

President's Report: September 2016

This summer has afforded your president multiple opportunities to represent the Board of General Ministries to the broader ABC family. These events provide space for relationship building and interpreting the value of United Mission. As I travel, I find American Baptists committed to our life together, willing to serve as the hands and feet of Christ in their local communities.

The week of July 4th took my husband and I to Greenlake Conference Center at the invitation of the World Mission Conference. It was a delightful week of listening and envisioning with our many Global Servants serving within International Ministries. Both Interim General Secretary, Susan Gillies, and I brought greetings and benedictions in evening plenary sessions. We were present for IM's celebration of Reid Trulson's ministry as well as witnesses to the installation of Rev. Sharon Kho as IM's new Executive Director.

July 24-27 I was in Washington D.C. for the Women in Ministry After Event: Soul Leadership. Although it was a small group of women clergy, mostly from the D.C. area, I found the experience rich as I listened to their stories and together we prayed for each other's ministries. While there, I had lunch with two former American Baptist leaders-Kate Jacobs, who served as Director of the Ministers Council and John Jacobs, who, for twenty years, was President/CEO of the American Baptist Foundation. It was a joy to thank these two servants for their leadership and vision that helps bring us where we are today.

From D.C. I travelled to Philadelphia in the midst of the Democratic National Convention, but not for the convention. Rather, I was there for Phase 4 of the 2017 Biennial Mission Summit planning process. We had a productive meeting and are well on our way to a fine family reunion next summer! On Thursday afternoon, July 28, I shared my reflections on the blessing Rev. Dr. Leo Thorne has been to our denomination! I identified Leo as an encourager and man of high integrity and deep faith; a positive influence on all who have been blessed to work with him. We will miss Leo and pray for him and Yvonne as they transition to this new stage of living.

August 22-25 I participated in the Minister's Council Pastor's Conference held at the National 4-H Conference Center in Washington, D.C. The conference utilized many partners in the denomination to focus on clergy well-being. There were presentations from MMBB and ABHMS as they implement grants from Eli Lilly for clergy stability. Also, the American Baptist Foundation shared in leadership. The Conference enfolded the second Rhythms of the Spirit gathering as Brad Berglund and Jennifer Davidson led us in contemplative practices. At the conference I was one of several spiritual directors offering a listening space for clergy and I presided over The Lord's Supper during the closing worship. As with many of the other summer events, this was an opportunity to connect with our sisters and brothers; hear their stories and share how we are made better when we work collaboratively as a faith family

On August 31 I made a one-day trip to the Mission Center for Reid Trulson's final retirement celebration. Upon arrival, I met with OGS staff during their coffee break to express gratitude for their dedication and hard work. Staff have been incredibly flexible this summer with the many changes in Office of the General Secretary.

Perhaps the most significant work I've done this summer as your President was to convene the first meeting of the new General Secretary Search Committee. We met on August 8 in Chicago. We have hired a consulting firm, National Executive Service Corps, to assist us in the search process. I am grateful for the openness and sense of encouragement felt by the Search Committee after our initial meeting. We have a conference call with the consultant on Sept. 12; then a face-to-face meeting with him on October 3 in Chicago.

As President, I have been asked to serve on the newly formed board of the New Baptist Covenant. This board consists of the Presidents and three other persons from all the Baptist entities participating in NBC-Cooperative Baptists, Progressive Baptist Convention, and National Baptist Convention. We will be hosted by former President Jimmy Carter at the Carter Center. Former President Carter initiated the New Baptist Covenant movement to bring Baptists from across the country together to creatively explore ways to address systemically, adaptively, and technically the issues of poverty, racism, gender roles, housing, and economy by working collaboratively in our communities. Members of the Race and Race Related Violence Task Force will also be attending the New Baptist Covenant Summit which follows the board meeting.

I thank you for the privilege of serving as President of ABCUSA. I submit this report with gratitude and humility.

In Christ,

Judy Fackenthal, President ABCUSA 2016-2017