

Board of General Ministries Report  
March 2020

## Relationships with National

- I delivered Christmas gifts to NEC members, and started building those relationships.
- The NEC had a good meeting in January and came to the following agreements:
  - We each committed to day of fasting and prayer each week during Lent and will offer a joint press release of encouragement to others.
  - We agreed to have a national staff picnic in July.
  - We agreed to re-define our purpose at the next meeting.
  - We are exploring positive outcomes to the peace pole concerns.
  - We set meeting dates for the rest of 2020.
- By invitation, I attended the ABHMS event hosting ABC executive ministers and sought to increase the harmony of the meeting.
- By invitation, I attended the MMBB pastors colloquium and networked with pastors and MMBB staff.
- We held an open house at the Roblee Building for national staff.

## Staff

- Kevin Walden and Marsha Scipio have been released from service with ABCUSA. David Knipel and Judith Christiansen approved the release letters and talking points. Both employees signed their release letters.
- We have a signed contract for our new OGS HR consultant, Judith Christiansen.
- Yvonne Carter has agreed to be the liaison for the National Institute for Civil Discourse.
- I have held individual meetings with nearly every OGS staff person.
- We have planned several lunch gatherings and “no agenda” lunches for 2020.
- Staff development/training will be an emphasis for 2020.
- We launched the process for exploring the concept of an IT and Communications intern.
- I have met with the computer team a few times to assess current and future work. We are receiving bids to reconstruct ABCIS.
- The staff are testing out the Microsoft Teams software for internal communication.

## Events

Celebrating Ministering Women Event – Radical. Redeemed. Ready.  
June 16-19, 2020

- A press release was distributed highlighting the keynote speakers.
- Registration has been launched for the event.

## Mission Table

- We set the date and location for the Mission Table, recruited the planning team, held a planning meeting and a project meeting for all staff involved in the event.

- Invitations have been sent to all of the potential participants.

## NLC

- The NLC agenda is being built with input from an NLC survey and input from the Mission Table Planning Team.
- There will be three retirement celebrations of NLC members at the meeting:
  - Robert Cochran (Planning Committee: Pat Hernandez, Steve Bils, Marie Onwubuariri)
  - Tom Wiles (Planning Committee: Cheryl Dudley, Soozie Ford, Al Fletcher)
  - Michael Williams (Planning Committee: Frank Frischkorn, Joan Friesen, Al Fletcher)

## Biennial Mission Summit

- The BMS Planning Team met for a three-day meeting in February. The meeting was very productive and helped to focus the plans for the 2021 BMS in Puerto Rico. Here are some highlights from that meeting:
  - The theme of “Imagine” was adopted as the 2021 BMS theme.
  - Plenary and workshop speakers were prioritized and are in the process of being contacted.
  - OTABL will be held in conjunction with the BMS. Judy Fackenthal and Zina Jacque have agreed to serve as facilitators of the event.
- I drafted a decision-making matrix detailing who has authority to make each decision related to the BMS.
- I am in the process of preparing a budget for the BMS.
- We have a signed contract for Biennial Mission Summit Producer, Jeremy Fackenthal.
- We have a signed contract for Biennial Mission Summit Negotiator, Annie Marcucci.
- Zina Jacque and Judy Fackenthal have agreed to staff the Orientation to American Baptist Life.

## Other Events

- The Office of Travel and Conference Planning will provide complimentary planning assistance for the McKee conference this year.
- I am working on an online Christmas show this year.

## Regional Ministries

- ABC Michigan has called Brian Johnson to be their next Executive Minister. Brian and I have been in touch about an orientation.
- I met with the DCBC Search Committee twice to review applicants for the Executive Minister position.
- I have provided counsel to Tom Wiles who has announced his retirement as of June of 2020 and will meet with their board in April to discuss next steps.

- Documents have been prepared for the REMC Nominating Committee including a summary of needs, description of committees and council, and historical chart of officers.
- I consulted with two regions (Wisconsin and ABCOPAD) regarding executive minister evaluations.
- I led a pastors retreat in Chicago and two local church retreats for the regions.
- I approved a consultation team visit for Mid-America.
- Rebecca Driscoll responded to an invitation to lead Creation Justice workshops for PR.

## **Vision and Values**

- I have begun to outline the modalities of the Office of the General Secretary as inclusive of and yet distinct from other national offices. I believe that it is important to show how all of the boards can work together and have relevance and importance in the ABC family.

## **Other**

- The US Govt placed a travel ban on six countries including Myanmar. It does not include the refugee resettlement program, but it may limit and slow down the process for visas. We held a Burma Refugee Commission conference call on the issue and are engaging in some advocacy work in this area.
- I wrote and distributed an annual appeal letter to our donor list and developed a thank you response letter for gifts received. We received over \$5,000 in gifts in response to that letter.
- I signed on to a letter on voter rights.
- I signed onto an Amicus brief in support of a district court decision that rejected new rules proposed by the federal government that would allow the indefinite detention of immigrant children with their parents in unlicensed facilities while their applications for asylum were being considered.
- I distributed a link to the FACT 2020 survey, encouraging ABC responses. This is the largest survey of congregations in the U.S.
- I met with Jeff Dromeshauser regarding the Church Mutual insurance agreement.