

ABOTA National Meeting Invocation

October 3, 2020

Doris Cheng

Sovereign of the Universe, Beloved God

Bless this ABOTA National Meeting and let us rejoice in our fellowship with one another.

We gather during a time of unprecedented uncertainty – burdened by deadly health and safety concerns, besieged by wildfires and smoke, and broken hearted by repeated instances of inequality. Just one year earlier, we could not have foreseen the challenges that we now meet. But God knows the plans for us - plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us hope and a future. As we stand on the precipice of this inflection point, we give thanks for the steadfast leadership of **Luther Battiste, Grace Weatherly, Richard Middleton, Jennifer Doan, Chris Boyd, Peter Riley**. We give thanks for the stalwart administration of **Brian Tyson, Sarah Wahlert, Molly McDonald, and the entire ABOTA staff**.

As we prepare our hearts and minds for discourse and action, give us unequivocal clarity about our principles, values and mission. Our commitment to the 7th Amendment is a commitment to protect the right to a civil jury trial, even when an alternative is easier, cheaper or faster. It is a commitment to equal justice for all in a vibrant and civil democracy. It is a commitment to join all people in the meaningful participation of government and society. Where any person is excluded due to race, color, gender, sex, or national origin, give us courage to protect and defend our fellow person and the rule of law. We choose these commitments, not because they are easy, but because they are hard.

Give us wisdom to identify this organization's short-term and long-term goals so that we remain relevant and useful to our members' needs. Give us inspiration and innovation to understand how to fulfill these needs.

Bless our communications. Teach us to honor the dignity of difference. Remind us that there is more that unites us than divides us. And Motivate us to listen as well as we speak. When we speak, let us approach and receive each other with all manner of humility and patience, bearing with one another in love and respect, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Bless the ABOTA members. Let us never grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. Rather, let us spur each other on to press on toward the goal. Let all that is accomplished today be done with wisdom and justice, grace and compassion, bringing honor to Your name and Your blessing to humankind.

Amen.