and encouragement he and his staff have received over these past 19 months.

Frank next spoke on the vision he has for the future of ABCOPAD. A copy of the vision is below:

Our Vision: To build healthy partnerships with churches, pastoral leaders, and the wider ABC family to fulfill Christ's mission in our world.

Our Scriptural Foundation: Philippians 1:3-6

All three of the components are dependent on each other...none can exist in a vacuum and the region can hold a strategic place in tying them all together.

1. To Build Healthy/Vital Partnerships with Local Congregations

Key components of this focus would include, but not be limited to the following:

- a. The Growing Vital Congregations Initiatives
Moving from Diagnostic to Prescriptive: Developing a cycle for addressing the Eight Vital Signs in a comprehensive manner (2 a year over a 4-year period)
- b. Stewardship Training
- c. Search Committee/Transitional Work
- d. Developing our own pool of Interim Leaders...
Partnering in training with Interim Ministries-ABC
- e. Pastoral Relations Committee
- f. Church Leadership Institute
- g. Associational Life
- h. The "Missional Church" – aiding our congregations in the contextualization of their ministry
- i. Conflict Mediation Efforts
- j. Effective and Innovative Student ministry resources for training local church leaders but also providing wider regional youth events

2. To Build Healthy/Vital Partnerships with Pastoral Leaders

"Seeking to build a Culture of Excellence in Leadership, which in turn will foster the development of a new generation of leaders."

Partnership with Pastoral Leaders needs to occur in two definitive areas: **personally** and **professionally**.

Key components of this focus would include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Personal Life of Pastors:
 - a. Development of Devotional Lives
 - b. Pastoral Family Concerns
 - c. Spousal Issues
 - d. Finance and the Ministry
 - e. Barnabas Network/Care of Pastors
 - f. Retirement Concerns
2. Professional Life of Pastors:
 - a. Workshops/Training on a variety of topics such as: Preaching, Discipleship, Evangelism, Bible Study Methodology, Counseling, Transformational leadership
 - b. The Nehemiah Network
 - c. *Together in Ministry* Groups
 - d. New Pastor Orientation
 - e. *A Pastoral Peer Resource Bank*

3. To Build Healthy/Vital Partnerships with Our Wider ABC Family

- A. Strive to enhance existing partnerships with other Regions/Covenanting Partners and to explore new avenues of partnership.
 1. Existing: Fanning the Flame
Clergy Ethics
Nehemiah Network
Face to Face
 2. New: On-line Youth Training
George Bullard Events
Regional World Mission Conference
- B. Foster healthy 2-way communication between our region and the wider ABC family
 - a. Promotion of mission initiatives
 - b. Communication of Denominational Vision
 - c. UM/Partners in Ministry Offering/4 annual offerings

***PERVASIVE IMPORTANCE OF WEBSITE IN ALL AREAS**

Frank briefly elaborated on each section of the vision. He also mentioned that we need to become a people of call. God has a big mission out there for us and we need God's people to say yes to that mission. As pastoral leaders, we need to be able to foster a community of call where we serve.

As we move toward the vision, we need to begin thinking about how the budget will fit in with that. This year, we will have a transitional budget and Caryl will speak to us about that.

Sue has already been given the authority to work on the restructuring of the region board to fit in with our vision.

Karen Refugee Resettlement: Mrs. Marcia Binkley

Mr. & Mrs. Binkley spent 20 years as American Baptist missionaries serving in Thailand with the Karen people. They came home on leave in 2006 and found many of the Karen and Chin peoples from Thailand in their American churches. They ended up being assigned to help them adapt to their new life in the U.S.

In 1962, in Burma (Myanmar), an uprising resulted in a military junta being placed in power. In 1967, all Christian missionaries were expelled from the country and the mission work turned over to the national church bodies. Since then, the church has survived and grown despite severe restrictions. In 1990, democratic elections were held and a president was elected by a landslide, but she has never been allowed to take office. Instead, she has been held under house arrest. For decades the country has been under the iron grip of a military dictator. In 2008, in *Parade Magazine's* "Who Is the World's Worst Dictator?" Myanmar's dictator, Than Shwe, ranked #3.

Myanmar has the third largest army in the world, but with no outside enemies. Villages are attacked without provocation and people are forced to flee for their lives. Some believe it is simply ethnic cleansing. Villages are forced to relocate. Many of the Karen are shot on sight. Many are captured for slave labor. Many suffer from all kinds of human rights abuses, including torture, rape, and murder. Some are used as human land mine sweepers, forced to walk across fields of land mines to set them off so that it will be safe for their soldiers to walk across. Some act as porters, carrying equipment and supplies until they literally drop dead. The military is a law unto itself and accountable to no one.

Millions have fled into nearby countries. There are 9 refugee camps in Thailand. Ten countries have decided to take them. The U.S. has taken most of them as part of a refugee resettlement program. Why should we care? The earliest missionaries to a foreign land were the Judsons in Burma and the first person they led to Christ was a Karen. This led to more and more Karen coming to Christ and as the church there grew, excitement in the U.S. over this grew. Soon they came together to form mission societies which were the forerunners of today's American Baptist missions.

The lines between national and international work are becoming very blurred. 50 or 60 Karen are showing up in Baptist churches in Pittsburgh, Erie, York, and other ABCOPAD cities. There are now 80 churches across the U.S. with Karen in their congregations.

Mrs. Binkley will be teaching one of the workshops in the afternoon.

President's Remarks: Sue MacDonald

Sue was very blessed by working with the ABCOPAD staff these last 18 months. She found them to be professional, personable, and very human. They were also very enjoyable to work with.

Sue's favorite verses are Proverbs 3:5-6. She clung to them as she was growing up, especially during her teen years. One of her pastors told her, "Sue, you can't rationalize everything!" However, it took many years for her to realize the truth of that statement.

Sue told us of her election to vice-president of the board, Clay Woodbury's resignation, Dan's appointment to Interim Executive Minister, and her appointment as chair of the search committee for the Executive Minister. When that ended in a split

decision, a new committee was chosen and a new executive minister, Frank Frischkorn, was chosen.

One constant in ABCOPAD is change. As Frank began his ministry, the merge with the PBA was underway. We had a need for a clearly stated vision. We were facing financial challenges and so the Regional Offering became the Partners in Ministry Offering. We were able to reduce the amount of funds we've had to withdraw from the principal of our investments. Instead of meeting face to face as a region board, we had a conference call which saved us thousands of dollars. During that meeting, we called Mark to his new job as Centre Area Minister, Web Site Coordinator, and Missions Liaison. Frank made the difficult decision to close the western office at Greensburg was closed and the part-time staff there was let go. Southwest area minister, Dave Skinner, retired at the end of 2007 and Southeast area minister, Dale Miller, resigned to return to the pastorate. At the direction of the Region Board, a task force will now be formed to restructure the region board and staff around the new vision.

Sue attended Dale's installation and was struck by these words: We need to remember those who have gone before us because they have molded us. We need to forget all that keeps us from being all that God wants us to be. We can let go of what has been and commit to a new future. We do not need to be afraid because we know Who holds the future.

Sue finished her remarks by quoting the words of a Steve Green song, "May All Who Come behind Us Find Us Faithful."

BUSINESS SESSION:

There were 142 delegates in attendance. They represented 79 churches from 19 associations. The following business items were discussed:

Financial Report/Budget: Mrs. Caryl Casey

Caryl shared several charts with us. United Mission Basics have been decreasing for a number of years, but this year they seem to have leveled off.

Love Gift has done very well. The AB women have done an excellent job with that.

Designated giving has gone down, but that has shifted to targeted giving which has greatly increased.

Partners in Ministry has continued to grow each year and we believe that we will reach our goal of \$95,000 this year.

Habitat for Humanity offerings are coming in well. It is amazing to see God working here.

It has been a challenge putting together a budget with the new changes coming in mind. We now have a 3-pronged vision. We will be training staff to work with people in these areas. We do not know how much it will cost, but we tried to put figures on these categories. They may need to be adjusted at a later time.

The total budget is \$1,212,118 with a projected withdrawal from investments of \$172,190 and assuming we meet our Partners in Ministry goal of \$100,000.

We have done well this past year for several reasons. Those reasons include the following: 1) Increase from missions giving, 2) We have part-time interims in two staff

positions, 3) We received a grant and 2 gifts from churches, and 4) The commissions have not met.

Allan Campbell had previously presented an investment report. He said that the fund balances on 12-31-07 were \$4,482,694.00 and on 10-16-08 were \$3,211,235.00. That loss is not really good, but it is not really bad either unless you were wanting to sell your stocks, which we are not. We are actually well positioned with our investments. We are down 29% whereas the Dow is down 34 to 48%.

Our last budget was 6 pages, this budget is 1 page. This budget tells of the journey we are about to begin.

Sue requested that the congregation affirm the new transitional budget. The budget was approved by consensus.

Partners in Ministry 2009-2010: Rev. Mark Mahserjian-Smith

Our goal for 2007 was \$70,000 and we raised \$92,000. In 2008, our goal is \$95,000 and so far we have raised \$80,000, none of which includes the *Habitat for Humanity* monies.

Up until now, the theme has been “Giving Hands Coming from a Giving and a Forgiving Savior.”

Our new theme is “Building Up the Body of Christ.”

We Partner with Local Congregations

We Partner with Pastors

We Partner with the Wider ABC Family

Mark showed us samples of how anyone can use a template of a church that can be used to paste pictures as part of a promotion for a partnership offering. These pictures can also be put on the website.

There is a lot of good *Partners in Ministry* material coming in 2009. Watch for it.

Election of Officers: Mrs. Sue MacDonald

Carol Ross-Irwin moved that the slate of officers presented by the nominating committee become the elected ballot. Rita Boyden seconded the motion. The motion carried. Sue read the names (see page 3) of the nominees and asked them to come forward for a prayer of dedication. She included Robin Swope as Robin always travels with her mother to meetings and wanted Robin to stand with her mother.

Frank prayed for the newly elected board members.

Announcements: Sue MacDonald

Presentation: Rev. Richard McIntyre

In recognition of our pastors, a name was drawn for a prize. That name was Rev. Gary Firster of Colonial Park Community Baptist Church. He won two books.

Closing Prayer: Rev. Ken Jordan

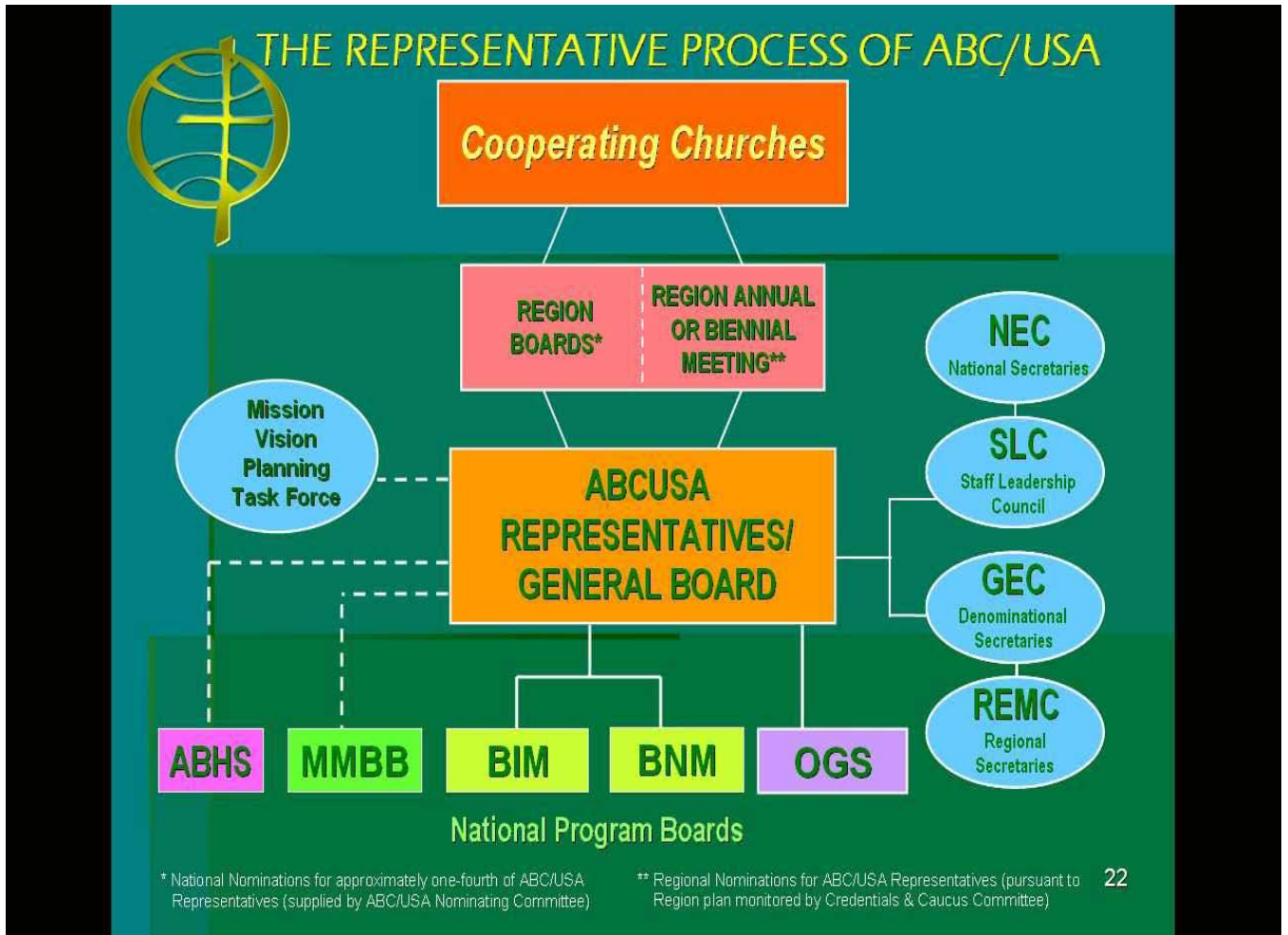
Before his prayer, Ken spoke briefly about how excited we should be about the business of God. We should be planting the seeds, watering the seed, and then excitedly watching God going about the business of helping them grow. And when you see a

young one come to Christ, you will know that it was all worth it. Ken closed his remarks in prayer.

Saturday Afternoon

Discussion of ABC/USA Restructure Proposal

Presented by Rev. Charles Case



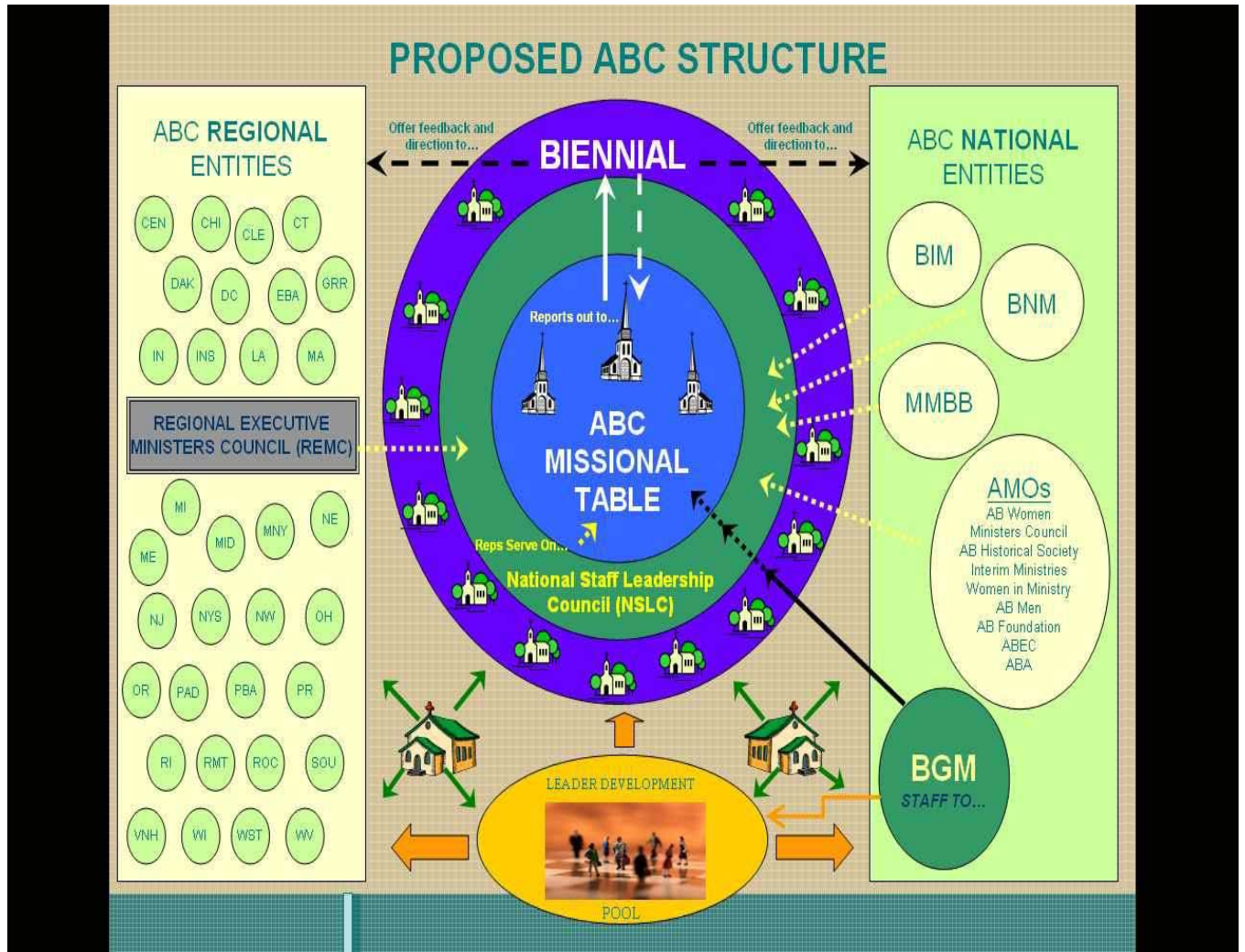
Above is the current structure of ABC/USA.

Dr. Case began his talk with a brief history of American Baptists. Changes have taken place with every generation. In 1814, the Triennial Convention was born. In 1843, the American Baptist Free Mission Societies began. In 1845, the Southern Baptist Convention formed as a local aide on the slavery problem.

In 1907, the Northern Convention began with the issue of the need to have a general body. In 1933, the GARB (General Association of Regular Baptists) formed. In 1947, the Conservative Baptist Association came into being because they felt we should have a creed. The majority of our folks said no. In 1972, ABC/USA moved into a new

program of grass roots representation for the General Board where representatives were voted into office from various areas of the country.

In 2006, the situation involving Transformation Ministries (formerly known as American Baptist Churches of the Pacific Southwest) brought to a head a number of other issues.



Above is the proposed ABC/USA structure.

One of these issues was that of restructuring our denomination. Recently, a number of us received letters from the General Secretary that informed us that at the next meeting of the (national) Biennial, they will be voting on a restructuring proposal for the ABC/USA that would simplify the ministry of our denomination. The General Board will make that decision in November. If they accept it, it will go to the Biennial in California. If not, there will be no vote. The General Board must okay it first.

In the new proposal, the greatest concern is the lack of grass roots representation. After the presentation of this proposal at the Washington, D.C. Biennial, all 12 discussion groups had the same concern and that was this lack of grass roots representation.

In addition, there will no longer be a legislative body. It seems they do not want to take a stand on certain issues, but it is Dr. Case's opinion that we need to make decisions on the difficult issues according to God's Word and not be frightened by the problems that might follow.

Under the new structure, we will be losing the concept of the General Board. We did have up to five representatives in the old structure, but under the new one, we can now be guaranteed only one.

Some things will remain the same – our commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our commitment to the local church, and our desire to support vital, invigorating, healthy churches.

In missions, we will continue to be represented by International Ministries and National Ministries. Educational Ministries has already ceased to exist due to financial difficulties, and has been absorbed by National Ministries. We will have a Missional Table with a Mission Summit, where new mission initiatives of the denomination will be discussed and implemented. There will be a Board of General Ministries. With smaller boards, it is thought that missions will be easier to support financially.

ABCOPAD was the first region to take these issues seriously.

There was much discussion over the role and tenure of the General Secretary, but in the end, it was decided that the process of the election of the General Secretary will remain the same as the current by-laws, allowing for renewable four-year terms. Language will be added to reflect that a contract will be put in place.

That is where we are now. We have the choice of voting it in or laying it on the table. If we lay it on the table, we will need to rework the representative process to take in the people we wish to represent – the grass roots.

LUNCH

Workshops

The following workshops were available for the afternoon:

Missions: Coming to a Pew Near You! – Mrs. Marcia Binkley

Hear stories of Ethnic minorities forced to flee Burma and live in refugee camps in Thailand. Learn about the resettlement process from the camps in Thailand to the United States. Understand their shared history with American Baptists and how our churches, associations and regions can help.

Preparing Leaders for the Global Church – Dr. Stan Slade

Dr. Slade's Missionary service takes him around the world to help missionaries and international partners prepare leaders for the global church. Catch a glimpse of what God is up to in our partner churches across the globe!

Estate Planning: A Partnership in Ministry and Missions – Mrs. Linda Cassel

Principles of financial planning and estate stewardship will be presented. These planned giving techniques enable you to distribute your assets in such a way that you will both care for your loved ones and reflect your legacy of faith.

Engaging the Children in Poverty Initiative – Rev. Dale Miller

In 2005, American Baptists set a bold new vision before us: to reach out more effectively to “the least of these”: children who live in poverty and who are at risk. This workshop is designed to bring together teachers, educators, pastors, and local church leaders to explore how to reach children in need in our own ministry contexts. This workshop will explore our missional vision, how to build a network between teachers, local schools and churches, as well as some creative ministries already being used by some of our ABCOPAD churches to make a real impact.

TWO WORKSHOPS IN ONE:

It Takes More Than a Hub & Spokes to Make a Wheel! – Mrs. Ruth Stevenson

Partnership is where “the rubber meets the road” in mission engagement. Explore ways you and your church can be involved in what God is doing around the globe through your International Ministries missionaries by joining a Missionary Partnership Network.

AND

Transforming Lives Through Volunteer Ministries – Mrs. Vicki Goff

Discover the many ways you can share the love of Christ with those in need across the United States and Puerto Rico. Learn about specific American Baptist-related home mission opportunities for both individuals and groups, and learn how you, too, can transform lives by sharing your time and talent as a volunteer through National Ministries.

OFF-SITE WORKSHOPS

The Hope Center, Bellwood – Rick Beatty

Rick Beatty had a vision of a place where hurting people in his community could get help for their needs and an opportunity to know Christ. Churches in Bellwood came together and the result is The Hope Center. At this workshop, you’ll learn how The Hope Center came to be, learn about their current programs, and come away with ideas to do outreach in ways that demonstrate Christ’s love in your community. There will be time to tour Hope Center and ask questions of the director and staff. People really do want to know more about Jesus, we just need to get their attention. Learn how at The Hope Center.

American Rescue Workers, Hollidaysburg

The goal of the Hollidaysburg Corps of the American Rescue Workers is to meet needs, providing Hollidaysburg residents with help for the present and hope for the future. Learn about their ministry while you help them out. You will be assembling grocery bags, portion packing bulk items, wrapping gift boxes, and assembling starter kits.

Celebrating Partnership Dinner

Saturday Evening *7:15 p.m.*

Prelude/Gathering Music: Mr. Frank “Buzzy” & Mrs. Lois Clark

Welcome and Prayer: Rev. Mary Lewis

Mary welcomed everyone and let us know that the service would be a little different. We will be celebrating the variety of partnerships in ministries that we share about the region.

She closed her remarks with prayer.

Student Ministries: Eric Kraihanzel

Eric spoke on three ministries that he is currently working on. The first is *You Can Be a Servant Leader*. This is a servant leadership course for teens being taught this fall. The information can be found on the web. It has also been mailed to our churches.

The second is the ABCOPAD *On-Line Youth Ministry Training* being done through the CLI-W. The courses are taught on-line with 4 face-to-face weekends throughout the year. We are currently in conversation with four other regions in an effort to partner with them in this endeavor. In addition, we are working on a certificate program through Eastern University.

Lastly, Eric spoke about *Reunion 2009* which would take place on March 27-29, 2009. The theme will be “Belonging to the Kingdom.” This theme was chosen because teens so often feel a lack of connection and Eric wanted to show them that there was a place they could belong and that was the Kingdom of God. Britt Nicole and her band will be providing the music.

Eric then introduced Krissy Kline, a teen from Moreland Baptist Church. She sang two songs: *On my Knees* and *Amazing Grace, My Chains Are Gone*.

Habitat for Humanity Project: Rev. Mary Lewis

It has been almost two years since Frank, Mary, and Eleanor Siegrist first met with *Blair County Habitat for Humanity* asking to partnership with them to build a house for someone in the Altoona area. Mary introduced Mark Glasson and Amy Ernest from *Habitat for Humanity*.

Amy expressed her thanks to everyone. The home is still being built. It takes a lot of volunteers, but everyone is stepping up. Usually it is her job to gather the volunteers, but we just bring our own. *Habitat for Humanity* hopes to dedicate the home soon and have the family in before Christmas. Amy expressed special thanks to Art Munson. She also said that their board president, Santa Mosey, was unable to be present, but extended her gratitude to everyone in our organization.

Mark Mahserjian-Smith showed us a video clip of Mary talking about the vision of building the house for Habitat for House and the difference we can make by having been in Altoona. Afterwards, Mary mentioned that the words “partnership” and

“fellowship” are the same in Greek. It is one thing to see or study that in print, but when you actually get out there and work side by side, you see God’s Word at work.

The Habitat for Humanity family was brought up from and introduced – Ken Brodman, his wife Cara, and their daughters Hannah and Sierra. Ken has been at the site almost every day before anyone else. Ken and his family have prayed for a very long time for this to happen. *Habitat for Humanity* made the possibility come true, but ABCOPAD made the possibility a reality. Without the churches, the people behind the scenes, for all those who took time out from their busy schedules to make his dream come true, Ken expressed his heart-felt thanks. He had not realized until recently that God had been planning this before he even applied.

Hannah’s ninth birthday was today, so we sang *Happy Birthday* to her.

Richard McIntyre introduced Pastor Myra Goss from Coryland Baptist Church in Columbia Crossroads. Pastor Goss presented a quilt to the Brodman family that was made by Coryland Baptist Church’s quilting group.

Mark next showed a video clip of the ground-breaking for the house in which it was pouring down rain. It was the most watched video on our site for some time.

Sue MacDonald asked Art Munson to come up to the podium. Art has had a lot of experience in *Habitat for Humanity* and because of that, she had asked him to be our liaison with *Habitat for Humanity*. He has been on site every day but two. He has given sacrificially of his time and talent, as did his wife. He and Jean will be celebrating 50 years of marriage very soon. At that point, Sue presented Art with a gift from ABCOPAD for all he has done on behalf of this project. Art’s initial comment was, “Is this a bribe?” He then went on to say that this project could not have been done without the army of volunteers who showed up each day. Art knew the Lord was present at this site because every time something was needed, it showed up. Now the house needs only small crews because only the small detail work needs to be done. He will continue to be there until the home is finished.

Video clips were shown of the excavation and pouring of the foundation, framing up the house and beginning the construction, and working on the inside.

Mary had everyone present who worked on the house stand up to be recognized. Working on the house proved to be a very powerful experience for all those involved.

Caryl Casey shared her excitement at having churches come to her asking what to do with certain amounts of money that they have available to give. It is wonderful to see ABCOPAD churches come together with a united vision to accomplish a specific goal.

Rieta Boyden went to the site with her 85-year-old mother. They find a job for you to do even if you think you can’t do anything. Her mother went again and made her stay home. There is something there for everyone to do, even if it is just sweeping up sawdust.

Pastor Tom Marker decided to pray for a coordinator to get the information and put up a sign-up sheet. It ended up being him. He prayed for 6 people to go. He ended up with 14 that he ended up taking. He did menial tasks while he was there, but it proved a wonderful experience and he was grateful for being a part of ABCOPAD.

Partners in Ministry Offering: Rev. Mark Mahserjian-Smith

Mark offered a prayer for our offering this evening.

Karen Ministries: Rev. Mark McCallion

Frank introduced Rev. McCallion from Oil Creek Association. A few years ago, the association met and prayed, asking the Lord to give them something to do to keep their association intact and active. They decided to become proactive and be part of the support team for some missionaries – the Binkleys. They traveled to Buffalo to meet them and learned about the Karen people and when they heard that some of them were moving into the Erie area, they decided to become even more proactive. Some of the Karen moved into their association. More came. More came and more came. There were 46 Karen refugees at the last Oil Creek Association Meeting. Mark introduced Katie White, who would be leading the Karen Choir this evening.

Katie had the choir come up. They are from the Crossroads Community Baptist Church in Erie and the Moravian Baptist Church in Lititz. When they were learning about the Karen, they learned that these people often plan everything together. Another thing that impressed Katie is that they have family worship. That worship includes prayer, Bible study and songs that they learned from the missionaries.

Concert: Karen Choir

The first song they sang is their national anthem, written over 100 years ago. Many of the young men play guitars, but they have very few to go around. If anyone has one to donate, it would be appreciated.

Closing Prayer: Rev. Mary Lewis

*Sunday
October 26, 2009
8:45 a.m.*

Prelude: Mr. Frank “Buzzy” & Mrs. Lois Clark

Praise and Worship: Mr. Frank “Buzzy” & Mrs. Lois Clark

Announcements: Rev. Rusty Horning

Opening Prayer: Rev. Rusty Horning

Testimony: John Rai

Pastor Katie White introduced John Rai. He is of Nepali ancestry, but was born and raised in Bhutan. The Bhutan government forced John and his people to leave that country because of their ancestry and they went to Nepal. The Nepalese government did not want them because they were Bhutanese. They ended up in Erie, PA. John is very evangelistic and very welcoming. He kept bringing people to us.

John was born in Bhutan, a monarchial kingdom that is primarily a Buddhist land. John’s parents lived near the border with India where they met some Christian

missionaries and came to know Jesus Christ through them. They became evangelists themselves and set up house churches that met at night. Christians had to be very secretive because there was a lot of persecution towards them. The churches are all underground, but growing and prospering.

John is of Nepali ancestry, but his family has lived in Bhutan for many generations, as have many of the Nepali people. They have suffered many kinds of persecution, including being forced to work for the government without pay, not being permitted to wear their traditional clothing, use their own language, among many other restrictions. They began questioning human rights, uprisings occurred and many people were killed. Many were forced to leave Bhutan and go to refugee camps in Nepal.

There in the camp his parents were able to be more open as pastors. John taught Sunday School at age 12 and was a youth leader at age 16. He also started preaching God's Word in his church at age 16. He went to other churches to preach as well.

John felt that God was calling him to the ministry so he attended theological studies in India where he learned the Hindi language. He had no support group there and it was very hard for him. He had no financial support, either. He could not ask his family because he knew they had no money. However, God gave him a good friend who arranged the financial support he needed to get his Master of Divinity. He was able to get a scholarship in exchange for working for the college as well. He received an Academy of Excellence Award.

John never went back to the refugee camp because his mother told him not to come back. They did not have enough money to feed him or have him there. Instead, John went and traveled throughout India doing ministry with his friends when he completed his studies.

One night they went to preach at a house with a leafy roof. The husband was drunk, but the wife who was a Christian, started crying when they were done. When John asked his friend why she was crying, he said that the wife, who was very, very poor, felt really bad, that she could not even give them food. They believed that if they could give the pastor something, no matter how small, they would be blessed.

We have been speaking about opportunity, challenge, and risk. John suggests that we reverse this and think of it as risk, challenge, and opportunities. Jesus knew the risk. He had to make a decision to come here. There were lots of challenges when He arrived here. And there were so many opportunities to serve His creation while He was here. John spoke of several simple examples of each of these in today's world.

John thanked all those who have helped him and his people.

Special Music: Karen, Nepali, & Bhutanese Choirs

Partners in Ministry Offering: Rev. Rusty Horning

Thus far, prior to this offering, the Partners in Ministry offering has totaled \$2,236.76. The Habitat for Humanity Offering has totaled \$2,100.00

Rev. Horning offered a prayer for today's offering.

Scripture Reading: Rev Rusty Horning

Jeremiah 29:4-14

Message: Rev. Frank Frischkorn – “God Has a Plan”

Frank began his message with prayer.

Frank started with the question, “Is there any hope?” and gave several situations in which this is a valid question. Even many of today’s churches are focused on surviving rather than ministry, raising the question “Is there any hope?” The Jews in captivity in Babylon asked this same question in Psalm 137. It was often sung by the children of Israel and is full of despair.

Jeremiah is the beacon of hope in verses 29:10-14b in which the Lord declares that He knows the plan that He has for us. God’s plan is a good one, to prosper and not to harm us. It is good news.

There are three insights into that plan. The first one is that His plan will take us into the future and not return us to the past. We spend our time worrying about the past, bemoaning our present circumstances, and failing to look to the future. We need to focus on the future, to look forward and not behind us. God has a plan, but we cannot see it if we do not look forward to where we are going. God’s plan is one for the future and it calls for people who are able to trust Him.

Secondly, God’s plan starts right here, right now, right where we are. Josh Harris wrote in his book, “A lot of times we think that God’s plan can only kick into gear if we’re in a different location in a different set of circumstances.” The Jews in Babylon probably felt like that, but the Lord told them to settle down and live their lives there, to be faithful to Him there.

Thirdly, God’s plan is realized when we seek a deeper walk with Him. The future God has for us can only be realized if it includes more and more of Him. We must spend more time with Him.

God has a plan for us personally, locally, and regionally. It is a plan that will take us into the future and not the past; it will start right here, right now, right where we are; and it will be realized as we seek a deeper walk with Him.

Video Clip: God Has a Plan

Communion: Rev. Frank Frischkorn

Benediction: Rev. Frank Frischkorn

We sang *Blest be the Tie that Binds*. Frank gave the benediction and dismissed us at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice L. Swope, Recording Secretary

Thank You to Our Exhibitors

ABCOPAD Camping
ABCOPAD Habitat Build
ABEC
Alderson-Broadus College

Christian Community Credit Union
Church Leadership Institute – West
Colgate Rochester Divinity School
French Creek Christian Center

American Baptist Foundation
AB Historical Society
American Baptist Men
AB Personnel Services
AB Women's Ministries

Interim Ministries – ABC
International Ministries
National Ministries
Palmer Theological Seminary

Thank You to Our Bookstores

Family Christian Stores, 120 Byron Avenue, Altoona, PA 16602
Judson Press Bookstore (Provided by AB Women's Ministries)

Thank You To:

First Baptist Church of Hollidaysburg for providing Childcare.

And Thank You to Our Partners in Ministry:

Blair County Convention Center, Jennifer Brown
ABCOPAD Staff
Ford Music Center
Frank and Lois Clark
Mt. Zion Baptist Church Choir
First Baptist Church, Hollidaysburg
Logan's Valley Baptist Church, Bellwood
Family Christian Store
Judson Press Bookstore/ABW Ministries
Workshop Leaders
Eric Kraihanzel, Technology
Members of Biennial Committee
Ushers, Greeters, Childcare Workers
Habitat for Humanity, Blair County
American Rescue Workers, Hollidaysburg
Family Services, Inc., Altoona
Hope Center, Bellwood
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Ken Jordan
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Ralph Reynolds
Carol Ross Irwin
Eleanor Siegrist

Ex-Officio: Caryl Casey, Frank Frischkorn, Eric Kraihanzel, Sue MacDonald, Mark Mahserjian-Smith, and Denise Veselicky

Coming Events!

The 2010 Biennial is scheduled for October 14-16 at the Blair County Convention Center in Altoona, PA.

Women's Conference will be June 5-7, 2009 at Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA.

Men's Retreat will be July 31-August 2, 2009 at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA.