



PENN-DEL TIPS

The official newsletter of the American Baptist Men of Pennsylvania and Delaware

June, 2003 Issue

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AMERICAN BAPTIST MEN: GOD'S WORKMANSHIP CREATED IN JESUS CHRIST

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2: 8-10

American Baptist Men USA is blessed with a very special ministry: to encourage men and boys to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ and fulfill their mission. How successful have we been? What are we currently doing? What is being planned for the future?

Our organization has a long history. In 1922, a small group of businessmen, a smaller group of active Baptist laymen and members of the Northern Baptist Convention united to address a financial crisis that threatened the support of Baptist missionaries in their fields. Funds were raised, the American Baptist Men of USA was founded and God's work continued. Through the ensuing decades, ABMen continued to raise mission funds and to identify many other needs as good work opportunities for Christian men. It was concluded that to strengthen the American Baptist family structure, active laymen would establish and/or support the following programs and ministries: the Baptist family's purchase of the Green Lake Conference Center, the Lead The Laymen Movement, the Mission In Valley Forge, Lay training through ABMen council meetings, leadership summits and mega-rallies, the National ABMen Prayer Breakfast and resource kit development, Disaster Relief Trailer, ABBoys & YoungMen Program and publications, National communications through the ABMen In Action Newsletter and ABMen's Ministries Website and the resource catalogue.

What are we currently doing? Years ago, I was encouraged to attend local meetings of ABMen with lay leaders of my congregation. We were rebuilding our Men's Brotherhood. Our members found that their service to God was positively defined and graciously strengthened by work in ABMen Ministries. Training and fellowship across ABMen regions elevated our commitment to serve and energized our witness in our congregation, homes, workplaces, and the wider community. We were blessed. As a past Regional Director, District Director, and current member of the ABMen's Council, I hear the same story from others. American Baptist Men, USA continues to do good works: "encouraging men and boys to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ and fulfill their mission."

American Baptist Men of USA is not currently without problems. In 1997, program indebtedness temporarily weakened the financial structure of ABMen. However, through the ongoing support of United Missions, loan extensions by National Ministries and both the in-kind services and provision of a director by Educational Ministries, indebtedness will soon be cleared. The support provisions however, were temporary by design and are up for

corporate review in 2005. The director's position has now been eliminated to minimize costs. Each Council member is willing to continue to serve and accept additional responsibilities. The Council has appointed me as Interim Director of ABMen's Ministries, a volunteer position. We certainly seek God's guidance, your prayers and your support.

The Men's Council is confronted with pressing administrative and financial questions: Can the ABMen organization survive on the \$75,000 provided yearly by United Mission? Can ABMen depend on Baptist men, regional organizations and associations to supplement the \$75,000 to meet a projected yearly budget of \$275,000? Is autonomy a realistic goal for 2005? All answers to these questions depend upon membership reaction to the 2003-4 appeal for annual giving outlined in the letter of Cody Pollington, President of American Baptist Men, USA.

I can share with you the Council's present course of action. First, we seek your prayers and the response that comes from Bible based and heartfelt stewardship. There are approximately 13,500 men who receive our Men In Action Publication. If each gives \$10 annually, some of our current needs will be met. We are asking individuals through letters of appeal to seek the support of all 500,000 men in the American Baptist family. If each gives \$10 annually, current services will certainly multiply. We are contacting Baptist churches, regional associations, state organizations and those groups that have helped financially in the past. If each assigns an annual budget amount to support ABMen USA, how much more blessed we will be. Realistically, we may not reach all, but we look forward to reporting a successful response to the various avenues of giving in our next newsletter.

ABMen, USA's future is in God's hands. I personally believe that He has already blessed us with righteous men, active clergy and laymen, who will give joyfully and annually to build a strong ABMen's organization that is worthy of our calling: to encourage men and boys to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ and fulfill their mission. God has gifted us to do His will. Let us be about our Father's business.

Contributions may be sent to: American Baptist Men's Ministry, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851. All monies will be deposited for ministry use.

Frederick A. Robbins, Interim Director
ABMen's Ministries of National Ministries