**James A. Christison Jr. Dies; was a Former ABHMS Executive Director**

**VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 4/10/15)**—James A. Christison Jr., 87, who served American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) in the position that is now known as executive director and played a major role in restructuring American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA), died on Sunday at his home in Tampa, Fla.

Christison was ABHMS’ executive secretary and the denomination’s associate general secretary from 1969 to 1976. He was responsible for drafting the proposal of the Study Commission on Denominational Structure on which delegates to the ABCUSA annual meeting voted in 1972. This restructuring marked the shift in organizational identification from Home Mission Society to National Ministries. Christison directed “eco-justice” initiatives, and, under his leadership, ABHMS adopted a goal that focused on environmental wholeness and human justice.

“We are grateful to God for the ministry of Jim Christison. His entrepreneurial vision and Christ-centered leadership of American Baptist Home Mission Societies distinguished our ministry throughout the United States under his tenure,” says ABHMS Executive Director Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III. “I am especially grateful for his mentorship during the early years of my leadership at ABHMS.”

Christison was employed by Price Waterhouse before joining ABHMS as treasurer in 1960. After his departure from ABHMS, he served as vice president for finance at Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Fla. He retired from the college in 1997.

Born on Dec. 24, 1927, he was married to Joyce (Parr) Christison for 31 years. He was a member of First United Church of Tampa, Fla.

Christison graduated from the University of Connecticut and was a certified public accountant.

He completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Business Administration in 1968.

He was vice president of the National Council of Churches, assigned to the Division of Church and Society. In addition, he was a member of the steering committee of the National Urban Coalition. He authored “Emphasis on Living: a Manual on Retirement Housing” (Judson Press, 1970).

He is survived by his wife; daughter, Janice; son, Chris; grandchildren; and great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on April 18 at First United Church of Tampa.

*American Baptist Home Mission Societies—the domestic mission arm of American Baptist Churches USA—ministers as the caring heart and serving hands of Jesus Christ across the United States and Puerto Rico through a multitude of initiatives that focus on discipleship, community and justice.*

*American Baptist Churches is one of the most diverse Christian denominations today, with over 5,200 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members, across the United States and Puerto Rico, all engaged in God’s mission around the world.*