

**Board of General Ministries Reports:**  
**ABCUSA/OGS and**  
**Associated Ministry Organizations**

**OFFICE OF THE TREASURER**

Highlights of Treasurer's Office, Accounting, American Baptist Churches Information System, Building Management, Traffic, AMOs -- December 2010 – June 2012

**ABCUSA**

- Completed 2012 ABCUSA Budget; preparing for 2013 Budget
- In process of selecting auditors for next term, with Treasurers Council and ABEC Pres
- Completed ABC 2010 Audited Financial Statements; finalizing 2011 Audit
- Annual insurance reviews/renewals
- Prepared Analyses and Financial Statements to BRC/GB/BGM and Executive Committees
- Conferred with Regions and churches on financial and administrative issues
- Oversaw work of legal counsel in several areas
- Met with and reported to GB and BGM and Executive Committees
- Staffed Budget Review Committee and BGM Finance Committee
- Personnel supervision for Accounting, ABCIS, Building Management and Traffic
- Participated in Orientation of new GB and BGM members
- Continued ABCIS functions for ongoing business needs and priorities
- Staffed Common Budget Covenant Review Committee
- Ongoing collecting agency responsibilities for 13 regions and AB Churches of SW and Hawaii
- Prepared financial projections for Interim Ministries continuing as an ABCUSA program
- Prepared financial reporting formats for New Baptist Covenant II and Transformed by the Spirit

**AMOs (Associated Ministry Organizations)**

(American Baptist Historical Society; American Baptist Women's Ministries; Ministers Council; American Baptist Computer Center, American Baptist Interim Ministries)

- Completed 2010 Audits; preparing for 2011 Audits
- Accounting functions/ongoing consultations
- Annual insurance reviews/renewals
- Meet quarterly with AMO executives to discuss financial and operational matters

**588 Associates**

- Prepared 2012 Budget; preparing for 2013 Budget
- Completed 2010 and 2011 Audited Financial Statements
- In process of selecting auditors for next term, with Treasurers Council and ABEC Pres
- 2011 Tax Returns
- Accounting functions

- Leasing and Building Management
- Annual insurance reviews/renewals

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

### **ECUMENICAL RELATIONS**

Under the guidance of the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations, American Baptist Churches has continued to be a leader in pan-Baptist, ecumenical and interfaith work. The committee is composed of June Totten, Chair; Ruth Clark, Jonathan Malone, Ernest Jones, Mo Khan and Hopeton Scott with Roy Medley ex officio.

#### **Baptist World Alliance**

The executive committee meeting in March voted to bring the name of Rothang Chhangte forward as the nominee for the director of Baptist World Aid. Paul Montacute who has served ably for many years in this role is retiring. Rothang, along with Julie Justus, will represent us well on BWA staff.

We will have a good presence at the annual meeting in Santiago, Chile. Ruth Clark, Roy Medley, Reid Trulson, and Aidsand Wright-Riggins are stated delegates. In addition we will be represented in commission meetings by Jeffrey Haggray, Allen Reasons, Kent Berghuis, and Jerrod Huguenot. Other American Baptists are often present to give presentations. Dr. Medley will be presenting on Baptist-Muslim relations in North America.

In the related North American Baptist Fellowship, we continue to lead the effort in Baptist-Muslim relationships in North America.

#### **National Council of Churches Of Christ**

Frank Christine, Cheryl Wade and Roy Medley are our official delegates to the governing board of the NCC. Dr. Medley was installed in November as President-elect of the NCC. His term as president will commence in January 2014.

Dr. Michael Kinnamon resigned due to health reasons and completed his service with the NCC at the end of December. He has resumed his teaching career in the Seattle area. With his resignation, the governing board has taken the opportunity to rethink the focus and staffing of the NCC. An interim report was presented to the governing board at its May meeting and several options will be presented to the Governing Board in its September meeting for final decisions. Peg Birk has been called as the interim general secretary. The council faces the financial constraints of its member churches and will need to significantly reduce its costs due to reduced income from its supporting churches. Kathryn Lohre is leading us through this time with imagination and hope as we plan a new future for the NCC.

We continue to be represented in the commissions of the NCC including those that focus on interfaith relations (Paul Eppinger), faith and order (Mark Heim and Marvin McMickle) as well as those related to Christian education and leadership development, and social justice.

#### **Church World Service**

ABC hosted the most recent meeting of Church World Service in our building. CWS is in the process of adopting its proposed new structure with a significantly reduced board which will no longer reflect its supporting churches but will be based upon a person's skill sets. For the past several years we have

been represented by Earl Trent, now chairperson of the board of directors, Lisa Rothenberger, Aundrea Alexander, and Victoria Goff. Hunger Relief will become the signature issue for CWS. In the new structure, Lisa, Aundrea, and Vicki will continue to be active in the working groups related to their portfolios where the significant programmatic efforts are dealt with.

#### **World Council of Churches**

Rothang Chhange's term on the Central Committee will end with this year's meeting. She and Dr. Medley will attend this meeting on August 28-September 5. Rothang has been very active in the Decade to Overcome Violence which was marked by a gathering in Jamaica last year which she attended. Through the WCC and its member communions she has constantly kept the religious liberty and human rights situation in Burma on the forefront of people's concerns. We also continue to advocate for the acceptance of the membership application of the Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia. Last fall, we sponsored Jonathan Malone as a participant in the WCC sponsored Global Christian Forum which brings together representatives of the breadth of the world Christian family for dialogue in the quest for Christian unity. This is a critical forum in that it brings together segments of the church which often are not in conversation with one another.

#### **Christian Churches Together**

June Totten represented us at the 2012 annual gathering of CCT. It continues to focus on the twin themes of poverty and evangelism. June is providing an account of that gathering.

#### **New Baptist Covenant**

American Baptists were active in supporting the second New Baptist Covenant, including the recruiting of Ken Fong as a speaker. The Los Angeles region, Sam Chetti-executive minister, and Evergreen Baptist Association, Marcia Patton-executive minister, actively supported local meetings in their areas that were linked to the main gathering in Atlanta.

There was an excellent panel of speakers and workshops presented, but the attendance at the central and regional gatherings was disappointing. There was a decision early on in planning this event to focus on regional satellite gatherings with Atlanta serving as the core site. This was a departure from the first gathering where everyone met in Atlanta but it did not prove to be successful. A meeting was held in April in Atlanta to review the effort and critique it. Dr. Medley participated for American Baptists.

At that gathering it was decided not to hold a separate gathering of the New Baptist Covenant in 2014, but to combine it with a celebration already being planned by the North American Baptist Fellowship to mark the founding of the Triennial Convention in 1814 in 2014.

It remains to be seen what future this effort will have when President Carter is no longer able to lead it.

#### **Churches for Middle East Peace**

Dr. Wes Brown, retired ABC missionary, continues to represent us on the board of directors. He is submitting a report of their activities.

#### **Church of the Brethren**

We have long had a formal "special relationship" with Church of the Brethren. In September their General Secretary, Dr. Stan Noffsinger, approached Dr. Medley with the request that this relationship

become more energized. In response to Dr. Medley's question as to what that would look like for them, Dr. Noffsinger suggested a joint delegation visit Israel and Palestine. Such a visit is being planned for this December with the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations. The desire is to strengthen our common witness for peace in that part of the world and to strengthen our ties as denominations with one another. COB is a historic peace church in the Anabaptist tradition.

### **Baptist-Muslim Dialogue**

Efforts continue with planning the November 2012 second national dialogue. The theme is "Love of God and Pathways to Peace" which is related to the "first" word of "A Common Word," the love of God. It will be held November 30-December 2 at Andover Newton Theological Seminary. Ambassador Suzanne Johnson Cook has agreed to speak.

A second strategy of partnerships with ABC seminaries for regional dialogues is beginning. American Baptist Seminary of the West held a preliminary gathering of Baptists and Muslims in February with Totten and Medley in attendance. Virginia Union's Proctor School of Theology and Central Baptist Theological Seminary will also sponsor events.

Mo Khan continues to represent ABC in the Shoulder to Shoulder effort of Muslims and Christians committed to the principles of religious liberty.

A trip for ABWomen's Ministries leadership to meet with Muslim and Christian women in Lebanon and the Republic of Georgia is being planned for January 2013.

### **National Association of Evangelicals**

Last Fall, Ruth Clark was invited to attend the fall meeting of NAE in DC which marks its efforts on Capitol Hill. And Ruth has already received an invitation to attend the next meeting of the US Lausanne Committee.

On April 27, Leith Anderson of the NAE visited with Medley for about two hours for a good-natured but frank and wide-ranging discussion. Towards the end of that conversation we affirmed that ABCUSA desired to continue in an observer status, not wishing to pursue membership at this time. Dr. Anderson responded that we would continue to be invited to events sponsored by them since there is no longer an assembly type meeting as was held in the past.

--A. Roy Medley, General Secretary/Ecumenical Officer

### **OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

The Office of Human Resource Development (HRD) is responsible for providing a comprehensive and creative human resource programs for the American Baptist Foundation, Associated Ministry Organizations, International Ministries and American Baptist Churches USA. Our staff is committed to our mission and continues to be effective in serving as the Hands and Feet of Christ.

The HRD department is responsible for the entire HR function which begins from the moment that a candidate applies for a position and ends after an employee has left ABCUSA. In addition to fulfilling our roles in the Office of Human Resources Development, the following projects were successfully carried out:

Since the last report, the HR office has recruited four staff within various boards. We are currently working on three additional executive recruitments. A major accomplishment for the HR office was closing a long standing employee legal matter.

For 2012, we were able to negotiate a healthcare plan that resulted in a 21% decrease in premiums for our healthcare plan.

We delivered and facilitated workshops for staff of ABCUSA where we identified six internal aspirations that will be used as a working model for our staff as we continue to be more efficient and productive in our responsibility as well as working together as a team. Additionally, the HR office will be continuing to offer employee and leadership development programs for staff of all the respective boards that we provide service.

Several job descriptions were revised and rewritten to keep abreast of the changing demands of several of our internal positions.

In addition to the above, we continue to administer the benefits and salary for our staff. We spend time listening to our staff and help them in dealing with various issues. We continue to make sure that we are in compliance with various federal and state regulated employment laws. The HRD office maintains electronic records of our employees. The accurate recording keeping is an essential function of the HRD office. The HRD office is involved in discussions with our attorney in employment issues and a good deal of time is spent by the HRD staff assisting employees with day-to-day questions and concerns.

--Johnson Eapen, Director of Human Resources and Evon Moody, Human Resource Assistant

### **OFFICE OF REGIONAL MINISTRIES**

**(Activity from Jan.-June of 2012)**

**Search Committee Work:** I am pleased to announce that the American Baptist Churches of VT-NH have called Dale Edwards to be their executive minister and the American Baptist Churches of IN-KY have called Soozi Ford to serve as their executive minister. NYS is moving toward the presentation of a candidate to their board. ABCORI should announce their opening for executive minister this summer and I am in dialogue with several other regional executive committees and executives regarding retirement announcements. I provided on site orientation for Dale and Soozi and will meet with eight executives, including the planning team, for an orientation retreat this August.

**Other Region Consultations:** It was a pleasure to facilitate regional board retreats for the Oregon, and the Evergreen regions and regional staff retreats for West Virginia, Ohio, and New England this spring. I also met with the PBA board and have been working with the Cleveland Baptist Exec Comm. At an event that I hope will be replicated in other areas, I had the opportunity to facilitate a retreat of local church search committees exploring new models of ministry in the New England area. As a part of their four year evaluations, I am also working with several executive on 360 evaluations. Given the downsizing that has occurred in many regions, I developed a new tool this year to assess the preferred areas for hands-on activity from the range of duties for which most executives are responsible. So far this year, I have been on site in twelve different regions, many including multiple visits. I greatly appreciate the leadership given by our regional executives and their staff.

**Wider ABC Work:** As primary staff to the following groups... The National Leadership Council met in Orlando and explored new ways of being together and sharing ideas. The Professional Ministries Team is working on several avenues related to “Clergy Health.” For Transformed by the Spirit, I also facilitated an Adaptive Change Team this spring related to the “Beloved Community” and will facilitate a new ACT focusing on regional and national partnerships this summer. I also attended a planning team of the Biennial Mission Summit.

--C. Jeff Woods, Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries and Marilyn K. Tyson,  
Administrative Assistant

### **OFFICE OF TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE PLANNING**

The Office of Travel & Conference Planning (OTCP) plans and executes approximately 90 meetings per year. The goal of the Office is to save the denomination as much money as possible through our combined years of negotiating. This Office receives meeting requests, researches and obtains proposals, negotiates and signs contracts, works with our travel agent, Travel Leaders, reviews your meeting registrations, submits rooming lists to hotels, coordinates airport to hotel shuttles, requests audio visual, orders food & beverage and reconciles the billing (both with the hotels and the meeting attendee).

OTCP plans meetings for OGS, ABHMS, IM, MMBB, Representative Process, OTABL/Ministry Renewal. At the moment our large projects are IMMERSE, July 2012 and the Mission Summit/Biennial, June 2013. Our work for the Mission Summit includes working closely with the Local Arrangements Committee.

OTCP employs three full-time Staff. Recently, OTCP welcomed Stephanie Heflin as a Meeting Planner. Stephanie is currently working on registration for the IMMERSE Conference at American University, Washington, DC in July and soon will begin working on the 2013 Mission Summit.

--Annie Marcucci, Director of Travel & Conference Planning

### **MISSION RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

#### **June 2012—MAJOR MINISTRY ACTIVITIES**

##### **United Mission (UM)**

United Mission continues its downward trend. YTD December 2010 to YTD December 2011 saw a 3.3% decline in total UM. MRD staff continues to focus on positive and hopeful conditions and to give UM top priority. An analysis of 2011 giving patterns reveal that just under half of all our congregations gave to UM every year for 10 years (2000 to 2010), for a total of 2,103 congregations; 211 congregations gave to UM every year for 5 years (2005-2010). In addition, 1,089 congregations gave more to UM in 2011 than they give in 2010. We believe that the increased relationship building and recognitions through visits, telephone calls, certificates and preaching opportunities have a positive effect on a situation that could be worse. Over 1,373 recognition certificates and letters were mailed to our churches in 2012. A brand new and colorful “Thank You” poster highlighting UM, our four annual offerings and Love Gift was mailed to all our churches in the spring. MRD staff is

currently preparing to focus activity on increasing the number of churches participating in UM. In addition, discussion on UM giving is beginning to emerge on the level of the National Leadership Council.

### **Mission Summit/Biennial**

June 21-23, 2013, in Overland Park, Kansas, will be our first Mission Summit/Biennial according to our new Bylaws, and we are hopeful for a different and more heightened celebration. The Biennial Program Committee (BPC) with its 40+ composition has been recast. The new Mission Summit/Biennial Planning Team (MSBPT) is now comprised of a core of 7 members. The inclusion of the appropriate national and regional persons brings the total to approximately 20 persons. This reconstruction provides for cost savings, allows for greater and more direct involvement of the members in the total process, and gives flexibility for continuing membership. Planning for the event is well underway, and the presence and participation of our Baptist sisters and brothers from Burma is significant to the planning process. Major celebrations will include the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Judsons' sailing for Burma, the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Baptist Church in America, and the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. MRD staff continues its responsibility of providing coordination of this event.

### **MRD'S Deployed Staff**

Rev. Soozi Whitten Ford, newly appointed Executive Minister for the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky, continues in her role as MRD's deployed staff as Stewardship Facilitator for Biblical Stewardship education. Her new regional board believes that this arrangement benefits both the region and ABCUSA. Rev. Ford meets this ministry commitment to MRD on a flexible 1/3 time basis. Her accomplishments for 2011-2012 include:

- Preaching at various churches on stewardship;
- Leading training sessions on stewardship in local and regional settings;
- Attending national and regional ecumenical gatherings and serving on various committees;
- Producing for the ABCUSA website *Generosity* e-newsletters and bulletin inserts;
- Being a resource for congregations seeking information via phone calls and the website;
- Purchasing a license for a new book on stewardship, *Teaching a Christian View of Money: Celebrating God's Generosity*. The process includes customizing an ABC version for our use. Héctor González continues to represent ABCUSA as our Volunteer Coordinator for Hispanic Ministries.

### **Communications**

Improving our work with Communications continues to be an important aspect of MRD's work. We are in the process of redesigning the ABCUSA website. The website will have a new look and feel and will be more user-friendly. We continue to maintain Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts as a way of keeping different, especially younger age groups interested in ABC's ministries through these social media communication tools. We are also working to strengthen our use of technology with Skype, GoToMeeting, and so on, as a way to cut meeting costs, and at the same time build strong relationships with ABC regions and congregations, among other things. We have responded to the requests from region executives to have the regions more visible on the ABCUSA website. As such, we have added a "Spotlight on the Region" page. The quarterly publication, *ABCUSA Connections*, continues to meet a real need for keeping the ABC family informed about significant aspects of ABC life. The publication is available in hard copy, on request, is emailed to a list of interested individuals, and is downloadable from the ABCUSA website. MRD maintains

professional membership and affiliations with various communication groups like the National Council of Churches' Communication Council, Baptists for Ethics (EthicsDaily.com), Odyssey Network and the Communication division of the Baptist World Alliance. We also keep active contact with the wider religious news services, and we maintain regular meetings with our own ABC Communication Council. We also share with American Baptist Home Mission Societies an important contract with Meltwater News service that identifies all published stories, articles, and media mention of ABCUSA.

### **Development**

MRD has begun placing more emphasis on development, and it continues to be a growing area as we engage in and help coordinate the fundraising activities for the denomination's *Transformed by the Spirit* (TbyS) initiative. MRD's Development Advisory Team, a denomination-wide group of diverse persons committed to assisting ABCUSA develop its donor and fundraising capabilities, provides good leadership and support to TbyS. MRD is also engaged in a process of coordinating the transition from eTapestry to a much more flexible system of donor management being created by our own computer center.

### **Additional Activities**

- Hosting an annual Reception for ABC persons at the Hampton University Ministers' Conference. The focus this year, Wednesday, June 6, highlighted specific ministries of American Baptist Home Mission Societies serving the global church. Attendance is generally 50-80 persons.
- Hosting a meeting of the State Department's Sub-Group on Religious Freedom, Stability & Democracy. The Sub-Group is part of the Secretary of State's Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society. This meeting of the group is part of a process through which religious leaders and communities can have ongoing input regarding the formation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. The meeting was held at the ABC Mission Center in Valley Forge, PA, on Tuesday, April 17, 2012.
- Representing ABCUSA on various national/international boards and associations, including the American Baptist Assembly, the Baptist World Alliance, the American Baptist Foundation, and Baptists Today.
- Developing new strategies to promote the newly adopted identity theme, *American Baptists serving as the hands and feet of Christ*. We have recently created a new United Mission/Identity Theme poster for that purpose. This poster was mailed to all our churches.

### **Staff**

- Leo S. Thorne, Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development
- Lorie Smith, Executive Assistant
- Bridget Holmstrom, Web Manager/Communication Specialist
- Soozi Whitten Ford, Stewardship Facilitator
- Beth Fogg, Assistant to Associate General Secretary
- Joyce Lake, Administrative Assistant

--Leo S. Thorne, Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development

### **AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY**

This has been a year of changes for ABWIM. Following an interim period led by Rev. Holly Bean, a new director was called, Rev. Patricia Hernandez. Key to this year was the formation of the ABWIM Advisory Team. This gifted team of men and women in ministry is diverse ethnically, racially, geographically and theologically. It is comprised of people representing a variety of ministry roles, positions and contexts such as pastor, seminary leader, and executive minister. Forming the team are: Rev. Charles C. Adams, Rev. Dr. Judy G. Allbee, Rev. Holly Bean, Rev. Steve Bils, Rev. Dr. Liliana Da Valle, Rev. Alice Green, Rev. Mary Hulst, Rev. Lauren Ng, Rev. Jackie Saxon, Rev. Karen Yee, Rev. Dr. Mary H. Young and Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley.

The ABWIM Advisory Team has been hard at work developing its mission, vision and strategic priorities. Our newly formulated vision comes out of the fundamental theological assumption that women and men are both created in the image of God. As such both women and men are gifted for and called to ministry.

**Vision:** ABWIM seeks the full participation and full partnership of all 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.

**Mission: ACCESS**

- **A**dvocating for equal access in placement and opportunities for ministry
- **C**ultivating women's call to ministry
- **C**elebrating the gifts women bring to ministry
- **E**ducating congregations about the biblical basis for women in ministry
- **S**hining the **S**potlight on American Baptist Women in Ministry!

Accessing our God-given gifts, gaining access to the world for the good of all and the glory of God!

Some of the highlights of this past year include:

- New brochure: Rev. Dr. Marvin A. McMickle, "Challenging Gender Discrimination in the Church"
- New Initiatives: "March On! Shining the Spotlight on American Baptist Women in Ministry" [www.marchonabwim.org](http://www.marchonabwim.org); "Get Your Stole On" <http://www.facebook.com/#!/GetYourStoleOn>
- Partnering with ABHMS in sponsoring "Engaging Mentors" workshop at The Mission Center
- Partnering with Ministers Council and Interim Ministries to sponsor "The New Normal " at the 2011 Biennial
- Partnering with AB Women's Ministries to bring lay women and clergy women together at the National Women's Conference
- Partnering with Cleveland Women Together in Ministry conference
- Day of Dialogue - ABCNJ

In this year of new beginnings, I am so very thankful for the Rev. Dr. Roy A. Medley and the ABWIM Advisory Team, the ABCUSA staff and the Board of General Ministries without whom none of this could happen and with whom we move forward into a new and exciting era of ministry. Thank-you!

God is calling talented and gifted women into ministry. We are thankful for the many gifts women bring to ministry and the many ways in which men and women serve together for the glory of God. I am thankful to the ABWIM Advisory team, the ABCUSA staff and General Secretary Rev. Dr. Roy Medley.

I'm often asked what I like best about my new role serving as the Director of ABWIM. From the first time the question was asked to just yesterday when it was asked once again, the answer comes quickly and easily. What I like best is meeting gifted women in ministry across the ABC, women who are gifted beyond what my own limited, very human imagination could ever envision but who are abundantly and divinely endowed with gifts from our everlasting, infinitely imaginative, incredibly awesome Creator.

God has gifted women to serve in ministry.

God is calling talented and gifted women into ministry.

You know that because *you* are one of many such women called and gifted to serve, or you are a supporter of such amazing and gifted women in ministry.

I wish to express my thanks to the search committee, the Advisory Team, Roy Medley and to the ABCUSA staff.

--Patricia Hernandez, National Director

### **INTERIM MINISTRIES-ABC**

*Interim Ministries-ABC* has been for 35 years the only nationwide, denominationally linked interim minister placing agency in the USA. *Interim Ministries-ABC* has been a partner with ABC regions for excellence in interim leadership of congregations seeking God's "new thing." *Interim Ministries-ABC* has provided interim pastors for American Baptist congregations throughout the country through the Ministers-at-Large (M.A.L.), Appointed Interim Pastor, Interim Ministry Specialist, and Commissioned Woman Interim programs. This ministry has never received United Mission funding but has been sustained by the fees it charged to the churches served. *Interim Ministries-ABC* has offered training opportunities for ministers who seek to focus on the particular opportunities and tasks of leading a congregation during an interim period.

Highlights of this ministry's activities include:

- Partnering with the limited staff of ABC Regions to find and place interim ministers.
- Enrolling and reactivating 32 ministers in *Interim Ministries-ABC* in 2011 and 5 so far in 2012. The total number of interim ministers enrolled in our program is now 405.
- Partnering with the Ministers Council and Women in Ministry to sponsor speakers on "The New Normal" at the San Juan Biennial Meeting in June 2011.
- Offering scholarship to our interim ministers for training events. We have partnered with the Heidi Lynn Fuller Fund for training in intentional interim ministry.
- Receiving with gratitude contributions of \$12,625 from friends, constituent churches, and regions as a result of our fifth annual fund raising effort in 2011.

In the first half of 2012, the Governing Board of *Interim Ministries-ABC* determined that the organization could no longer be sustained and voted to close the corporation before the end of the year. Conversations were begun with Rev. Roy Medley and Alan Musoke about the possibility that interim ministry might be administered by the ABCUSA. That is the direction being pursued at this time.

Such a change of administration will include changes in policies and procedures, but the files of nearly 400 interim ministers will remain intact. This ministry that has been a great help the ABC churches and regions over the last 35 years will continue to assist our churches.

Mrs. Janet Newman, Secretary for *Interim Ministries-ABC* for the last twenty years, will retire June 30, 2012. The Rev. Dr. James Munro, Executive Director of *Interim Ministries-ABC* for the last seven and a half years will retire August 31, 2012.

--James Gordon Munro, Executive Director

### **AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN'S MINISTRIES**

**Events.** Next month AB Women's Ministries is hosting a **national conference for women** in Nashville, Tennessee (July 21-27). The experimentation to move our annual conference to different locations of the country has offered us opportunity to connect with new audiences of AB women. We partnered with women in the Nashville area to identify workshop leaders and music/worship leadership and we partnered with AB Women in Ministry to give clergy women opportunities to gather and network and provide leadership during the conference.

On September 28-30, we're sponsoring our first ever **national retreat for young adult women** ages 18-40 in a retreat setting at Canonicus Camp & Conference Center in Rhode Island. LaKeeyna Cooper, our national coordinator of Young Adult Women's Ministries, is working with a planning team that includes young women from the New England states.

AB women will participate at the **North American Baptist Women's Union Assembly**, a once-every-five-year event, on October 3-6, 2012, in Nashville, Tennessee.

An opportunity for national AB Women's Ministries board members is being planned for January 2013: **a trip to the Middle East for Baptist/Christian Muslim dialog and learning**. One hoped-for result of the experience will be an ABWM initiative to foster relationships between Baptist women and their Muslim neighbors in the U.S. The trip will include 6 days in the Republic of Georgia and 7 days in Lebanon, and is being planned by Roy Medley, Virginia Holmstrom, Malkhaz Songulashvili, and Dan and Sarah Chetti.

**Adaptive Change.** AB Women's Ministries is participating in Transformed by the Spirit, seeking to understand the deeper issues of our challenges to engage younger generations of women and reaching out beyond "our own". Two Adaptive Challenge Teams have completed the task of defining the challenges. We are now forming Action Learning Teams to design and implement experiments that have the potential to instill new learnings, attitudes, and behaviors throughout our organization and its leadership at all levels.

**Break the Chains.** We celebrate the funding support that AB women have given to our Break the Chains mission project since 2007. When the project was to end in 2010, many region ABWMs selected alternative mission projects in 2011, while at the same time, AB Women's Ministries national board was deciding to extend Break the Chains to begin focusing on oppression of women and girls, with a specific focus in 2012 on violence. Thus we did not have a large amount available for grants in 2012; it will take time to rebuild the momentum of support. Nevertheless, last week AB Women's Ministries selected six grant recipients (from among thirteen grant proposals) to receive modest

funding in 2012 toward new initiatives to break the chains and stop the pain of oppression against women/girls. Grantees are:

- *GIRLS (Girls in Real Life Situations)* program, Milwaukee Christian Center - \$2,500
- *Building Sacred Safe Spaces*, a ministry of Safe Spirit Ministries, ABC of New Jersey - \$1,202.06
- *Charting a New Employment Path for Women*, a new ministry of Cameron Community Ministries, Rochester, NY - \$2,000
- *Anti-Trafficking Outreach and Education in Bulgaria*, directed by International Ministries missionary Terry Myers - \$3,712.06
- *NightLight's Program for After Care, Shelter, and Repatriation for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Exploitation, and Trafficking*, through NightLight Foundation in Thailand - \$1,000
- *European Baptist Federation Anti-Trafficking Network conference coordination* – directed by International Ministries missionary Debbie Kelsey - \$1,000

**National Board leadership.** The national board of American Baptist Women's Ministries will meet on July 17-21, 2012, in Nashville, Tennessee; and the board's executive committee will meet additionally on October 11-15, 2012, in Kansas City, Missouri. On July 22, 2012, an election of national officers will occur: nominees for the 2012-2015 term are Patricia Stratton (president), Rev. Valerie Andrews (coordinator of Conference), and Bonnie Higgins (coordinator of the Eastern Section).

--Barbara Anderson, President and Virginia Holmstrom, Executive Director

### **THE MINISTERS COUNCIL**

The Ministers Council is entering a time of significant transition. After ten years of incredibly fruitful ministry, the Lilly Endowment grant for Together in Ministry (TIM) is coming to an end in December of this year. About 2,600 pastors and 4,000 persons have been served well during the course of this venture with participants reporting, over and over again, enhanced effectiveness in ministry, better personal and relational health, and stronger church life.

To sustain the culture of TIM (covenantal, collegial, clergy groups) and the health that those groups bring, we are initiating a TIM Capital Fund Drive that will become a public event in the fall of this year. Our goal is a modest \$500,000 though our hopes are for better results. Utilizing that which has been learned in the past decade, and working with reduced funding, we will refocus so that strong attention is given to those in the first 5 years of ministry. Our reason for giving first attention to this group is that, according to the best research that we know, there is about a 50% attrition rate within the first five years of men and women who enter ministry. That can be changed by overcoming the sense of isolation and providing the right mentoring. (Contact the Ministers Council for more information.)

At the same time, though the timing is less than perfect, we are engaged in a search for a new Executive Director. A candidate will be presented to the Senate in August and we anticipate that the new Director will assume office between September and November, 2012. Your continuing prayers are appreciated.

We have been honored to be full participants in the Transformed by the Spirit initiative. While, as pastors, we are keenly aware of the difficult challenges that face our churches, we have hope that this initiative is indeed a part of God's plan to retool the churches for a new season of fruitful and faithful ministry.

We also want to express our gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of the recent Call Conference led by BIM. We pray that this is another harbinger of a new era of shared mission and ministry within our denominational family.

Working with ABHMS and the OGS, we sponsored a retreat for pastors who are leading congregations who work with immigrants from Burma. With half of the pastors being American and the other half being from Burma, we were able to create new relationships and channels of understanding that will serve all of the participants well.

I expect that this will be my last communication to you as the Executive Director of the Ministers Council. It has been a high honor and profound privilege to have served among you. I am grateful for the ministry that we have shared, for the friendships formed, and pray that God will bless this denominational family in every way.

--Joe Kutter, Executive Director