

## COMMUNICATING AMERICAN BAPTIST IDENTITY

Action Group Report: Friday June 17, 2016

Present: Leo Thorne, Susan Gilles, John Williams, Don Ng, Josue G, Felipe C, Elmore W, Zina J, Jonathan M, Bonnie H

### UPDATES

#### Communication Standards: Standards have been distributed

- Nomenclature
  - OGS is not acceptable. What is acceptable is the Office of General Secretary or the Ministries of the Office of the General Secretary.
  - When referring to the American Baptist Church(es) USA it is appropriate to spell it out the first time and then use ABCUSA.
- Logos
  - There are two official logos;
    - The hands and feet logo may be used **only** when describing Ministries of the Office of the General Secretary.
    - The world and cross may be used for ABCUSA in general.
    - Regarding instructions to churches, it was suggested information be developed and disseminated to church regarding preferential use of logo's going forward.
- Language groups
  - Distributing all standards to churches in their preferred language is very important and recommended, highly.

#### Stories for Publication

- Stories of local ministries whom we wish to highlight and for whom we wish to pray are being solicited for the monthly eNewsletter.
  - Stories should be developed in a 200-250 word format, include pictures (when possible) and a prayer request. Submit stories to Bridget Lipin.

### REPORT FROM INTERIM GENERAL SECRETARY, DR. SUSAN GILLIES

#### New Ways to Speak about the Office of the General Secretary

- The phrase Office of the General Secretary and or the phrase the Ministries of the Office of the General Secretary do not set alight a flame in the heart. They are not inspiring.
- While we will live with these titles in the interim, as we cast a new vision for the Office of the General Secretary we might consider language that is more descriptive of the essential work of the Office of the General Secretary.
  - Harmonizer
  - Encourager
  - Promoter
  - Keeper of the Story
  - Heartbeat of the ABCUSA story.

#### Challenges Facing the Office of the General Secretary

- Insufficient resources to fund the vision that exists and the vision that will emerge.
- The insufficiency of funds can cause members of the wider ABCUSA family to feel as if they are competing with one another for funds and more. This can lead to a sense of defensiveness of the part of the Office of the General Secretary.

Going Forward

- The Office of the General Secretary must see itself and its functions as
  - A servant to the good of the whole.
  - A “value add” to the others parts of the ABCUSA family.
  - A cheerleader for REMC, ABHMS, IM, ABWIM and MMBB.
- The Office of the General Secretary can uniquely,
  - Unify the narrative.
  - Continue to communicate we are one body and that each part is vital to the other parts.
  - Articulate the internal challenges we face.
  - Create and hold space for the discovery of internal disconnection and work to facilitate reconnection (e.g., meditate conflicts among the various members of the family).
  - Offer the face of ABCUSA to the world (communicate our identity).
  - Collect, curate and share our rich history.
- Questions to ask
  - How do we add value to the enterprise?
  - As we are generous in adding value, what do we expect in return from our ABCUSA family members?
  - How are we critical to the whole of the ABCUSA family?
  - How can we best tell our missional story?
  - How do we resource our story telling?
  - How do we call out and capture the stories of who we are, **today**, especially some of the new voices and new stories?
  - How do we understand our transition from a corporate/CEO model to a missional/lead missionary model?

Susan's Wisdom

- Do not rush.
- Let us see where we are in November.
- Ask ourselves if the metaphors (harmonizer, encourager, etc.) hold or are other metaphors emerging.
- This is a unique moment in the life of the ABCUSA family. It is time to begin this process.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Zina Jacque, Recorder  
Jonathon Malone, Reporter  
Tasha Wilson, Action Group Leader