

## **Role of the American Baptist Churches, USA**

### **ABCUSA Focus Statement**

American Baptist Churches are missional congregations that nurture devoted disciples of Jesus Christ who live their lives in mission and ministry for the healing of the world through the love of God.

### **ABCUSA Mission Statement**

American Baptists are a Christ-centered, biblically grounded, ethnically diverse people called to radical personal discipleship in Christ Jesus. Our commitment to Jesus propels us to nurture authentic relationships with one another; build healthy churches; transform our communities, our nations and our world; engage every member in hands-on ministry; and speak the prophetic word in love.

As a people of prayer, purpose, and passion, we are in the forefront of creating a community of faith where people of every race, nationality and culture gather as one in worship, service and work.

The heart of the gospel is God's redemptive love. In our life together, the world will see the power of forgiveness to overcome alienation, the strength of love to transform hate, the power of grace to break the bonds of guilt, the triumph of hope over despair, and the victory of faith over doubt.

Through the cross of Christ we embrace the world as neighbor. Our vision for mission energizes a multitude of servant ministries of evangelism, discipleship, leadership, new church development, social justice, healing, peacemaking, economic development and education. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we work together in mutual submission, humility, love, and giving that the gospel might be preached and lived in all the world.

### **Role of the Office of the General Secretary**

The role of the Office of the General Secretary is defined by our missional priorities and shaped by our values. Our missional priorities are to (1) support and nurture the American Baptist family, (2) Strengthen our Regions, and (3) Bring together American Baptists. Our primary values of generality, harmony, humility, and respect, along with our Baptist distinctives and commitment to scripture shape our support of these agencies as manifested in the following ways...

### **Governance**

Our governing board is comprised of members from every region as well as at-large members. The Board of General Ministries performs its fiduciary, strategic, and generative functions in a manner that supports the whole of ABC. American Policies and Resolutions provide the parameters for public statements and signatory documents.

## **Constituency**

Our primary constituency consists of American Baptist Regions, National Program Boards, and Associated Ministry Organizations. We also interact with our ecumenical partners and interfaith groups on behalf of the denomination. We are United in Christ and Together in Mission.

## **Gatherings**

The Office of the General Secretary carries the planning and leadership responsibility for the Biennial Mission Summit, the National Leadership Council, the National Executive Council, and the Mission Table. These events are planned for and by the entire ABC family.

## **Administrative Functions**

Each of our administrative functions listed below performs its service as the hands and feet of Christ. These groups, teams, and committees provide support for a full range of American Baptist ministries.

- a. Mission Resource Development
- b. Regional Ministries
- c. Transition Ministries
- d. American Baptist Women in Ministry
- e. Accounting Office for American Baptist Mission Support
- f. American Baptist Churches Information System (ABCIS)
- g. Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relationships
- h. Conference planning for family events
- i. World Relief Committee
- j. AB Historical Society
- k. Professional Ministries Team

## **A Metaphor for the Office of the General Secretary**

There is a tasty rice dish in every culture, such as jambalaya, paella, gumbo, etc., comprised of rice and local ingredients. The Office of the General Secretary is the bowl that holds these ingredients. Like rice, our OGS staff serve to bring everyone together, but we are dependent upon our missional partners to add key elements of mission and ministry to the dish.