

Mission Resource Development Report to the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee
March 2017

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Work of the Acting Associate General Secretary

2016 is finished. 2017 is here. It is a privilege to serve with you. Thank you for your encouragement, critique, and insights. I greatly appreciate it.

The top five United Mission giving churches from each region were sent a hand written thank you note expressing our thankfulness for their support and an encouragement. The top five churches in each region (165 churches) provide almost half of United Mission support. When you consider that ABCUSA claims over 5,000 churches, there is great room for increased giving to United Mission. We aren't making a strong case statement as to United Mission's importance and necessary.

All ABC identified Hispanic/Latino congregations were sent from the Office of the General Secretary an Epiphany card with a Spanish greeting. We are seeking to honor their Christmas tradition.

These two mailing brought to our attention that ABCIS data needs to be updated. Prior to sending the information about Biennial Mission Summit Church Sponsorship, all ABC regions were asked to review and update their current mailing lists. We only received confirmation from two regions that they checked their church list.

Began working with the Kachin Baptist Association toward AMO status. I've had initial contact with Florence Lee, ABHMS for education and cooperative ministry. This is an on-going work of support and encouragement from the Office of the General Secretary.

Met with New England Executive Ministers.

Coordinated a trip to the annual meeting of the Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico. Leo Thorne and Manual Luquin accompanied Al on this trip. Leo made arrangements for Al to meet several key pastors in Puerto Rico. Certificates of appreciation were distributed to the region, top giving United Mission churches, and the church with the largest increase in giving.

Other events I will be attending include: ABC of the Central Pacific Coast Board Retreat in the middle of March; the dedication of Prescott Lodge, the new location for ABC of Massachusetts offices on April 8; and the ABC of Connecticut annual gathering on April 29.

Biennial Mission Summit

Tina continues to provide administrative support to the Biennial Coordinator now that Annie Marcucci has assumed that role in addition to assistance with the new registration system as needed. Registration for Church Sponsorship and Individual Registration are open. Regular Staff Advisory Group meetings are being held to plan the events within the Hall of Ministries and Ministry Square as well as the Passport promotion. MRD is working with ABCUSA staff to develop a cohesive feel for our display space at the biennial.

Communications

Bridget has worked closely with Tina, Annie Marcucci and the Office of Travel and Conference Planning on items related to the 2017 Biennial Mission Summit and marketing for the event. She continues to maintain the ABCUSA website, works to gather stories for American Baptist Churches publications, and works with partners in production of the American Baptist News Service. In recent months has brought

together members of the Communications Council, made up of the Communications Directors from International Ministries, MMBB, ABHMS and the Office of the General Secretary, to discuss denominational communications strategies related to the Biennial Mission Summit and the Mission Center disposition process.

Stewardship

AI served as part of an Adaptive Learning Team led by Mission Resource Development's Stewardship Facilitator, Rev. Stacy Emerson. Held at the Mission Center, this two-day retreat focused on creating generous disciples. Stacy served the ALT well with her skills and it is hoped that the on-going work of the Team will challenge our churches to live in God's abundance and not out of mindset of scarcity. The ALT team is working on a new resource called The Generosity Project. The Generosity Project will begin in Fall 2017 with a pilot group of pastors and congregations in New England. We will celebrate the generosity we already experience, explore new ways of nurturing generosity through discipleship with creative experiments, and share our learning through the ABC website.

United Mission

We are implementing a design change in our United Mission is the Vehicle presentation as well as on the UmistheVehicle.org website. The train will slowly be phased out. The train significance was our past. 2017 will look to our current ministries supported by United Mission. The monthly themes presented so far in 2017 were: January highlighted Tom Wiles and his ecumenical work with the state of Rhode Island; February highlighted the Biennial Mission Summit with Steve Bils and Orientation to American Baptist Life with Holly Bean; the March highlight features the New England Collaborative facilitated by Tony Pappas, made possible by a Mission Initiative Grant. In addition to these stories there will be some devotionals, bulletin inserts, and children's sermons posted on the United Mission website through 2017.

A "marketing piece" will be provided to our Pilot Regions (Central Pacific Coast, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin). Technology Therapy Group (TTG) will talk with each of these regions and write an article to share their story focusing on: in the first third of the year "things that the region is proud of"; in the second third of the year, "stories from local churches in which the region's ministry made a significant difference"; and in the last third, "things that the region is dreaming." Some parts of a bulletin insert template have been designed by TTG which Tina has used to create individual bulletin for CPC. Bulletins will be customized for each pilot region pulling content from the stories written by TTG. The region will be able to add other information that they wish to be promoted through the bulletin insert such as events, highlights, pictures, etc.

We will continue to work with ABC/NYS to shadow the work of TTG and see what we can produce out of our office that is similar in nature to what the pilot regions will receive.