

AMERICAN BAPTIST NATIONAL PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING CAUCUS
Caucus Nacional Batista Americano de Língua Portuguesa

2014 ACTIVITY REPORT

On the 14th of January we held our first Executive Committee Meeting of the year in San Francisco, CA. We wanted to follow up on our previous efforts in the area, where we had been contacting Brazilian pastors and churches, trying to motivate independent churches and their leaders to join the ABC, and seeking to establish a support group for the Caucus in North California. The meeting was held at a reasonably large church (Message of Peace Church) that had somewhat recently joined the ABC through our efforts.

So, following a trend of reaching out to Brazilian pastors in the area where our Executive Committee chooses to meet, we had on the following day (a Saturday) a one-day conference with a number of pastors from different churches of the region. Since one objective is to expose the pastors to ABC institutions and personnel, the event was held at the American Baptist Seminary of the West. There, as in other occasions, we had regional representatives of the ABC. Sometimes we also have representatives from Valley Forge, more often Salvador Orellana (National Ministries) and Miriam Chacon-Peralta from MMBB. The contacts and information are useful both for the members of the Caucus (who need to be more involved) and our friends, who get familiarized with the denomination.

Given the fact that we had planned a Conference of Brazilian leaders for October 23-25 in San Francisco, our second Executive Committee Meeting took place there as well, again in the Message of Peace Church, which hosted the Conference. Besides the participants that came from the San Francisco area, we had others from Northern California, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Florida. The Theme was “Current Challenges Facing the Brazilian Church in the USA—From an Ethnic Church to a Multicultural Church.” Rev. Ken Fong, Pastor of Evergreen Baptist Church in Rosemead was one of the keynote speakers.

An important meeting was held on June 20 at the Grotonwood camp site in Groton, MA, led by the Caucus Regional Representative, Rev. Jackson Oliveira, and myself, as the National President, during a program sponsored by MBMM (Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministry). The regional caucus approved the formation of the Ministerial Association of the Portuguese-Speaking Churches of Massachusetts as a chapter of the Conference of Ministers of Massachusetts. This way, the Portuguese-Speaking Pastors and churches would be better served and the work load of the Conference would be eased and made more efficient.

Aside from this, a few other efforts deserve to be mentioned. The Brazilian pastors in Massachusetts are being encouraged to get involved in multicultural projects and activities, especially those promoted by MBMM. A special effort has been made to have our leaders seek ministerial standing in the denomination. We not only encourage them, but we also try to help them through the process of having their ordination recognized.

A great challenge we face is the need to better integrate our caucus constituency in the country and to motivate the Brazilian pastors and churches to be more involved in the structure, programs, and activities of our denomination. For this we need to put together a complete and updated national directory of our caucus. For several reasons, we know it's not an easy task. But at least we have one for Massachusetts, which was completed recently.

We praise God for all that has been accomplished, and trust him to be our helper as we struggle onwards, facing the challenges that lay ahead.

Dalton Said
New Bedford, May 14, 2015