

President's Report
March 2020

I pray that this, my first report as President in this Biennium be received in the spirit of humbleness that it is written. I remain thankful for the opportunity to serve at this time in the history of our beloved denomination. I am increasingly grateful for each of you who continue to pray as I assume the responsibilities that come with the position.

I owe a most heartfelt thanks to Josue for his 12:01am on January 1, 2020 text message handing over the reins and also to he and the Executive Committee for including myself and Jim during the fall meetings as we prepared to assume our roles. Having learned a great deal during that time, I remain excited and committed to bringing my leadership to the position and continue to seek input and guidance as I learn the particulars of leading in this space.

After much prayer, listening and conversation, I am pleased to set forth several priorities for my service in this Biennium. First, I am committed to standing courageously at this time in the history of our denomination with my heart focused on gathering all of our American Baptist Family as we imagine what the future holds for us as individuals, churches, communities, regions, the nation and world. Second, to assist as we continue to renew and strengthen relationships within our American Baptist Family. It is through these strengthened relationships that we will further enhance our service and witness both locally and abroad. Lastly, to strengthen the Board of General Ministries and Nomination Committee during this time of discernment and preparation for the call of our next General Secretary. I am in prayer and ask that you join me as we seek God's blessings in leadership and direction.

With these priorities in mind, I've spent the first couple of months getting to work in the following ways:

I attended an ABCUSA Open House on February 4, 2020 that included many of our ABCUSA family and national staff of partners who were not able to join us for the ribbon cutting in November.

During the same trip to King of Prussia in February, I participated in a Biennial Mission Summit Planning Team Meeting led by Felipe Candelaria, Chair and Tasha Wilson, Co-Chair. The 2021 Biennial Mission Summit will be held in Puerto Rico June 25-27, 2021. Several members of the planning team shared their excitement not only for the foundations that were laid for our time in Puerto Rico, but also for the cooperative spirit that was present throughout the planning meeting.

I participated in a conference call to select participants for the 2020 Mission Table event. The theme for the next Mission Table is, "United in Christ, Together in Mission" and will be held at American Baptist Assembly in Green Lake on May 19-21. I am looking forward to presiding over the next.

In the spirit of cooperation, I will participate in the 2020 McKee Heritage Mission Adventure to Ghana and Liberia being facilitated by International Ministries scheduled for August 3-19, 2020. This mission adventure has been planned with the hope that the experience of, and reflection on, the history, culture and current realities in Ghana and Liberia will afford participants an opportunity to better integrate their sense of self with their calling, mission and ministry; indeed, to enhance the potential for our cultural humility and competency.

In closing, again I appreciate everyone for their role in making my transition to the position as it has been. I appreciate the support, questioning and trust that the family will continue to work together as I bring my heart and hands to the work that is before us. It is an exciting time. May we continue to seek God's leading and remain committed to sharing the love of Christ in a world seeking grace, hope and justice.

Respectfully submitted-Karen M Podsiadly, ABCUSA President 2020-2021