December 2014

Dear Women in Ministry and Friends of Women in Ministry,

At the end of 2014, let us pause to smile at how American Baptist Women in Ministry (ABWIM) has changed in the last five years. In that short period, we have seen fresh vision and energy for ABWIM grow. A new and gifted National Director, Rev. Patricia Hernandez, stepped into leadership in 2011. The ABWIM Advisory Team formed and is now an active group of advisors and supporters, refreshing itself each year with a new class of members. ABWIM has a presence and a voice in many denominational gatherings.

The new energy and vision make it abundantly clear that American Baptist Churches USA seeks to recognize God’s call to ministry for both men and women, equally. And yet, some individual American Baptist Churches deny their own best interests and dismiss or overlook qualified candidates for pastoral leadership because they are women. Less than 15% of all American Baptist pastors are women. The change we seek is slow to come.

Before my retirement in 2010, I worked with MMBB for 23 years. Because of MMBB’s historic commitment to recognizing the gifts of women in ministry, I had numerous opportunities to work with-- and on behalf of--many of our sisters in ministry. I witnessed the subtle, yet powerful, dismissal of their gifts, time after time. For some, the doors opened and I witnessed the strength and beauty of their service. Too many still face the closed doors. There is still much work to be done.

Won’t you help ABWIM continue to try to open hearts and open doors? There are many ways to lift up American Baptist women in ministry and I celebrate each and every effort made. In the same way, I celebrate each woman who steps into the pulpit and adds her gifts to powerful witness of the church. Today I ask that you think of a woman you wish to celebrate (perhaps that woman is you!) and consider making a year-end gift to ABWIM.

To donate, please go to [www.abwim.org](http://www.abwim.org) and click on the “donate button.” You may also mail a gift to American Baptist Women in Ministry, c/o Ms. Joyce Lake, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851. Please make your check payable to “ABCUSA” and note ABWIM on the memo line.

In faith and hope,

Rev.Holly V. Bean