

BGM Item 5a:

**Board of General Ministries Reports:
ABCUSA/OGS and
Associated Ministry Organizations**

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TREASURER'S OFFICE:

Highlights of Treasurer's Office, Accounting, American Baptist Churches Information Systems, OTCP, Associated Ministry Organizations (AMOs) – **November 2023 – June 2024**

ABCUSA:

- Preparing proposed 2025 Budget
- Finalized ABCUSA 2023 Audit
- Annual insurance reviews/renewals
- Prepared and presented Analyses and Financial Statements to BGM/ABCUSA Finance Committees, BGM and BGM EC; staffed meetings
- Oversaw work of legal counsel in several areas including several recent lawsuits
- Preparing for 2025 Biennial Mission Summit
- Personnel supervision for Accounting, ABCIS, Office of Travel and Conference Planning, and Building
- Attended NLC meetings in Orlando and provided update about NetSuite Implementation status.
- Amended Common Budget Covenant Operating Guidelines for Receiving Regions to perform Agreed-Upon Procedures in lieu of an audit. To date, three Regions opted for the Agreed-Upon Procedures: Wisconsin, Nebraska and ABCOPAD.
- Reviewed 2023 goals and set 2024 goals.

- **ABCIS:**

ABCIS to Oracle NetSuite Conversion Update

- During the last few months, our primary focus has been to ensure the successful migration of all data into NetSuite. We have been diligently working to recreate many of the reports previously available in the old ABCIS system within NetSuite.
- To support this transition, we launched a comprehensive training program in 2024. The NetSuite Training Program sessions are held on Wednesdays at 11 AM EST and Fridays at 1:30 PM EST. These sessions provide an opportunity for Regions and Partners to learn about new features within NetSuite and ask any questions they may have. Additionally, we keep Regions updated on the latest reports by sending an email at the end of each month detailing the new reports we have created. We usually send these emails on the last Thursday of every month.
- Completed church annual electronic reports in NetSuite. Churches can submit annual reports electronically or manually.
- Prepared internal audit confirms for American Baptist Mission Support.

- In process of hiring NetSuite intern.

OFFICE OF TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE PLANNING:

- We extend our deep gratitude to Kathy Young, Associate Director, who is retiring after a long and successful career of over 25 years of dedicated service. We wish Kathy all the best in the future.
- The Office of Travel & Conference Planning welcomes two new employees:

Pam Smith, Manager of Travel & Conference Planning, joined ABCUSA mid November 2023.

Naijaa Michel, Meeting Planner & Accounting Assistant, joined ABCUSA mid May 2024.

- In 2024 OTCP continues to plan meetings and have secured many 2025 hotel contracts for our Partners and those sponsored by ABCUSA, the Office of the General Secretary.
- We look forward to seeing you in Omaha, NE at the CHI Health Center Omaha for the Biennial Mission Summit, July 3 – 6, 2025. Connected to the Convention Center is the Hilton Omaha where the Board of General Ministries Meetings will precede the Biennial Mission Summit.
- Cvent continues to be our main source for Registration. Please remember to check your Spam Folder for upcoming meeting invitations.

REGIONS:

- Conferred with Regions and churches on financial and administrative issues
- Ongoing Receiving Units (collecting agency) responsibilities for 13 regions
- Providing Accounting Services for Philadelphia Baptist Association and Cleveland Baptist Association

ASSOCIATED MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS (AMOs):

(AB Historical Society, AB Women's Ministries)

- Started 2023 audit preparations
- Accounting functions, ongoing consultations, insurance reviews, renewals, re: financial and operational matters
- Represented ABCUSA/OGS and NEC at ABHS Board of Managers meetings

-- Alan Musoke, Associate General Secretary for Finance/CFO/Treasurer

Report to the Board of General Ministries from Mission Resource Development

Rev. Dr. Robin D. Stoops

Associate General Secretary for MRD

June 2024

Mission Resource Development

We continue to send out the quarterly email newsletter, “United Mission Matters,” using materials from the United Mission toolkit as well as other resources from our Executive Ministers to highlight United Mission and share what is happening in our regions in mission and ministry as it relates to discipleship, evangelism, and stewardship.

As a representative of the Office of the General Secretary I attended the MMBB national conference entitled MMBB’s Re-Think, Re-Invest Financial Conference. It was a great event with great information about all things financial for clergy as well as an unveiling of their new program surrounding Clergy Care. I also attended ABHMS’s Space for Grace. It was a well-attended event, pastors and chaplains were present and we were able to have some great conversations about mission and ministry. We also were able to identify some exhibitors for the upcoming Biennial Mission Summit. We hosted a table throughout the conference sharing information about ABCUSA, Office of General Secretary and United Mission. In May I gave the charge at the Rev. Dr. Greg Mamula’s installation as the new Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of Nebraska. I just returned from the Mountain Prairie Youth Conference at the YMCA of the Rockies, sharing the ABCUSA story with our youth.

We promoted and received a “Giving Tuesday” online offering in late November of last year. The funds from this promotion will go to a new grant ministry called “The Least of These.” ABCUSA churches will be able to apply for grants for new ministries in their communities caring for those who are enduring various hardships.

We held our first ABCUSA Sunday on February 11, or February 18, 2024. We created and shared support materials to highlight the past/present/future of our work together as churches and national partners. I was able to attend a couple of different churches celebrating ABCUSA Sunday, we received good feedback on the Sunday and the materials we provided.

We are working on two videos, one is centered on promoting scripture reading and study, the other will be short clips of people supporting United Mission and ABCUSA. I am hoping to record several of you at this meeting in 15 to 45 second clips we can use for video and social media promotion. Please see me or Bridget Lipin to record your clip.

In all things we are working to build support for United Mission as well as exploring new ways for congregations to journey with us as we seek to join God’s mission in our communities.

Burma Refugee Commission

Another of my responsibilities is the Burma Refugee Commission and ongoing advocacy for our sisters and brothers in Christ who are a part of the Burmese diaspora.

Since our November meeting I have visited Washington DC to plan and participate in the prayer service to remember the coup and those victimized by it beginning in 2021. Also to attend and speak at a demonstration outside of the White House to call attention to those suffering under the destruction of the Burma military. I was also able to speak briefly at a House briefing on the persecution of Christians in Burma.

My time always includes meeting with representatives from our government, asking for them to remember and care for those who are displaced in Burma because of the coup. Along with the Burma Advocacy Group we are always working to help provide aid to those who are suffering because of the war crimes being committed by the military in Burma.

The International Religious Freedom Summit is also a place I spend some time. I have sat on the steering committee for the summit for the last three years. This group gathers over a thousand people in Washington DC to advocate for religious freedom for everyone, everywhere, right now. This is an arduous task with all the turmoil in our world, much of it based on religious intolerance. There were over forty different faiths represented at the summit, and bi-partisan support for the work of seeking this freedom for everyone, everywhere, right now.

Planning Coordination for Biennial Mission Summit

We are excited to continue the process of planning for the 2025 ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit in Omaha Nebraska, July 3-6. Our theme for the 2025 Biennial Mission Summit is "Come Seek Living Water", John 7:37-38. The Biennial Mission Summit Planning Team met in person at ABHMS Lamb building, on April 25-26, 2024. The team was expanded this year to include young adult feedback. ABCUSA and our partners recommended and sponsored young adults, under 35, to our planning team. This young adult group were very helpful as we began to discuss what a biennial in Omaha might look like.

Some fun family activities are being planned as well as speakers and workshops surrounded by powerful worship and great fellowship. Downtown Omaha has been in a constant state of remodel and updating, there will be all kinds of celebrating going on around us for us to participate in if we choose.

The other planning groups are meeting, and we are going to have a Biennial Mission Summit budget in place by mid-June. The next Biennial Mission Summit Planning Team meeting will take place via Zoom at the end of June.

Our goal is to have registration open for the Biennial Mission Summit in Omaha open no later than November 1st, 2024. Please plan now to join us for this great family reunion of our churches and partners. It is going to be an especially fun event for the whole family.

Regional Ministries Report to the BGM from Jeff Woods

Activity Highlights from February 1 to June 15, 2024

Search Committees and Orientations for New Executive Ministers

- ABCOPAD completed its search process and called the Rev. Dr. Mark Maserjian-Smith as their new Executive Minister.
- The Cleveland Baptist Association completed its search process and called the Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard as their new Executive Minister.
- VT-NH is receiving names after posting its position announcement.
- I have provided initial materials for the Mission Northwest Region following the retirement announcement of Charles Revis.
- I am in the early stages of facilitating leadership transitions with two other regions.
- I conducted a one to one orientations for Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard and Mark Maserjian-Smith and facilitated a group orientation event for the six newest REMC members.
- I updated over 20 documents and sample materials used with search committees.

Regional Consultations and Events

- I have been providing in-person and online envisioning and restructuring facilitation for the Central Region.
- Rocky Mountain Region hosted a group of Executive Ministers for sharing best practices, encouragement, and fellowship.
- I participated in the installation service for Rev. Dr. Michael Friday, the newly called Executive Minister for ABC of Greater Indianapolis.
- I am currently facilitating Executive Minister performance appraisal processes for two regions.
- I gathered the Leadership Team to meet with newly called Executive Minister Rev. Dr. Greg Mamula to share the priorities of ABCUSA.
- I participated and assisted with the REMC Annual Meeting, facilitated the work of the REMC Nominating Committee. and am working with the REMC Planning Team for a fall continuing education event.
- I distributed a needs assessment survey among the REMC looking at continuing education needs, trends, and tasks.
- I attended the Great Lakes Pastors Conference focusing upon “Fresh Expressions” for local churches.

REMC Calls - Highlights of recent REMC calls include:

- A presentation from Dr. Charlene Quint, on “A Biblical Response to Domestic Abuse in the Church - A Pastor's Guide.”
- A presentation from Rev. Dr. Jason Mack on, "Church Redevelopment: What Does the Future Hold?"
- A presentation from Rev. Dr. Jessica Williams on, “Exploring the Pandemic Impact on American Baptist Congregations.”
- I presented a seminar on the benefits of sabbaticals and how to shape them.

Professional Ministries Team

- I facilitated a meeting of the team as they explored the implications of AI at their May meeting with guest Saeed Richardson from ABHMS.

Other Activities

- By invitation, I participated in the MMBB Colloquium event.
- I produced the National Leadership Council agenda and assisted with the event.
- I have continued to assist with ABCUSA legal issues.

American Baptist Women In Ministry (ABWIM) And Transition Ministries

ABWIM

Vision: ABWIM seeks the full partnership of men and women in ministry in which both women and men are able to fully utilize their God-given gifts and fully live out their God-given call.

Some Highlights:

- **Women in Ministry pilgrimage** – partnership between ABWIM and Mid-American Baptist Churches and in collaboration with Brad Berglund on the ABCUSA Spiritual Direction Team we journeyed on the Camino de Santiago reflecting on our journeys in ministry while exploring the ancient practice of pilgrimage
- **BWNA (Baptist Women of North America) Executive Board** – led session on mentoring and leadership practices
- **UN Commission on the Status of Women** – planned and participated in the UN Commission on the Status of Women with Ecumenical Women and a BWA (Baptist World Alliance) delegation of women leaders from around the world
- **Selected for Fellowship of Women Clergy Award** – SAWUBONA, Zulu for “We See You” commemorating empowering and supporting women in ministry
- **upcoming: Commission on Racial, Gender, and Economic Justice** – planning sessions for the Baptist World Alliance Annual Gathering in July

Transition Ministries ABCUSA

The vision of Transition Ministries ABCUSA is to partner with regions in resourcing churches during times of transition in a way which enhances their ministry and empowers them to journey into the future as vibrant missional congregations.

Navigating through covid has presented many challenges and has impacted the number of intentional interims available to serve in a variety of locations. Nevertheless, we continue to live out our mission of providing intentional interim ministers who are adept and experienced in leading churches through times of transition. These interim pastors guide the congregation on a journey that involves celebrating their history, clarifying their identity, articulating their mission, and moving into a fruitful future.

Training – Given the positive responses to an on-line training we conducted, we’ve been exploring further on-line as well as in-person trainings, as we continue to partner with regions in recommending intentional interim to congregations in need.

American Baptist Spiritual Direction and Formation

During Covid, we re-ignited an initiative that was begun about ten years ago as part of the Transformed by the Spirit movement. This initiative is a way for those who are involved in the ministry of spiritual direction to resource, connect and network with each other as well as to

invite people into practices that ground us in God, strengthen our interconnectedness, undergird our life together and deepen our faith. The Spiritual Direction Team of Rev. Betty Wright-Riggins, Rev. Judy Fackenthal, Rev. Brad Berglund and I as staff liaison are all certified Spiritual Directors.

As part of this initiative, we have been renewing and refreshing a website that will include resources for those seeking to deepen spiritual practices as well as for certified Spiritual Directors to connect: www.abspiritualformation.com. Also growing out of this initiative is the recent Women in Ministry pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago, also known as “the Way of Saint James,” which was a way of exploring the ancient practice of pilgrimage and deepening spiritual life in the midst of reflecting on our journeys in ministry.

In all of these ministry areas—ABWIM, Transition Ministries, and Spiritual Direction and Formation—I am thankful for the wisdom, grace, guidance, and support of our new General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain, the ABCUSA Leadership Team, the ABWIM Advisory Team, and the Board of General Ministries without whom none of this could happen.

Thank-you!

Rev. Dr. Patricia P. Mercer Hernandez, AGS ABWIM & Transition Ministries ABCUSA



AMERICAN BAPTIST MEN USA

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AMERICAN BAPTIST MEN USA MINISTRY INTERIM REPORT May 19, 2024

American Baptist Men USA celebrated its 100th year anniversary, September 30th and October 1st, 2022, at the Parchment Valley Conference Center in Ripley, WV. Immediate Past President, Brother William 'Bill' Morningstar presided over this event. A special highlight was the recognition of all living past presidents. The nomination slate for new officers, 2024-2026, was presented and accepted.

There were no major business items in 2023. ABMen responses to disasters are still down as we continue to recover from the global pandemic and its lingering effects. ABMen did receive calls regarding flooding in Kentucky, SW Virginia, and West Virginia. We were able to help in removing of debris, i.e., trees down, to help disaster aid get to necessary areas. We were, also, able to help people having their homes repaired from flooding or tornadoes such as roof repair/replacement. There were a few churches that received our assistance as well in the WV incidents. We were contacted by various churches or relief agencies that we had worked with in the past. There are still a few projects that ABMen have ongoing with some in final stages. Those projects are Crow Community Baptist Church Work Project and the Murrow Indian Children's Home. The new president-elect, Brother Vernon A. Clement, attended the 2023 Biennial in Puerto Rico as ABMen USA representative.

There was a change of leadership at the beginning of 2024. Mr. Vernon A. Clement became the new president with his official swearing in on Sunday February 18, 2024, at the Second Baptist Church – West End, Richmond, Virginia. There was a Servant Leadership Meeting/Training on Saturday February 17, 2024, at Second Baptist Church-West End. It was well attended with some great training on reaching the next generation of male leaders, leadership within ABMen on a national and regional level, and finally how to cultivate Christian leaders.

I attended 2024 NLC where I was able to meet many of the ABC USA national leaders. This was very good as I was able to inform the general-secretary office and national leaders of the new changes. I was able to hear their concerns for the inactiveness of the ABMen Disaster Ministry. I gave assurance that I would work with the ABMen National Board to address this issue as quickly as possible. I was given the opportunity to speak at the REMC meeting. This was very rare however I am grateful to the president for her willingness to allow me that rare opportunity. There is a planned ABMen National Board Zoom meeting for Wednesday May 22, 2024.

In His Service,

Vernon A. Clement
President

Ministry Report for June 2024 BGM

Ministers Council, ABCUSA

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Matthew Sturtevant, President

Programming

The Ministers Council has had several meaningful online and in-person conversations in the last several months, including a book study on “Preaching as Spiritual Direction,” and MC Live topics such as “Alphabet Soup: How We Relate (or Don't) to Our ABC Partners,” led by Sarah Strosahl-Kagi, “Reckoning with Power: Why the Church Fails When It's on the Wrong Side of Power,” led by David Fitch, and “Building Bridges: An Updated Handbook for Intercultural Ministries,” with Katie Choy- Wong. Our June MC Live is titled "God's Invitation: Sabbaticals & Sabbath-Minded Ministry," featuring Travis Norvell, Jacki Belile and others for a panel on the importance of keeping “sabbath-minded.” And on July 10, we will hold a session for folks about grants for Together in Ministry (peer groups) and Excellence in Ministry (chapter support). These conversations continue to provide an opportunity for growth in competence and collegiality.

Meanwhile, we also worked to intentionally provide space for the centeredness of shared worship and prayer experiences. The week of Ash Wednesday, we led an online prayer service with various Lenten prayer experiences, and during the same week as our national Leadership Team planning meeting, we joined with clergy from the Greater Chicago and Wisconsin chapters in a creation-themed day of prayer and worship titled “Take a Breath.” Our Fall Retreat is scheduled for October 28-31 at Tuscarora Inn & Conference Center in Mt. Bethel, Pennsylvania.

Covenant and Code of Ethics

The Ministers Council is turning in coming months to conclude the publication of a Learning Guide intended to be a companion to our national "Covenant and Code of Ethics." (The 2006 version of the COE was updated through a three-year process from 2019-2022 and became effective 2/1/23.) The diverse eight-member editorial team collaborated for 15 months on the Learning Guide, which was shared in "beta version" with REMC at biennial 2023 and one MC Live session last year. Focus groups are being scheduled with our denominational caucuses before its release this Fall. See attached for a Preview Document.

Clergy and Chapter Health

Over the course of several weeks, we conducted a clergy survey inviting ministers to share perspectives on their ministry, priorities, and goals for partnering with the MC. We found that 31% of clergy felt that they were “thriving” in their ministry, and we have thus asked for some to share their “thriving stories” in our monthly newsletter. Meanwhile, 52% of our members define themselves as “surviving,” “struggling,” or even “depleted and despairing,” a concerningly high number. Some of our initiatives to combat such experiences of isolation are described below. In other results, respondents reported that “companionship” was their highest need in their spiritual journey, and “personal support in a clergy

group” is their highest need for collegiality. The biggest need for competency growth was identified as “preaching and worship.” These responses highlight the continuing need to provide opportunities for shared collegiality and resources to help clergy who are feeling isolated.

New Initiatives

The Leadership Team had a fruitful planning retreat in April, where we worked on several new initiatives. One of our hopes is to find a way to parallel the current chapter model with an offering of *affinity groups*. Piloted by groups such as our Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors chapter, we recognize that sometimes the strongest collegiality comes through affinity, not geography. Meanwhile, we are also working on a *Hub for Well-Being*, hoping to provide a place where clergy who are struggling might find resources for health. The goal is to invite clergy to assess in what areas they are seeking well-being, where they will be pointed to a wide range of resources available to them—books, programs, denominational initiatives, and other tools. Finally, one of our strongest tools for clergy who feel isolated is the *Together in Ministry* group, and we are working at ways to promote and encourage this important resource. With these new initiatives, we hope to leverage our greatest strengths and encourage health for all of our clergy.

Transitions

We as a Leadership Team grieved the loss of our Secretary Rev. Dr. Charlotte Myers upon her passing this year. She had resigned several months ago due to her increasing health concerns, and was remembered fondly by family and friends at a memorial service at her church. Julio Gonzalez-Paniagua has agreed to fill the rest of her term and has joined the Leadership Team. This Fall will be a time of significant transition, as several LT members are at the end of their terms, and we will vote on their replacements. Rebecca Driscoll, our current vice president (and thus president-elect) has begun moving into the president’s role by participating in more national conversations and leadership on our team.

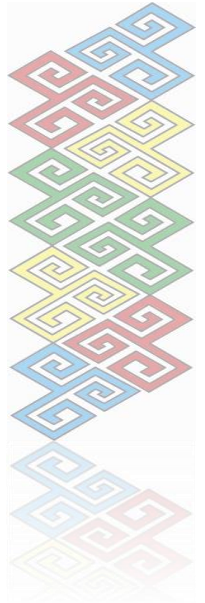


Kachin American Baptist Association

American Jinghpaw Wunpawng Hkalup Ninghtan Hpung

3264 Townsend Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32277; (904) 442-5522

Office of the Executive Minister



Date. May 21, 2024

To,

Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain, General Secretary of ABCUSA

Re: Submitting A Report of Kachin American Baptist Association (KABA).

Greetings on behalf of the Executive Board of KABA! We are very optimistic about submitting our association report. All we have done are as follows.

1. We had an opportunity to participate in the activities and meetings hosted by ABHMS, ABCUSA International Ministries (IM), Burma Refugee Commission (BRC), and Burma Advocacy Group (BAG) with our fellow Myanmar Ethnic Baptist church leaders.
2. The 6th KABA Youth Annual Camp with 120 campers met at Camp Copass, Denton, Texas, on December 27-30, 2023. Rev. Joy Martinez-Marshall, Associate Region Minister of ABC-NE, has been with us as a keynote speaker at this youth camp.
3. After the BAG team trip back from Malaysia and Thailand for the Burmese Ethnic Refugees, we formed a Welcome Corp Awareness Team to help the Kachin Refugees in Malaysia. The process is ongoing.
4. We collected about \$11,000 from our local churches for humanitarian financial support and sent it to the IDP camps in the Kachin Independent Organization (KIO) control areas in Kachin State.
5. KABA Women Ministry will host the "Women Conference" in Great Salt Lake, Utah, on July 4-7, 2024.
6. KABA will hold its 5th Biennial General Assembly and 7th Youth Camp at Camp Copass in Denton, Texas, on December 27-30, 2024. We also will celebrate our association's tenth anniversary during this assembly. If available, we would like to invite Dr. Gina to preach at the tenth-anniversary celebration service and lead the Bible Study for us.
7. KABA supervised one Bible Institute called Ola Hanson Bible Institute (OHBI). It is affiliated with Central Baptist Theological Seminary (CBTS) since 2021. The CBTS conferred the certificate of ministry study level I & II and the Diploma in Kachin Christian Formation Degree for our Bible Institute. It has twelve faculties teaching in our own Kachin language. Sixty-eight students have recently enrolled in the third batch of the Certificate of Ministry Studies Program Level I, and 28 students have enrolled in the first batch of the Diploma Program. The third batch of the Certificate program level II and the second batch of the diploma program will start in August 2024.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Tu Lum Lamung

Executive Minister of KABA