

ABCUSA President Report

In my last report as your president of the American Baptists Churches - Board of General Ministries, I am going to give a brief summary of two years worth of accomplishments, celebrations, concerns and opportunities.

The first topic would be the building issue. This issue took a great part of our agenda in the last years. Subsequently, I realize that there are two matters. One is the property that we agreed to sell, our current Mission Center, and our new property (Roblee Building) that we agreed to buy for our new offices. Several meetings, including two extraordinary sessions of the whole board in the past year, allowed us to proceed to a new time, to build what we call our "home." The poet Dante defines the home as something much more than a four-walled structure. It's the rendezvous point. So, let's never forget that our home is more than a structure, it is relationships, to enjoy along with our partners, ABHMS, BIM and MMBB, our true home.

The other major issues came from the administrative or legislative side of our work. Budget concerns, human resources, policies, meetings, and other enjoyable moments.

Biennial Mission Summit Planning Team (BMSPT) worked very hard to provide a unique time of gathering in a different, enjoyable venue, focusing on our mission and providing tools to be more effective in the different scenarios. After the evaluation of the experience, we realize that we will be work ahead with the venue of 2021 in San Juan, P.R. to present a special celebration for the whole family, where we realize our diversity, celebrate our unity, but affirm our richness.

I really had a great experience with the National Executive Council (NEC) where we had the opportunity to not only share our vision, but also envision the ministry of our partners. There's still a lot of opportunities to be had alongside our brothers and sisters.

In conversations with our new president, we look forward to strengthening the goals and scopes of our ABCUSA Caucuses. In the midst of a new time, we have to rediscover new ways to engage people in this family.

I will never have enough words to truly express my gratitude for what this family was able to do in Puerto Rico after the devastating path of Hurricanes Irma and María. I am especially thankful for ABHMS, due to their intensive, logistic and scheduled work in Puerto Rico.

Last September 2018, we received news that our General Secretary, Dr. Spitzer, had to be out of office due to a major heart condition that required surgery. The subsequent notice announcing his retirement gave us a new challenge, another transition time. The leadership of Rev. Jeff Woods, in conjunction with Lee, was able to maintain the scopes of the office, also as well as assist regions, churches and organizations. He was truly a blessing during this time.

We should begin the process of discerning our new General Secretary. This is going to be a very inclusive, collaborative and growing period, where we definitely seek for a healthy process in order to be stronger and better.

Finally, we thank our Lord for our whole staff, the ones who maintain our family together, with a promptly and well-performed job; special thanks to Kathy Jachowski, KJ, for her diligence and patience with me.

For the executive committee, the ones that walk with me, sometimes carry me, for their wisdom, passion, creative minds and experience. Thank you Don Ng and Judy Fackenthal, our past presidents, for making my journey easier.

For my family, my lovely wife, my daughters and son. They are truly a blessing.

And last, but not least, as I said on my acceptance words two years ago, I still don't know why Jesus loves me so much. I don't deserve anything that I already have or achieve, but I am sure that, as he walked with me on this journey, he will be as well with the whole ABCUSA family...

Please, let's work to keep this family together, raise your voice for the ones that do not have a voice, and never be afraid to do what Jesus needs to happen in our family so the world can see that we are still able to be the hands and feet of Christ.

"If they ever tell my story, let them say I walked with giants. Men rise and fall like the winter wheat, but these names will never die..."

Let them say I lived in the time of Lee, Jeff, Don, Paul, Alan, Judy, Dennis, Jose, Karen, Zina, Cedrick, Annie, Manuel... (whole Board of General Ministries). Let them say I lived in the time of grace of our Jesus in 2018-19...

In Jesus Christ,



Josué D. Gómez-Menéndez
President ABC-USA