

OGS Report
Acting General Secretary
3 Month Activity Report December 2018 thru February 2019

It was a privilege to serve as Acting General Secretary for ABCUSA from September 2018 through February 2019. The staff of OGS welcomes back Dr. Lee Spitzer back to his office as General Secretary and are grateful for his recovery and healing.

OGS Staff

- Building move. The timeline for the move to a new location is now July 2019. An early-exit agreement with Presser has been signed and we are preparing the staff for the big event.
- Move Task Force. A task force that included Tina Turner, Bridget Lipin, Iris Cobb, and Anita Densmore produced an excellent planning document for tagging, charting, and reviewing material contained in the storage boxes.
 - In keeping with our Summit by the Sea focus, they asked everyone to, *"Get in mOcean! And make an oFISHall commitment to this relocation process!"*
 - There are over 1,000 boxes to review before we move to our new space. The boxes are not spread evenly across departments, but everyone has pledged to help one another, especially those departments with the most boxes to review. We also have our first volunteer recruits to assist, Art Munson and Gabe Jachowski.
 - The details of the move plan were revealed during a pizza party that included team building and instructions. Several people commented that the party and plan actually made this cumbersome task that lies ahead kind of fun by working together. Every Thursday afternoon will be dedicated to reviewing materials until the goals are reached. The specific plan includes:
 - Instructions for deciding what to keep and what to shred, scan, discard, or send to the Historical Society.
 - A spreadsheet to chart progress for each department.
 - Incentive awards for those who make the most progress in a given week.
- Communication. Bridget Lipin distributed a number of press releases, most notably a press release announcing our move to a new location that included contact information for all of the national agencies in their new locations.
- Internship. Rebecca Driscoll began her work as the first Women in Ministry Intern for the Office of the General Secretary on January 1, 2019. We provided an information packet and discussed her initial assignments. KJ also arranged tours of the IM and ABHMS (and ABWM) buildings and staff for the new intern. We are quickly beginning to see the fruits of Rebecca's efforts and skills. Rebecca consistently exceeds expectations, is fitting in well with staff, and exhibits skills of creativity, enthusiasm, and product excellence. Some of the projects that she is currently working on include:
 - A Lenten devotional series
 - Analysis, compilation, and production of reports based on the analysis and compilation of data from regional websites
 - Interviewing bivocational ministers who have indicated that they have a success story to share based upon a recent survey among the regions
 - Assistance in presenting the mission of Women in Ministry with Pat Hernandez

- ADP HR services. A leadership team comprised of Alan Musoke, Dave Kahn, and Evon Moody have been working diligently to provide content for the upcoming rollout of services from our new HR resource provider. The resources will include:
 - New processes for onboarding staff, accommodation, FMLA, etc.
 - A new staff handbook
 - Survey of employee satisfaction
 - New training modules
 - Standardized templates for job descriptions that are also compliant with current regulations such as specifications for travel, time sitting and standing, lifting, etc.
 - Risk and safety management
- Leadership and staff issues. Monthly leadership team meetings were held in order to problem solve, evaluate, and think strategically about our upcoming Biennial/Mission Summit (BMS), Orientation to ABC Life, BMS youth conference, BMS display booths, year-end statements, the 2020 40th Anniversary of Women in Ministry event, Transition Ministries recruits, etc.
- Celebration. The staff enjoyed a Christmas party in December with wonderful gastronomical delights, games, music, and a unique and respectful gift exchange.
- Core values. The three organizational values listed below became more integrated into the office culture:
 - Treating one another with dignity and respect
 - Communicating openly and honestly
 - Taking responsibility for doing the right thing

Biennial Mission Summit

- BMS. Annie Marcucci and her staff have been working assiduously to prepare all of the components of the Biennial Mission Summit for online registration. Each event must be loaded into the software with descriptions and registration options and has been quite an undertaking.
- OTABL. Kevin Walden continues with plans for the Orientation to ABC Life event to be held in conjunction with the BMS. 41 new ministers have signed up so far and a total of 81 have asked for a spot to be saved. Less than 10 seminarians have registered so far and Kevin and Annie are working to generate more seminarian names.
- Youth Conference. The chair of the youth conference at the BMS resigned and Marsha Scipio is in the process of naming a new chair and recruiting additional persons for committee work. The shift from inviting children of BMS participants to a youth program to inviting youth groups has surfaced many challenges, but each challenge is being met.
- Display. Board of General Ministries members were invited to sign up to help staff the OGS display area and we are grateful for the twelve people who have responded thus far to this invitation.

Fulfilling the ABCUSA Priority of Unity and Relationships

- Campaigns. Ken Marsenburg is working on two ministry funding campaigns. The first is a pilot project with one of our regions to increase giving to the region and OGS. The second is a potential funding partnership involving Morehouse School of Religion and the region of ABC of the South. Gift acknowledgment letters were also sent in January.
- NLC. After receiving input from various organizations via an online survey, I drafted the agenda and cover letter for the upcoming NLC meeting and had several conversations with potential presenters and members of the NLC. The meeting will focus upon collaborating better to serve our local ABC congregations.
- Survey Results. We are receiving positive results from two surveys that were distributed in January to the wider ABC family.
 - The first survey is geared toward gathering information about those involved in ABC camping and conferencing and assessing their interest in networking with one another.
 - The second survey seeks to gain a better understanding of bivocational pastors in the ABC by looking at their other vocations, difficulties, and perspectives. The final question of this survey asks if the respondent has a bivocational success story to share. Ten persons have indicated that they have a story to share and I am working with Rebecca to develop a set of interview questions and protocols.
- ABCUSA Nominating Committee. Evon Moody prepared materials for a follow-up meeting of the ABCUSA nominating committee who completed its work via conference call in January.

Fulfilling the ABCUSA Priority of Promoting the Work of Our National Boards

- Marsha Scipio participated in a mission trip to Myanmar with several regional and national staff. An update on this trip will be presented at the NLC meeting by several of those in attendance.
- Rebecca Driscoll will be participating in ABHMS's idea incubation project.
- OGS and MMBB will be co-sponsoring the Sunday morning worship service at the BMS.
- John Mandt and I had a conversation about the upcoming MMBB pastors colloquium and I accepted an invitation to speak at the event.

Fulfilling the ABCUSA Priority of Emphasizing Regional Ministries (From the overall OGS perspective)

- Orientation. I facilitated a gathering of the newest executive ministers for a three-day meeting. Each executive minister shared their journey of how they came to their position and we discussed best practices for the core tasks of being an executive minister. Prior to this group orientation, I had met individually with each executive minister to provide an initial orientation. The evaluations show that the participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to get to know other executives and begin working together. They especially liked the balance of "information and interaction." Several expressed surprise at the strong level of collegiality among the group that included a very diverse set of regions. Participating in the retreat were:
 - Edgardo Caraballo Marín, Iglesias Bautistas de Puerto Rico;
 - Paul Gibson, Great Rivers Region;
 - Andy Quient, American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles, Southwest and Hawaii;

- Harry Riggs, American Baptist Churches of Connecticut;
 - Michael Sisson, West Virginia Baptist Convention;
 - Gregg Hemmen, American Baptist Churches of the Central Region;
 - Jacqueline Saxon, Mid-American Baptist Churches;
 - Sandra Hasenauer, American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region;
 - Miriam Méndez, American Baptist Churches of New Jersey;
 - Mark Click, American Baptist Churches of Ohio; and
 - David Gregg, American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago.
- Individual on-site orientations were held in Topeka for Gregg Hemmen, the new Central Region executive minister and in Chicago for David Gregg, the new executive minister for Metro Chicago.
 - REMC planning. The new REMC president Frank Frischkorn and I continued to make plans for the upcoming REMC meeting and June REMC continuing education event.
 - REMC Nominating Committee. I gathered all of the background materials for the REMC nominating committee (2019 summary of needs, 2018 slate, list of past officers, and description of duties) and facilitated their process. They will present their slate at the April REMC meeting.
 - Transition. I met with the executive committee of one of our regions to help them think through their succession plan due to the impending retirement of their executive minister who will announce later this year.
 - Resourcing. I also distributed my monthly columns to the regions, facilitated conference calls for the executive minister's innovation group, fielded several questions from executive ministers, sent resources to several regions on a variety of topics such as hiring new region staff, facilitating dual alignment, mediating conflicts, processing clergy misconduct, etc.

Fulfilling the ABCUSA Priority of Growth

- A large gift received. Ken Marsenburg was instrumental in shepherding the receipt of a financial gift from the Chestnut Street Baptist Church. The primary focus of the gift is for Asian ministry projects. This project has been in the works for several years.
- IT Project. Progress is continuing on the C.O.R.E. online networking project.
- Fresh Expressions will have an all-day Academy Track at the BMS.

Fulfilling the ABCUSA Priority of Creative Partnerships

- OGS staff and other national partners will be meeting with leaders of the Asian Alliance at the end of March.
- Creation Justice. Marsha Scipio continues to promote the work of Creation Justice through this new network. The theme for 2019 is "Next Generation Rising."

- American Baptist Women in Ministry. ABWWIM and AB Women's Ministries held a joint planning meeting to continue to plan for the upcoming "*Celebrating Ministering Women: Radical. Redeemed. Ready*" event to be held June 16-19, 2020.
- BMS. The staff generated ideas for the Sunday morning worship service at the BMS, to be held in conjunction with MMBB. We have also asked the nine women members of the REMC to produce and deliver a litany as a part of this worship service.