

**Board of General Ministries Reports:
ABCUSA-Office of the General Secretary and
Associated Ministry Organizations**

TREASURER’S OFFICE

Highlights of Treasurer’s Office, Accounting, American Baptist Churches Information System, Building Management, Traffic, AMOs -- June 2016 – November 2016

ABCUSA

- Prepared 2017 Budget for Board approval at November meeting
- Preparing for 2016 year-end closing
- Annual insurance reviews/renewals
- Prepared and presented Analyses and Financial Statements to BGM/ABCUSA Finance Committees, BGM and BGM EC; staffed meetings
- Oversaw work of legal counsel in several areas
- Personnel supervision for Accounting, ABCIS, Building Management and Warehousing
- Planned changes in traffic department due to planned outsourcing of Judson services
- Ongoing ABCIS functions
- Assisted with Human Resources transition
- Represented NEC at ABHS Board meeting in Atlanta

Regions:

- Conferred with Regions and churches on financial and administrative issues
- Ongoing collecting agency responsibilities for 13 regions
- Attend ABC of Maine annual meeting
- Negotiated contract to perform accounting services for PBA

ASSOCIATED MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS (AMOs)

(AB Historical Society, AB Women’s Ministries, Ministers Council, AB Computer Center)

Accounting functions, ongoing consultations, insurance reviews, leasing renewals, quarterly meetings with AMO executives re: financial and operational matters

588 ASSOCIATES

- 2015 Tax Returns; accounting functions
- Leasing and building management; received lease renewals/non-renewal for 2017-19
- Insurance reviews/renewals
- 588 Associates Annual Meeting with 588 Board, and real estate consultants/advisors
- Reviewed and analyzed best and final offers presented by final potential joint venture development partners
- Participated in planning of Real Estate Council meeting.
- Finalized work with 588 legal counsel to settle property taxes.
- Supervision of building administrative staff and day-to-day operations

-- Alan Musoke, Associate General Secretary for Finance/CFO/Treasurer



OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT

Department of Development Office (DOD) Skeletal Report: January 1, to September 30, 2016

Summary Highlights: \$39,523 Raised in Pledges and gifts

Responsibilities: MG Prospect Identification/Research/Development/Cultivation/Solicitation; Development Advisory Team Resourcing; *Transformed by the Spirit*; General Secretary's Circle; Enhancement of Plan Giving Opportunities; ABWIM ACCESS; Department/Office Administration; and other duties as assigned.

General Highlights & Action Steps

- Funds Raised (excludes Targeted 2015 Biennial Items shown below) \$39,523
 - General Secretary's Circles \$ 3,949
 - *Transformed by the Spirit (TbyS)* \$ 1,375
 - Charitable Trusts (ABF Expectancy ABC Allocation) \$20,000
 - Other Targeted Giving \$13,427
 - Peace Initiatives \$ 147
 - Other Contributions \$ 625
- Current ABWIM ACCESS Appeal Results as of October 31, 2016, excluded above:
 - Total Raised \$19,350
 - # of Gifts 21
 - Avg. Gift \$921
 - % of \$50k Goal 39%
 - Balance to \$50k Minimum Goal \$30,650
 - Total Prospects Assigned 80
 - Required to Public Announcement \$40,000 minimum
- Cultivate & solicit visits with top individual prospects;
- Research/ Review/Evaluate Top Individual Prospects (\$10k+ Ability);
- Regional (Area) Events / Visits – ABCOFLASH, ABCRMT, ABCCR, ABCOTS, ABCOPAD, ABCRI, DCBC, Evergreen, ABCMC, ABCCT, ABCOH, ABCPBA;
- Plan ABCUSA Giving Tuesday Fund-drive (December 1, 2015);
- Preliminary Prep 2016 Year-End Donor Letters of Recognition/Thanks/Follow-up;
- Submit 2017 ABCUSA/OGS/DOD Budget with Fundraising Goals;
- Attend various ABCUSA, Partner and Affiliate meetings (ABF, McKee, ABCOTS, CCC/TSPM, etc.);
- Continue to review internal controls, checks & balances as well as database reporting metrics;
- Facilitate two Development Advisory Team Meetings (Strategy, Logistics, etc.);

- Plan and Conduct ABCUSA Year-end Pledge Drive (November – December);
- Plan and develop 2017 Biennial branding and marketing resources (ad, exhibitors, etc.);
- Provide ABWIM Leadership in the launch of inaugural 2016 Annual Appeal - ACCESS;
- Continue development of sundry strategic fundraising operational plans and procedures; and
- Refine Naming Opportunities (GS Circles & Mission Center).

--Kenneth C. Marsenburg, Director of Development & Evon Moody, Assistant to the Director

OFFICE OF REGIONAL MINISTRIES

Sabbatical Report from Jeff Woods **October 1, 2016**

First of all, I want to thank those who approved my sabbatical study leave for July thru September of 2016. I greatly appreciated receiving this opportunity. I have detailed some highlights of my sabbatical time below.

Regional and Denominational Work

Due to the small number of staff in the Office of the General Secretary, I agreed to respond to emails, phone calls, and other inquiries related to my position and meet the ongoing needs of the regions while on sabbatical. The sabbatical took the form of a partial study leave and largely consisted of the opportunity not to schedule regional training events or interventions during the sabbatical period and rather, to focus upon the exploration of topics for future resourcing. Those topics will be addressed in a moment. First, I will detail work conducted that is an ongoing part of my regional and denominational work.

Regional Searches

In responding to the ongoing needs of regions, I responded to several calls and emails related to selecting an interim executive minister for two regions that had open searches in this area, namely Chicago and Connecticut. ABC of Chicago selected Doug Harris and Carol McVetty to jointly fill this position and ABC of Connecticut selected Ken Williams, former executive minister for ABC of Rochester/Genesee. After securing interims for these roles, I met with the executive minister search committee for the Connecticut region to orient them to their work. The first meeting of the Chicago search committee will take place after the sabbatical as will launches for the executive minister search committees of ABCOFLASH and the Evergreen Association of ABC.

Executive Minister Evaluations

Two executive minister performance reviews were scheduled to take place during the sabbatical. In keeping with common practice, I created, administered, and compiled the performance evaluation reports for the executive minister of ABC of Philadelphia and the executive minister of ABC of Metro New York.

Board and Staff Work

I attended an OGS staff retreat focusing upon the work of the new Interim AGS for Mission Resource Development, Al Fletcher. This proved to be a good time to catch up on other topics as well.

Near the end of the sabbatical, I received a request to help evaluate the progress of the Board of General Ministries, by designing and distributing a survey, the results of which will be disseminated at the November Board of General Ministries meeting. To conduct this task, I reviewed the minutes of the BGM meeting where the request arose, read several new articles on board development, and reviewed the ABC bylaw sections related to BGM. I circulated the survey for feedback prior to the end of the sabbatical. I also put together a PowerPoint presentation on the roles and functions of boards that I can use with regional boards as well as the Board of General Ministries if desired.

Sabbatical Topics of Study

The Sparks of God

While on sabbatical, I explored several topics that had previously surfaced, but for which I had not had time to investigate more fully. One of these is what I call, “The Spark of Innovation.” I have increasingly been referring to the initial contact of God and people as a spark that can be fanned, cultivated or squelched once present. While on sabbatical I studied scripture looking for examples of what happens to such sparks in the Bible. I discovered several insights, including the following:

- If we choose to respond to a spark that God created, our lives will most assuredly be disrupted.
- People often focus upon a distraction rather than the spark of God and sometimes try to squelch the spark.
- When we are the ones who approach God, faith is influential in creating a spark.
- Sparks in the book of Acts often created a new sense of community.

I particularly found the books of Matthew and Acts very engaging in this study. I plan to draw from this material at pastors conferences, sermons, etc.

Innovation

Closely linked to the topic of the spark of God is the topic of innovation. I met with a few people currently engaging this topic and read several articles related to innovation in organizations. Much of the reading confirmed what I had been discerning through scripture and prayer. I plan to disseminate these findings on innovation through my monthly REMC E-Topic articles. One book that I found particularly helpful was Brian Robertson’s book on *Holacracy*. I also plan to collaborate with a UCC conference minister on a project related to, “Creating the space for innovation.”

Search Committee Interview Questions

Regional executive minister search committees receive an entire set of guidelines to conduct their work. Last year, I revised these guidelines, but wanted to enhance one particular section of these guidelines related to sample interview questions. I read a few books on interviewing and surfaced several new sample questions that search committees can pose to potential candidates.

Story Beneath the Story

I continued work on a topic that begun several years ago in conjunction with my attendance at the Tavistock Institute in Leicester, England. The project involves looking for the dynamics, coalitions, and narratives that form beneath a conversation that ultimately influence the outcomes of the conversation. This time, I explored several books related to facial expressions and body language. This work is especially helpful in my work with search committees as I try to understand the multitude of perspectives at work and to move the committee toward consensus of a preferred candidate.

--C. Jeff Woods, Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries

MISSION RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (MRD)

Staff - Alfred J. Fletcher, Acting Associate General Secretary; Bridget Lipin, Assistant Director of Communications/Web Manager; Tina Turner, Executive Assistant to Associate General Secretary; Mark Staples, Communications Consultant; Stacy Emerson, Stewardship Facilitator

Staff Updates - This has been a time of transition in the office. A retirement celebration was held for Leo Thorne as he retired after 10 years of service as the Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development. Alfred Fletcher spent some time this summer in orientation with Leo Thorne and Susan Gillies, Interim General Secretary, ABCUSA. Al setup a working office at the Mission Center and researched current MRD projects and Board directives related to his work with MRD. We welcomed Bridget Lipin back from Maternity Leave (July-September 2016) and recognize Tina Turner and Mark Staples for their additional work during this time. MRD staff began a monthly staff meeting which will continue into 2017.

United Mission - We began to focus on several items as a new team, including: worked with United Mission is the Vehicle Pilot Regions to adjust the focus of this marketing emphasis; designed a United Mission brochure targeting the ministry of ABC NYS with the help and permission of Executive Minister, James Kelsey – this is a United Mission adaptive challenge experiment; interviewed Tom Wiles in ABC of Rhode Island for January 2017 United Mission is the Vehicle highlight.

Communications - We continued to provide support and resources to various Regions and Associated Ministry Organizations (AMOs); continued work on the ABCUSA website, newsletters, publications and the American Baptist News Service; produced the 2017-2018 ABC Directory/Planning Calendar which is now available online.

Biennial Mission Summit - Working in partnership, we have: met with the Biennial Mission Summit Planning Team; mailed a Save the Date card to all churches and regions for inclusion in annual meeting materials; worked on Biennial publications related to sponsorship/exhibitors/ads and registration for Church Sponsorship.

Stewardship - Stacy Emerson continues to work on the Board of the Ecumenical Stewardship Center and leads a Stewardship ALT team for ABC. She led a Stewardship Workshop at a Connecticut event which Al Fletcher also attended.

Preaching and Visiting Local Churches and Regions - Al Fletcher, in his role as Acting Associate General Secretary has: attended the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee meeting in Rochester, NY; participated in the New England Collaborative meeting, the New England Executive Ministers Gathering, and the ABCCONN Mission and Stewardship Day; attended the retirement

celebration for Judy Allbee, ABCCONN Executive Minister; participated in and led workshops for the annual meetings of Mid-American Baptist Churches and ABC of the Central Pacific Coast; and has preached at West Hartford Baptist Church, West Hartford, CT, and First Baptist Church, Indianola, IA, and brought greetings from ABCUSA to Allen Temple Baptist Church, Oakland, CA.

Matthew 25 Grant Administration - Tina administrated the Discernment Team which serves to award Matthew 25 Grants. In 2016 there were grants awarded in April and October. Beginning in 2017, grants will be distributed once per year in the fall. More specific information is provided in the ABCUSA Matthew 25 Grant Fund report.

Staff Note - Thank you to the BGM and to the Interim General Secretary for the privilege of serving in this mission capacity. I am impressed with MRD's fine staff and the staff of the Office of the General Secretary. Without their ministry, I would be unable to competently serve. – Al Fletcher

-Alfred Fletcher, Acting Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development

OFFICE OF TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE PLANNING (OTCP)

Annie Marcucci adds Biennial Mission Summit Coordinator to her current position as Director of Travel & Conference Planning.

Annie will soon be implementing, Cvent, a new on-line registration program, which will replace Meeting Trak.

Kathy Young and Annie Marcucci continue to plan 100 meetings each year, plus the Biennial Mission Summit.

The Office of Travel & Conference Planning has also acquired parts on Leo Thorne's Biennial Mission Summit duties since his Retirement.

Two per diems, Mary Beth Novack and Anne Harris, assist in the Office of Travel & Conference Planning pending work load.

--Annie Marcucci, CTC, CMP; Director of Travel & Conference Planning

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

The Office of Human Resource Management (HRM) is responsible for providing comprehensive and strategic human resource services for the employees of the American Baptist Churches USA, the American Baptist Foundation, the American Baptist Historical Society, American Baptist Women's Ministries, the Ministers Council and the American Baptist Computer Center. Furthermore, we are committed to providing mission-focused and value-driven strategic services to the chief executives and leadership staff of each of the organizations.

Laura Miraz, principal lead with **HRMatters**, has been providing HRM services since June 2016. **HRMatters** is a mission-focused, value-driven strategic human resource management service provided by the American Baptist Home Mission Societies designed for American Baptist organizations. **HRMatters** seeks to deliver excellent HR services for ABCUSA and other key

American Baptist organizations. ABCUSA has contracted *HRMatters* to provide HRM services going forward.

For years, ABCUSA has employed a total rewards compensation strategy. While not necessarily leading the market, ABCUSA salary and benefits structure is competitive, as well as being just and fair. ABCUSA's total rewards strategy includes a diverse list of benefits, a list of some is provided here:

- Competitive salaries + wages
- Generous retirement benefits, as well as disability and life insurance benefits. ABCUSA employees participate in the MMBB Benefits for Life plans.
- Paid time off/vacation and paid sick leave
- Comprehensive healthcare insurance which include medical, dental, vision and prescription benefits with Aetna.
- Flexible Spending Accounts for Health & Dependent Care, pursuant to IRS. Participation in Health Savings Accounts are also available to employees electing to participate in eligible high-deductible health insurance plans.
- Work/life balance efforts, such as flexible work schedules

In addition to renewing the healthcare contracts for 2016-2017, HRM has also supported recruitment and selection for various positions in ABCUSA and the AMOs. Additionally, HRM provided a comprehensive revision and implementation of a new appraisal process for an executive director position for an AMO.

Employee relations is important and HRM continues to be available to staff to assist them in addressing various issues that may come up in the course of their employment. HRM seeks to provide timely and accurate information to all ABCUSA staff with respect to all compensation – salaries and benefits. Various improvements have been made in order to improve the delivery of HR services. One notable example is the provision of an information session during open enrollment and the recording of the session to be available for all who missed it as well as for new employees eligible for healthcare benefits hired throughout the year.

HRM is underway in conducting a complete review of position descriptions in ABCUSA. This is important and required in order to ensure position descriptions keep up with the changing demands and expectations of staff. This effort is expected to be completed in early 2017.

For 2017, HRM is exploring the opportunity to offer ABCUSA employees the services of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAPs are a cost-effective way to provide access to confidential resources for employees and their families. Such services are available online, via telephone and face-to-face. These resources and services would be available to all employees and their families and are designed to assist in addressing the complexities and demands of life and work.

ABCUSA is committed to attracting and retaining highly skilled and committed staff dedicated to advancing the mission and vision of their respective organizations. In order to ensure staff remain competitively skilled, HRM is exploring opportunities to provide on-going support and training for ABCUSA employees. One cost-effective model currently being considered is a learning portal which would provide an opportunity for employees to learn new skills as well as

strengthen and sharpen existing skills. The learning portal provides access to thousands of webinars, seminars both online and in classroom settings. Respectfully submitted,

--Laura Miraz, Human Resources Director



AMERICAN BAPTIST MEN-USA **2016 Ministry Report**

2016 has been a busy year for the ministries of ABMen with the following representing highlights of our many activities:

JANUARY: ABMen participated in the DC Baptist Men's Organizing Conference in Washington, DC;

FEBRUARY: ABMen attended the ABC Great Rivers Region Installation Service for Dr. Paul Gibson as Executive Minister;

MARCH: ABMen participated in the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Falls Church, VA; Held ABMen Executive Committee meetings at Parchment Valley Conference Center, Ripley, WV;

APRIL: ABMen attended the installation service for Dr. Jeffrey Haggray, Executive Director of American Baptist Home Mission Societies in Washington DC; Held ABMen Spring Mission Work Party at Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake WI;

MAY: ABMen participated in the rebuilding of a rural bridge in Boone County, WV;

JUNE: ABMen Disaster Relief Teams from WV and NE traveled to Bacone College in Muskogee, OK in response to micro burst (Dec. 2015) damage to their chapel;

JULY: ABMen Disaster Relief Teams traveled to Rainelle, WV; ABMen attended the World Mission Conference at Green Lake Conf. Center; ABMen National Board Meeting and Annual Meeting at Moses Merrill Camp and Conf. Center, Linwood, NE;

AUGUST: ABMen participated in the North American Baptist Fellowship Disaster Relief Conference in Cary, NC; Disaster Relief Teams continued their work in Rainelle, WV; ABMen Disaster Relief Teams traveled to Bacone College in Muskogee, OK in response to tornado (July 2016) damage to their student dorms;

SEPTEMBER: Held ABMen Fall Mission Work Party at Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake WI; Teams from MT, WV and NE participated in the ABMen Mission Work Party church re-build at First Crow Indian Baptist Church, Lodge Grass, MT;

OCTOBER: Held ABMen Executive Committee meetings at Parchment Valley Conference Center, Ripley, WV; ABMen leadership team traveled to Mission Center to meet with national ABC leadership reporting on our ministry activities and offering continued support from the men; Held ABMen National Men's Sunday October 9th (2nd Sunday in October annually); ABMen Disaster Relief Teams traveled to Baton Rouge, LA (hosted by True Light Baptist Church);

NOVEMBER: ABMen Disaster Relief Teams continue in Baton Rouge, LA;

*ABMen USA continues to offer ministry support opportunities through their **Key Contributor Campaign** and their **Faithful Servant Endowment Fund** (American Baptist Foundation)*

Striving to be the hands and feet of Jesus,

--Kenna "Lucky" Ray, Executive Director, ABMen USA

AMERICAN BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Executive Director's Report November 2016

Staff: Priscilla E. Eppinger, Executive Director; Jan S. Ballard, Assistant Director and Archivist; Janet Winfield, Office Manager; Kay Eland, Financial and Subscription Secretary

Vision

The American Baptist Historical Society, as a premier religious historical society, advances Baptist identity, promotes historical literacy, and thereby inspires spiritual and social transformation.

This has been a year of both transition and continuity at the Historical Society. The most significant transition came in July-August as Deborah Van Broekhoven completed a 17-year tenure and retired, and Priscilla Eppinger was called to be Executive Director. Here are some of the highlights of the year's continuing ministry:

Research and Publication

- Onsite researchers: 44 (5-year average: 46/year). Research days: 136 (avg. 108)
- Research by mail: 50 (avg. 44); inquiries via web: 139 (avg. since 2014: 181)
- Major accessions: Growing Healthy Churches Regional Archives (San Francisco area); Glen Stassen Papers; David Gushee Papers; First Baptist Church, Belleville, IL; Buffalo Baptist Collections: American Baptist Churches of the Niagara Frontier, Buffalo Baptist Association, Buffalo Baptist Union
- *American Baptist Quarterly*: 2 issues published, with 2 more in the pipeline for late 2016
- Online catalog (ArchivesSpace) of manuscript and archival collections became available to the public

Collaboration and Relationships

- Participated in the New Baptist Covenant summit meeting with an ad in the program, a display in the exhibit area, and Ex. Dir. offering words of welcome to the worship service where Pres. Jimmy Carter was the main speaker
- Visits to Atlanta-area churches to build relationships with pastors and congregations
- Collaboration in planning an April 2018 conference on the legacy of Walter Rauschenbusch
- Ongoing relationship development with ABC partners, especially in a time of leadership change

Revenue Stream Development

- At Your Fingertips campaign to fund initial work of digital archives continues; about \$300,000 of the \$550,000 goal has been received
- Annual Fund appeal campaign planned; #GivingTuesday and [AmazonSmile](#) utilized to expand reach

Publicity and Communications

- hosted annual lecture with Deborah Van Broekhoven speaking on the New Era Baptist Institutes
- electronic version of *Primary Source* newsletter now available
- increased use of email and social media; “Like” the Historical Society’s page on [Facebook](#) to see significant events in Baptist history

Respectfully submitted,

--Priscilla Eppinger, Executive Director

AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY & TRANSITION MINISTRIES

ABWIM

Vision: ABWIM seeks the full participation and full partnership of men and women in ministry in which both women and men are able to fully utilize their God-given gifts and fully live out their God-given call.

Some Highlights:

- Completed publication of a booklet for the first ever ABWIM Annual Appeal in collaboration with the Annual Appeal Steering Committee and Ken Marsenburg, Director of Development
- “The Soul of Leadership,” an event in Washington DC bringing together women in ministry from across ABC regions to reflect on issues of call and leadership
- Partnered with AB Women’s Ministries on a return trip to the Republic of Georgia as part of the “Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges,” project, a project initially funded by a Palmer Grant. This initiative continues to grow.
- “Sisters in Service,” an event in Metro Chicago bringing together lay and ordained women in ministry to support and empower each other in service

Transition Ministries

The goal of Transition Ministries ABCUSA is to partner with regions in resourcing churches during times of transition in a way which enhances their ministry and empowers them to journey into the future as vibrant missional congregations.

Our mission is to provide intentional interim ministers who are adept and experienced in leading churches through transitions. These interim pastors guide the congregation on a journey which involves celebrating their history, clarifying their identity, articulating their mission, and moving into a fruitful future.

As this ministry resource continues to develop from what was formerly Interim Ministries, we have begun to offer training events. In a unique partnership with the Center for Congregational Health, we are able to offer high quality, standard training for intentional interims. As part of this partnership, Rev. Dr. Larry Swain is serving on a volunteer basis as the Transition Ministries Training Coordinator. We have offered such an event in ABCOPAD as well as an event in Indiana in collaboration with ABC Indiana/Kentucky and ABC of Greater Indianapolis. Plans are underway for trainings in ABCNYS, ABCOFLASH, and West Virginia.

In such times unique resources are needed. **Transition Ministries ABCUSA** serves as the hands and feet of Christ, connecting with regions and congregations in ways that move mission and ministry forward.

In both of these ministry resource areas –ABWIM and Transition Ministries—I am thankful for the wisdom, guidance and support of Susan Gillies, Interim General Secretary, the ABCUSA Leadership Team, the ABWIM Advisory Team and the Board of General Ministries—without whom none of this could happen. Thank-you!

--Patricia P. Hernandez, National Director ABWIM and Transition Ministries

AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

American Baptist Women's Ministries is a Christ-centered ministry with a commitment to encourage and empower women and girls to serve God. Our national board, through its Beloved Community initiative, is attending to strengthening relationships, empowering inclusive leadership, developing relevant and vital programming ministries, and leading with culturally-competent and responsive governance. www.abwministries.org

Accomplishments

- We promoted our “3D” 2016 conference events for women and girls in D.C. in July as *Unconference* events to prepare the imagination for a nontraditional format that facilitated strengthening relationships among participants from across the U.S. and Puerto Rico, representing every generation from 12 to 85. Great fun! Less sitting and listening to speakers; more purposeful interaction!
- 34 women of all ages remained in D.C. after the 3D event for one of three after-event seminars: leadership development, leadership event for women in ministry, and Baptist-

Muslim dialogue. (Read what Merletta Roberts had to say about the Baptist-Muslim dialogue after-event: <https://intheirshoesblog.wordpress.com>; scroll down to “A Summer to Connect”)

- More adventures in Baptist-Muslim dialogue and building bridges between faiths and cultures happened in August when eight women—seven American Baptist and one American Muslim—traveled together to the Republic of Georgia to share faith and life experiences with Georgian Baptist and Muslim women for ten days. (Intrigued? ABWM and ABWIM have been invited to co-sponsor another spiritual pilgrimage to Georgia in Fall 2017. Stay tuned.)

In process

- We’re sailing on September 15-18, 2017. Yes! . . . back by popular request, we’ve planned with ABWIM a lightly-programmed “Sisters on the Sea” retreat weekend for AB women—lay and clergy—on a Royal Caribbean cruise to the Bahamas. The goals are simple, but oh-so-needed: Relax, Relate, Renew. Register before January 22 at www.abwministries.org/events for best rates.
- Peacemaking, respect, and understanding happen in the context of relationship. Our “See Me As I Am”: Baptist-Muslim Dialog virtual mission encounter on May 8-12, 2017, intends to bring together Baptist and Muslim women for mutual learning and conversation. (Included is a daily curriculum of interesting and thought-provoking activities for individual learning, and opportunities to learn and share with other participants via evening conference calls with interesting presenters and practitioners.)
- Other places for Baptist women to connect next year: 1) The opening day of the ABC Biennial Mission Summit in Portland, Oregon, features Women’s Day with a morning and afternoon program event that includes a celebrative luncheon. 2) Baptist women in the U.S. and Canada are invited to Toronto (October 19-22) for the once-every-five-year conference sponsored by the BWA-related North American Baptist Women’s Union.

--Virginia R. Holmstrom, Executive Director; Rev. Angel L. Sullivan, President

MINISTERS COUNCIL

October 2016

1) Program Development

- a) 7Rs of Sanctuary program
 - i) Led fall cohort retreat in September 2016 at the Wisdom House Conference Center in Litchfield, CT.
 - ii) Will lead a second fall cohort in October 2016 at Camp Burton, Vashon Island, WA.
- b) Continued programming
 - i) Ministers Council is working to expand our offerings to provide webinars for constituents. Talks underway with Ministers Council chapters in Metro Chicago, Wisconsin and Greater Bay Area.

- ii) \$25,000 grant received from Pastoral Excellence Network for a program combining leadership and family systems theory in June 2016. Cohorts for this grant will begin in 2017.
- 2) Governance / Organization
 - a) Staffing changes
 - i) Kathy Jachowski became new Administrative Assistant in July.
 - ii) She will become the Executive Assistant for the General Secretary in December.
 - b) Contracted ABHMS HR Matters for HR needs starting in June. Will work with Laura Miraz of ABHMS to source a temp employee starting in January.
- 3) Partnerships
 - a) The 2016 Ministers Conference hosted by OGS/BGM, ABF, ABHMS, MMBB, and Ministers Council from August 22-25 at the 4H Conference Center in Chevy Chase, MD. Was very successful. Summary Report and survey were made available.

--Debra Jackson, Executive Director

RAINBOW ACRES

Mission Teams Transform Lives at Rainbow Acres

In 2016 Rainbow Acres has been blessed by Mission Teams from Baptist and Presbyterian Congregations from across the nation. The Transformations that take place are three dimensional. The teams transform the lives of the Ranchers with their unconditional love and the message that "the Ranchers are to the Kingdom of God and to each individual member of the Team. Team members lives are transformed, too, when they discover the meaning of Matthew 25, "when you do it to the least of these, you minister to me!" And the Teams bring financial resources and much needed labor to complete well planned and executed improvement projects such as construction of New Green Houses, renovation of the Daehler Building for the Crafts Programs, and Dakin House a residence for the Ranchers.

Mission Teams that have blessed Rainbow Acres in 2016:

Baptist Student Foundation, Purdue University, Dr. Shawn Zambrows and Rev. Homer Ford; Calvary Baptist Church ABC Central Pacific Coast, Rev. Todd Scheler, Calvary Baptist, Salem, OR; and FBC Cottage Grove, & FBC Springfield; First Baptist Church of Downey, CA, Rev. Steve Shangraw; Trinity United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jeff Wagner, Santa Ana, CA; Hillside Community Church, Rancho Cucamonga, CA, Ray & Terri Harton and Beth & Mat Partridge; Graceway Church "Centerpointe Presbyterian Church," Centerpoint, CA, Carig Ungethiem; Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Hurrican, WV, Rev Ron McClung; Christ Community Church, Milpitas, CA, Rev. Gayle Hotchkiss and Kim Clevenger; First Baptist Church of Sioux Falls, SD, Dr. Warren Hoffman; First Baptist Church, Temple City, CA, Rev Guy Blatt, Dr. James Walden; First Baptist Church of Hanford, CA, Lee Pritchard and Gary Rocha co-leaders.

Up-Coming Groups in 2016: Parkside Church, Camp Verde, AZ, Daniel Lee; Menlo Park Presbyterian, Menlo Park, CA, Church-Kids Ministry, Rebecca Barnett; First Baptist Church of Alhambra, CA, Frank Martinez; Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church, Tulsa, OK, Chrystal & Barry Fulda; First Baptist Church Evergreen, ABCOFLASH, Julie Ono.

Teams have included children, youth, young families, adults of all ages into their 90's! It has been noted that Churches thriving in the 21st Century are Congregations that look outward to serve their community and missions beyond their community. May these Congregations thrive!

--Gary W. Wagner, President and CEO

CHIN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA [CBCUSA]



CHIN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA [CBCUSA]

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October 29, 2016

The report of the CBCUSA

In September 2016 the CBCUSA churches are 102 and 28,000 members including kids. We have few new comers from Malaysia after the Chin refugee resettlement in the USA is stopped.

There are five areas of the CBCUSA such as the Eastern Area, the Central Area, the Western Area, the Southern Area and Mid American Chin Christian Fellowship. Each area carries its own programs such as annual conferences, deacons training, Sunday school training and youth sports and activities.

The Structure of the CBCUSA is as follows:

1. CBCUSA Executive Officers [EO] [6 office bearers]
2. CBCUSA Board of Directors [BD] [6 office bearers + 4 departure directors + lay leaders + 5 area secretaries + 1 ex-president + 4 lay leaders = total 20 members]
3. CBCUSA Board of Trustees [BT] [BD members & about 110 members based on the number of local church members].
4. CBCUSA Board of Management [BM] [all BT members & members based on the amount of the contributions by local member churches].

All local churches are directly affiliated with the CBCUSA office with contributions. There is another project of the CBCUSA, called "Relief Fund" to help support for the funeral service of the dead family with \$6,000 per dead person.

CBCUSA Mission

The International Chin Baptist Mission [ICBM] that is a part of the mission department of the CBCUSA, have been sending local missionaries to the southern Chin State. We praise God that 513 local people in Kanpalet Township are converted to Jesus Christ within three years since July 2013. We are building churches and houses for our missionaries.

We are thinking about home mission in the USA. We need to work urban ministries among our CBCUSA communities and other urban communities in the USA.

We hope that this mission of saving the lost souls will motivate our churches spiritually and our churches will grow in Spirit and truth.

The CBCUSA has a full time mission director Rev. Dr. Cung Lian Hup, who is responsible for all mission projects.

Children Sunday school Program

The CBCUSA has the department of Christian Education and Literature. We have a full time director Mr. Thlasui Tluangneh. He has written three volumes of Children Sunday School teaching books based on six levels of their age groups. He also wrote and printed other several books in Chin. Sunday School teachers' trainings are carried at local churches or area churches.

Women Department

The CBCUSA has the women department in leadership and administration. We have a volunteer director Pastor Hlei Sung who is a pastor of Emmanuel Chin Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. All women leaders of the CBCUSA churches are well organized and work different ministries together very well. They are motivating our churches by their active ministries and prayers.

Youth Department

The CBCUSA has the youth department in leadership and administration. We have a volunteer director Pastor David Lalthawm Lian who is the pastor of Chin Christian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana. All youth leaders of the member churches are working together. They have an annual youth leaders meeting and youth training funded by the CBCUSA. They have other programs such as musical and praise and worship programs. They are responsible for the arrangement of the triennial conference of the CBCUSA.

CBCUSA Scholarship Program

The CBCUSA has a scholarship program for seminary students in the USA. There are about 30 seminary students. It is expensive to pursue seminary studies for our youths although more youths like to attend bible schools.

Chin Relief and Rebuilding Committee

The CBCUSA has formed the Chin Relief and Rebuilding Committee that will help support to the victims of Komen Cyclone in July 2015 for 3 years. It is difficult to raise fund among our Chin churches and families for we do not strong churches and families yet. We hope and believe that God will work in some ways. Everything we are working is by faith in God. We are very thankful that the Baptist World

Alliance [BWA] has contributed \$15,000 to the CBCUSA for relief and rebuilding ministries. Hundreds of Chin families who were caused by this natural disaster are still struggling for their daily living.

Words of Thanks

We would always like to say many thanks to our American Baptists who brought the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Chins. Because of this gospel, we were persecuted in our homeland. Thousands of Chin Christians fled the country to avoid persecution and forced labors. God has given us new churches in the USA to work for Him and His glory. The first message of Jesus Christ "He has appointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor" [Luke 4:18] is really true to the Chins today. To God be the glory!

--C. Duh Kam, Executive Minister, CBCUSA

THE KAREN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE USA

Report of Karen Baptist Churches USA

We had celebrated the 7th Anniversary Celebration of KBCUSA on July 21-24, 2016 in Greensboro, North Carolina.

A. Current Leadership:

- Chairperson: Rev. Hsa Moo
- Vice-Chairperson: Rev. Htee Hgay
- Executive Secretary: Rev. Saw Ler Htoo
- Joint-Secretary: Rev. Ler Mu Martin
- Treasurer: Saw Winner
- Director of Women's Department: Thramu Maylary Htoo
- Director of Youth Department: Thra PlawHsoe Thaw
- Director of Minister's Council: Rev. Livingstone Zan
- Director of Christian Education: Rev. Debora
- Director of Evangelism: Rev. Lincoln
- Office Manager: Laueh Roland

B. KBCUSA Conference and Training In 2016

- Youth Conference: July 14-27, 2016 in Kennewick City, WA
- KBCUSA's Annual Meeting and 7th Anniversary Celebration on July 21-24, 2016 in Greensboro, NC
- Women's Leadership Training: June 9-12, 2016 in Houston, TX
- Ministers' Conference: September 22-24, 2016 in Rock Island, IL
- Church School Teacher's Training: August 11-13, 2016 in Buffalo, 2016

C. Affiliation

KBCUSA is an Associate Ministries Organization of American Baptist Churches USA.

D. Partnerships

- American Baptist Churches

- Global Karen Baptist Fellowship
- Karen Baptist Convention
- Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Churches
- Thailand Karen Baptist Convention

E. Advocacy

KBCUSA actively advocate for Karen immigrants from Burma who are resettling in the United States.

Executive Secretary Trip to South East Asia

A brief report of attending International Myanmar Baptist Fellowship Mission Conference and meeting refugee committees in Malaysia and Thailand

1. Mission Conference

I have attend the mission conference of International Myanmar Baptist Fellowship in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on September 13-17,2016. I have presented the role of ABHMS in Burma Diaspora Communities in the U.S.

2. Meeting with Malaysia Karen Organization

Aye Aye Thaw, Rev. Saw Thein Shwe (Chairperson of Evangelism and Mission Department of MBC) and I met with the leadership group of Malaysia Karen Organization at their office in Kuala Lumpur on September 15, 2016.

There are still over 1,000 Karen refugees in Malaysia registered at Malaysia Karen Organization, and they are expecting to go to third countries for their safety of life. Some of them already obtained UN ID as refugees, but most of them are undocumented people.

They are uncertain about whether to go to third countries or return home to Burma in the future. These people face danger and have to fear for their lives in Malaysia because of being robbed by the local people, being arrested by police even though they have UN documents, and having faced social issues like drug addiction and teen pregnancy.

3. Meeting with Head of Kachin Refugee Committee

I met with the chairperson of Kachin Refugee Committee on September 26, 2016

The situation of Kachin Refugees and migrants workers in Malaysia are very similar to the Karen's situation.

4. Meeting with Karen Refugee Committee

We traveled to Mae Sot for a meeting with Karen Refugees Committee headed by Rev. Robert Htwe, chairman of Karen Refugees Committee on September 24, 2016.

The situation of Karen refugees in the refugee camps are very uncertain at this moment. Suicide cases have increased in the camps and there are over 800 cases of teen pregnancy as well. In the camps, refugees have limited educational and training opportunities and have no official means of earning an income. While education in the camps is far better than any education available to civilians inside Burma, there are very limited opportunities for higher education, which also largely remains unrecognized outside the camps.

The Thai authority and UNHCH are planning to start the repatriation of refugee camps in Thailand and Burma border with camp closure workshops/seminars. The Karen Refugee

Committee has prepared for the refugees returning home by organizing vocational trainings in the camps, sponsored by NGOs, and implementing lands for the refugees in areas controlled by the Karen National Union. But it is a very limited program for the large numbers of refugees in the camps.

Most of refugees are not willing to return to Burma for uncertain situations in the country such as having no concrete plans to obtain a place to stay, having no guarantee of a job to work for their survival especially because of the continued fighting in the border area of Burma.

5. Meeting with Chief Minister of Karen State Government (Prime Minister of Karen State)

I met with the Chief Minister of Karen State Government on September 27, 2016 in Pa-an, Karen State. We discussed about the refugee repatriation process. The Karen State government is working on the repatriation process by sending the delegation team to the refugee camps to do education on repatriation among refugees, and issue IDs to return home to Burma. The Karen State Government is also planning to establish industrial zones in Karen State near the border area to create jobs opportunities for the people who return to Burma and plan to build apartments for returned refugees. But most of Karen refugees are doubtful of the promises for many reasons. They want their own land to farm and work on their own for their daily survival instead of working at factories in industrial zones and living at the apartments. One of the reasons is because they come from rural areas originally and prefer a rural life.

6. Meeting with Karen Baptist Convention

We met with Karen Baptist Convention led by Rev. Dr. Saw Samson on September 29, 2016. We discussed about the role of Karen Baptist Convention on refugee repatriation process. Dr. Samson is planning to join the meeting on October 19 in Chiang Mai with Lesley. The KBC will talk about the Karen refugee repatriation process at upcoming KBC Executive Committee meeting to plan programs with the related Karen Baptist Associations

F. Training / Mission school

KBCUSA assists the local Karen Baptist Churches for leadership training and started bible school in Karen Language for Diploma in Theology and Certificate of Theological Study programs in 20016. There are 56 students studying at St. Paul MN.

We thank God for allowing us to do mission work in the United States, strongly partnership with local Baptist organizations and overseas as well.

Sincerely,

--Saw Ler Htoo, Executive Secretary, KBCUSA