

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT-September
Jim Wolfe**

Following the June BGM meeting, many of us stayed for the 40th Anniversary of the Women in Ministry Project, now known as American Baptist Women in Ministry (ABWIM). The first gathering of women at Green Lake was held in 1980, and the Women in Ministry Project formally began in 1982.

Women, men, pastors, and lay people, ranging in age from 4 to 90 years, representing different cultures and backgrounds gathered to celebrate and affirm women in ministry.

On July first I traveled to Palacios, Texas to participate in the annual meeting of the Kachin American Baptist Assembly. American Baptists have a long history of mission and ministry in Myanmar (Burma) spanning more than 200 years. The Kachin American Baptist Assembly is an Associated Ministry Organization. The culture and language were different, but the Spirit was powerfully present in the worship and celebration of this wonderful group of God's children. I have never been more graciously received and honored as by the Kachin Baptists.

On July 11th I traveled to Birmingham, Alabama to participate in the Annual Gathering and General Council meeting of the Baptist World Alliance. The overall theme of the Gathering was RESTORATIVE RACIAL JUSTICE, A Call to Live in Flourishing Freedom. During the week participants from sixty-six countries in person and online had the opportunity to share in workshops presented by the BWA commissions. The commissions include, Baptist Heritage and Identity, Evangelism, Transformation Leadership, Theological Education, Baptist Doctrine and Christian Unity, Christian Ethics, Baptist Worship and Spirituality, Human Rights, Peace, and Reconciliation, Racial, Gender, and Economic Justice, and Religious Freedom.

Presenters included The Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley, General Secretary Emeritus and the Rev. Dr. Patricia Hernandez, Associate General Secretary for Women In Ministry and Transition Ministries.

There were two opportunities for off site excursions. On Thursday afternoon participants were invited to visit Montgomery Alabama and Friday afternoon there was an opportunity to visit The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and the historic 16th Street Baptist Church.

On a personal note, I met the General Secretary, and Associate General Secretary of the Berean Baptist Churches of India. I had the opportunity to sit with the Associate General Secretary and worship via Zoom with a colleague of his in India and another in Maryland. I prayed with them and exchanged greetings on behalf of ABCUSA.

July 24th was a very special day as I was able to join the First Baptist Church of Woodstown, New Jersey as they celebrated their 200th anniversary. It was my great honor to bring the church greetings on behalf of ABCUSA, as well as a certificate from the American Baptist Historical Society.

As a pastoral intern, I served three years at FBC, Woodstown under the leadership of The Rev. Dr. Howard Taylor. Dr. Taylor delivered the anniversary message, and we had the opportunity to spend time with him and renew many old friendships.

On August 30, I had the opportunity to travel to Karlsruhe Germany to participate in the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The theme for the Assembly was "Christ's Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity". American Baptists attending the assembly included General Secretary, Dr. C. Jeff Woods, Rothangliani R. Chhange, (ABHMS), Leslie Turley, (BIM), and Dr. Raimundo Barreto. I am pleased to report that Dr. Barreto was elected to serve on the Central Committee for the coming eight-year term. Dr. Barreto will be an excellent

representative of ABCUSA. Raimundo is an associate professor of World Christianity at Princeton Theological Seminary. He currently serves as Chair of the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations.

Dr. Jeff Woods chaired a workshop detailing the work of the Burma Refugee Commission. We had the opportunity to share lunch and conversation with a number of Burmese church leaders, which was informative and enhanced the relationships between ABC and our Burmese partners in ministry.

A word of affirmation is appropriate in this context. The Baptist World Alliance focused on Restorative Racial Justice and the World Council of Churches on Reconciliation and Unity. As American Baptists we have made a commitment to anti-racism. It is helpful to acknowledge and affirm that, not only Baptists, but sisters and brothers from many faith communities are united in reconciliation, unity, and justice.

When delegates from Canada and the United States met to affirm their top priorities Racial Justice and Creation Justice were at the top of the list. As American Baptists we are committed to these issues and celebrate the unity of sisters and brothers around the globe in restoring human relationships and responsible stewardship of creation.