

American Baptist News Service

P.O. Box 851

Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851

Phone: (610) 768-2077

(800) ABC-3USA

Fax: (610) 768-2320

E-mail: news@abc-usa.org



“TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES FOR THE CHILDREN” EVENT ATTRACTS REGIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 05/18/07) -- Participants from nine American Baptist regions attended “Transforming Communities for the Children,” a training event sponsored by National Ministries and conducted by the Future Search Network. The event, held on May 14-17 at the National Christian Conference Center in Valley Forge, Pa., was part of National Ministries’ Children in Poverty initiative and focused on ways various community stakeholders can collaborate to help children in poverty across our nation.

According to the Rev. Dorian Mendez-Vaz, National Ministries’ coordinator of Children’s and Intergenerational Ministries, each region was asked to send a team of four leaders whose positions in the local or regional community relate to the welfare of children. Together with the regional leaders and Future Search staff, National Ministries staff facilitated small group discussions and workshop sessions. American Baptist Churches of Alaska, ABC of Metro Chicago, Cleveland Baptist Association, ABC of Greater Indianapolis, ABC of Michigan, Philadelphia Baptist Association, ABC of Rhode Island, ABC of Vermont/New Hampshire, and ABC of Wisconsin sent representatives to the event.

“It is our expectation that this Future Search conference will be one more significant step in helping American Baptists engage with others in order to realize the dream of making a difference in the lives of children in poverty,” said the Rev. Marilyn Turner, National Ministries’ associate executive director, Program Ministries.

Participants expressed appreciation for National Ministries’ sponsorship of the Future Search event and for its Children in Poverty initiative. “The conference created an environment of hope and resources so that children can realize their destiny,” said the Rev. Carmen Porco, director of Housing Ministries for ABC of Wisconsin. “The program made us realize that we are all interdependent. It offered solid principles to help all stakeholders build and integrate service delivery to children and their families,” he said.

The Rev. Dr. Patricia Mitchell, the Philadelphia Baptist Association’s associate executive minister, mission communication and stewardship, also appreciated Future Search Network’s systematic approach to bringing community organizations, families, businesses, and other stakeholders together to benefit children. Mitchell said a shooting near a local high school was the catalyst for bringing together several American Baptist churches and other denominations and groups in an effort to make positive changes for local children and youth. “The Future Search process will help our currently-participating American Baptist churches to move forward from envisioning to implementing change,” she said.

National Ministries’ Executive Director, Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, said, “Participating in this event was like watching the mundane mud beneath my feet gradually being transformed into a holy and healing ground. At times, the presence of God's Spirit was palpable. I dare not claim that I witnessed the birth of a movement in behalf of children in poverty these last few days. In faith, I do believe that such a movement

has been conceived.”

National Ministries is the first national partner in Future Search Network’s “Prosperous Communities, Prosperous Nation” program, taking leadership in engaging American Baptist regions and local churches in creating better conditions for all children.

For more information on National Ministries’ Children in Poverty initiative, visit www.nationalministries.org/CIP/.

[RETURN](#) to American Baptist Mission Center ONLINE Homepage