

Mission Resource Development report from the Acting Associate General Secretary to the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee September 2017

Staff: Alfred J. Fletcher, Acting Associate General Secretary; Bridget Lipin, Assistant Director of Communications/Web Manager; Tina Turner, Executive Assistant to Associate General Secretary; Mark Staples, Communications Consultant; Stacy Emerson, Stewardship Consultant

Ministry Responsibilities: United Mission, Communications, assisting Biennial Mission Summit, Stewardship, Preaching and Visiting Local Churches and Regions, Matthew 25 Grant Administration.

Major Highlights July – August 2017

ABCUSA Biennial booth was well attended. Mission Resource Development staff were very involved in many aspects of the Biennial Mission Summit including setup, registration, coordination, media coverage, workshops and more. At the ABCUSA booth attendees were pleased with the biennial ribbons given away; 550 ribbons were passed out. There were a considerable number of folks who had attended over 10 Biennials. It was interesting to ask which Biennials they remembered and why. If this creative tool is used in future biennials, there will be a need for ribbons for 15 and/or twenty and over. Thanks to Bridget and Tina for their hard work and creativity.

Stacy Emerson and the Stewardship ALT Team have announced The Generosity Project. A bookmark announcing it was distributed to all attendees at the Biennial Mission Summit in their registration packets. Applications are being received for the pilot program. The ALT Team is excited about this experiment and what it will yield. Thanks to Stacy's leadership and team.

The Mission Resource Development Office continues to receive requests for resources. During Al's transition, PBA asked him to provide a Stewardship workshop at one of their churches and ABCCONN asked him to provide a workshop on United Mission and Stewardship/mission event. These regional contacts provide a rich opportunity to engage regions at a very fundamental level of their mission and ministry.

Matthew 25 Grant applications were due September 1. The Discernment Team will meet at the end of September to award grants. In the future, there is a call from the anonymous donor to focus Matthew 25 Grants on children, orphans and families in poverty. Thanks again to Tina for her leadership on this initiative.

ABC Identity group met during the board meetings and discussed telling the American Baptist Story. How can we connect ministries we are involved with and work that we are doing to our focus statement? (Discipleship transformation, Healing of the world, etc.) - How can we develop stories and narratives to help potential supporters? Group members discussed their American Baptist identity, and how their stories and other stories can be shared with the larger constituency of American Baptists. The group also discussed United Mission, the United Mission is the Vehicle emphasis, and considered new/updated strategy for United Mission. Thanks to Bridget for her contributions and support of this group.

The 2017-2018 ABC Directory and Planning Calendar is in process. This should be ready to be posted on the ABCUSA website by the end of September.

The United Mission is the Vehicle emphasis will continue through 2017. The General Secretary has decided to continue the work that MRD started to offer customized individual bulletin inserts to all regions. Building encouraging service relationships with Executive Ministers needs to be actively

cultivated by providing resources that help regions to increase their financial capacity by telling their mission story.

MRD staff have begun to review our storage areas at the Mission Center. We began to clean/downsize/retain all of the items in preparation for the move in 2018. Thanks to MRD staff for their careful attention.

Thank you to the BGM and to Interim General Secretary for the privilege of serving in this mission capacity. I am impressed by MRD's fine staff and the staff of the Office of the General Secretary. Without their ministry, I would have been unable to competently serve.

N.B. Over the past 13 months, I have come to understand that the MRD Office is a strategically critical resource of the ABCUSA. It is a tool rightly wielded that can be used to build cooperation and collaboration among mission partners. The MRD Office can be used to renew our budget covenant. The budget covenant suffers because of inattention and lack of leadership. However, it remains a core document valued among covenant partners.