

November 2021 Executive Report to the Board of General Ministries, sitting as the American Baptist Historical Society



ABHS has traversed several transitions over the past 12 months. Our COVID-19 protocols (as well as governmental and public health restrictions) continue to limit the number of on-site researchers. A 40% turnover in ABHS staff slowed the pace of most of our ongoing work. Caroline Crowell succeeded Jill Sweetapple who had resigned her position as Head of Archives and Special Collections in December. Also in December, Jan Winfield retired after nine years of service to ABHS as our Office Manager, and in June we hired Jean McDaniel as Administrative Assistant.

I was saddened by death of Board of Managers member Beverly Fink, and traveled to Kansas for her funeral service in July.

Archival Projects

In May we received the exciting news that our \$48,000 grant proposal to digitize reel-to-reel audio tapes was selected for funding by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). The project includes the recordings of American Baptist Conventions from 1958-1973 and conferences held at Green Lake during that same time frame.

Denise Hanusek has continued to volunteer her time and expertise to catalogue our rare book collection, making more of our collections visible online. A number of volumes are unique to our library, either in North America or world-wide.

Outreach

We continue outreach to congregations and regions by means of church anniversary certificates.

This year's Orientation to American Baptist Life took shape as an 6-session online workshop. ABHS prepared presentations of the history of each ABC mission agency covered.

Moving the 2021 ABC Biennial online necessitated re-thinking how to have an effective presence at the convention. We hosted our "breakfast" event with Rev. Senator Raphael Warnock as the main speaker, appearing via pre-recorded video. ABHS President Jonathan Malone presented two workshops, one live, the other pre-recorded, on Baptist figures Joanna P. Moore, Virginia Broughton, and Masahiko Wada. We presented online exhibits on the history of Northern/American Baptist conventions, the development of the denomination, stories from the International Ministries archives, ABHMS history, the development of MMBB, and the growth of ABHS. All of these presentations are available for viewing online.

Strategic Planning

Guided by consultant Michael Taylor and using SchellingPoint's Alignment Cycle process, the ABHS Board of Managers Strategic Planning Task Force identified the primary need over the coming 5 years to be increased revenue, in order to continue and expand our digitization project as well as continuing to preserve and make available historic documents. ABHS staff proffered several suggestions of new fee-based services ABHS could offer toward the end of increasing revenue streams.

Funding and Fundraising

In January we received a gift of \$50,000 from First Baptist Church of Palo Alto, CA. The church was closing and sold their building, donating the proceeds to various mission organizations including ABHS. We recently received a \$30,000 gift from Chico First Baptist Church of Chico, CA.

Our \$66,559.41 PPP loan has been converted to grant.

This year's fundraising is on track to exceed both expectations for this year, and results of recent years. Through Sept 20, 2021, Annual Fund donations total about \$33,000, compared with \$25,815 for the first 3 quarters of 2020. We have 19 new donor members, with an average gift of \$237, and 140 donor members total, with an average gift of \$215. Thus far in 2021 we have received donations from 10 organizations (8 churches and 2 foundations) to total \$6309.

It continues to be an honor and a blessing to minister with ABHS.

Respectfully submitted,
Priscilla Eppinger
Executive Director