

## **AMERICAN BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETIES**

### **Report of Special Director – Jim Wolfe**

**The Board of Directors of the American Baptist Historical Societies (ABHMS) met in November prior to the start of the national Space for Grace Conference. At that meeting four new members were elected to the board and members received an update regarding the “Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico” initiative.**

**Executive Director Dr. Jeffrey Haggray reminded the board in his report that 2018 marks the 186th anniversary of The American Baptist Home Mission Society and the 194th anniversary of the Baptist General Tract Society, which became the American Baptist Publication Society and was later absorbed in ABHMS.**

**Board members unanimously elected four new directors: the Rev. Yamina Apolaris, interim general pastor, Primera Iglesia Bautista de Caguas, Puerto Rico; the Rev. Dr. Mia Chang, pastor, NextGen Church, West Windsor, N.J.; the Rev. Corey Fields, pastor, Calvary Baptist Church Newark, Del.; and Quinton Roman Nose, lay leader and member of Watonga (Okla.) Indian Baptist Church.**

**The Rev. Salvador Orellana, ABHMS director of the Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico initiative, reported that more than \$1.3 million has been raised through One Great Hour Sharing for the island’s recovery following Hurricane Maria. Forty teams with close to 500 volunteers have impacted 20 churches, and the 30 teams already booked to volunteer in 2019 will impact even more. To continue the recovery momentum, ABHMS has set a second goal of \$3.7 million to be raised by 2022, bringing the total recovery commitment to \$5 million.**

**Retiring board members—the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Board, the Rev. Dr. Laura Sinclair, the Rev. Kevin “Scotty” Robinson, the Rev. Jay Rambo and the Rev. Dr. Robert Scott—were recognized for their steadfast service.**

**A significant highlight of the November meeting was a ribbon-cutting ceremony introducing board members to ABHMS’ new offices located at 1075 First Ave., King of Prussia, PA. ABHMS Executive Director Dr. Jeffrey Haggray said, “We give thanks for this space, for each of you and your leadership. This board has led this relocation effort with a sacred sense of stewardship, and this is a sacred space. We dedicate it and consecrate it in the name of God.”**

**Board President the Rev. Dr. Clifford I. Johnson cut the blue ribbon stretched across the new vestibule, crowded not only with board and staff members of ABHMS but also staff from American Baptist Extension Corporation (ABEC) and American Baptist Women’s Ministries (ABWM).**

**The November meeting was followed by the Space for Grace national conference sponsored by ABHMS. More than 500 individuals gathered for dynamic preachers and presenters, Spirit-filled worship, more than 24 “Leadership,” “Discipleship” and**

**“Healing and Transforming Communities”-themed workshops, thought-provoking conversations, hands-on local activities, and faith-inspired art and performances.**

**In February American Baptist Home Mission Societies’ (ABHMS) board of directors met for a three-day retreat at ABHMS’ new mission center, King of Prussia, Pa.**

**Considerable time was devoted to discussing emerging mission opportunities in the United States and Puerto Rico. These included ministrElife, an online community developed by ABHMS for American Baptist ministry professionals and lay leaders; Converge, a collaborative April event of Co-Creators Incubator participants, 2018 Palmer Grant recipients and American Baptist Association of Colleges and Universities’ deans and presidents. An update was received regarding the ongoing “Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico” initiative, through which 48 American Baptist churches, schools and other entities on the island have been restored or are undergoing restoration since Hurricane Maria wrought havoc on the island in September 2017.**

**The board also chose the official name of the new ABHMS mission center: “Leadership and Mission Building.” In addition to ABHMS, the building houses American Baptist Extension Corporation and American Baptist Women’s Ministries. A board committee was formed to plan a formal dedication ceremony on May 17, 2019.**