

181st ABCORI Annual Gathering, Part II

Meshanticut Park Baptist Church, Cranston, RI

May 19, 2007

The session opened as the praise team from the church led in music and reflections. President Nancy Bancroft called the meeting to order at 9:10 am. Linda Bausserman, chair of the program committee, presented the agenda for the day, and it was unanimously adopted. Host pastor Bob Lancia welcomed the gathering and led the opening prayer.

A specially prepared video was shown, featuring photographs of our ABCORI staff, many pictures submitted by the member churches, and professionally produced by the techies from Meshanticut. Following introductions of the day's speakers, Nancy presented Liz Lussier, our Director of Administration, who shared her testimony in both word and song. Liliana Da Valle, our new Executive Minister, led the Bible study from Luke 24:32, on the theme, *Hearts on Fire*. Liliana briefly introduced the support staff, the praise team led in a song, and Rev. Alex Gaete, pastor of Church of the Master and Iglesia La Esperanza, Providence, presented his testimony.

Liliana posed two questions for a "Light Our Fire" discussion: 1) What places and what people in your community need to see the light? 2) How can your church spread the light to these people and places? Brief responses from people in the congregation followed, and a summary sheet of all the written responses was distributed at the close of the day.

Ten workshops were offered at various venues in the Meshanticut and the Greek churches. A lovely catered luncheon was served in the splendid church hall of The Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation located across the street from Meshanticut Park Church. Opportunities to attend roundtable discussions, view a video on John Clarke, visit the authors' corner, participate in a hymnsing or join in a family festival, were also available after lunch.

Congregational singing, led by the praise team and music director Paul Mancini, called us to the afternoon sessions. Nancy announced 42 churches represented, with 172 persons in attendance. Leading off the afternoon, the Rev. Dr. Paul Lawrence, pastor of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Providence, presented his testimony.

Rhode Island Baptist Education Society Annual Meeting.

The annual meeting of RIBES was called to order by the Rev. Marie Carpenter, president. Eleven students are currently receiving financial aid for their theological education. Marie read several changes to the ballot on page 24 in the report book, then received a motion to elect these representatives. Motion to elect these representatives was unanimously carried. By-laws revisions were presented. It was moved, seconded and passed to accept these changes. The meeting subsequently adjourned.

An offering was received to help fund ABCORI's participation in the Children in Poverty initiative in Rhode Island, which is also a major emphasis of our ABC National Ministries. Local representatives have been trained in the Future Search process and will plan a conference to assess needs in Rhode Island.

Rev. Ethel Corbin, chair of the RI Baptist Ministers Council, introduced several pastors who are new to the state. A number of ordination anniversaries were also recognized, with a total of over two hundred years of service represented. The new executive of the RI State Council of Churches, the Rev. Dr. Donald Anderson, was introduced to a standing ovation. He will start in the position in mid-June. Don currently is pastor of First Baptist Church, East Greenwich.

Nancy called to order the official business session of ABCORI. Donna Sherman, chair of the New Life 2010 Committee, announced that three new churches in the state are engaged in the New Life 2010 program, bringing the total to sixteen churches. They are First Baptist in America, Greenville Baptist, and North Scituate Baptist. A banner listing all of the RI New Life churches was on display.

The Rev. Dr. Perry Alexander was nominated, and he was elected to fill the vacant position of Assistant Treasurer.

Three churches were welcomed into ABCORI membership: Primera Iglesia Bautista Latinoamericana, of Woonsocket, Wilfredo Rodriguez, pastor; Iglesia la Esperanza, of Providence, Rev. Alejandro Gaete, pastor; and the River of Life Church, Providence, Rev. Janice Thompson, pastor. All were unanimously voted into membership with the affirmation, "Glory to God!"

Paul Becker, representing the *ad hoc* By-laws Review Committee, next presented a proposal for several changes to the ABCORI by-laws. No questions were raised, and the amendments were adopted.

The Rev. Dr. Reppa Cottrell led a service of installation for the new officers of ABCORI:

President	Rev. Dr. Daniel Cottrell
Vice President	Mr. James Essex
Secretary	Rev. Dr. Liliana Da Valle
Treasurer	Mr. Don Wolfe
Asst. Treasurer	Rev. Dr. A. Perry Alexander

She related each person to a Biblical passage or a character of the same name, and celebrated the commitment these officers bring to the ABCORI family.

Our gathering concluded with a moving service of worship, including a message by the Rev. Dr. Tony Pappas, Executive Minister of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts and former pastor of Harbor Church, Block Island, titled "Fire on the Mountain: Passion, Power, Productivity." Communion was led by the Rev. Dr. Camille Bedard, who celebrated the 60th year of his ordination to ministry, and Virginia O'Shan, a seminarian. New president, Dan Cottrell, gave the benediction.

Respectfully submitted, Harry and Carolyn Bronkar
Clerks for the day