

Report of Interim General Secretary Susan Gillies

to the Board of General Ministries

June 2016

These are good days to an American Baptist! I am heartened by the energetic and even courageous American Baptist ministries underway across the USA and around the world. We are grateful to God for these opportunities.

Last November, I compared replacing a General Secretary to changing the keystone in a stone arch. The actual experience of losing the leadership of Roy Medley has indeed caused a shaking of the structure. Because of Roy's and your good work, the structure is not damaged, although a few cracks have appeared. Thankfully, our foundations are great! There has been change and repair work that has been necessitated by the cracks following a temporary keystone being put in place. In addition, we have had staff transitions expected and unexpected.

We are celebrating the ministry yet grieving the departure of Rev. Dr. Leo Thorne, Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development. We will miss his pastoral presence and his truly rare gift of deep wisdom about the people of God. As you have heard, Rev. Dr. Al Fletcher will be on board at the end of July to serve for 13 months as acting Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development. If you have not met Al, you will enjoy meeting him in November if not before.

Two OGS staff persons have been granted Sabbatical Leave this year. Annie Marcucci, Director of Travel and Conference Planning, will be out of the office during the summer as she does intensive study on a new conferencing software. We and our ABC partners will be grateful for this! Jeff Woods, Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries, will be out July through September doing a study on implementing change. He reports there is much information about how to keep change moving but it remains unclear why groups won't take the first step. It should be interesting for us to hear the result of this study!

Pat Hernandez and Ken Marsenburg have done impressive work to initial an annual fundraising appeal for Women in Ministry.

We have concluded our "in-house" Human Resources office and bid "Godspeed" to Johnson Eapen. It's a big change. We received great assistance with transition from both IM and ABHMS. Jeffrey Haggray, Executive Director of ABHMS, opened the door for a cooperative agreement with ABHMS and we are pursuing that.

I am grateful for each of you who commit the time, energy and prayer to service on this board. May you be abundantly blessed!