

**Board of General Ministries Reports:
ABCUSA-Office of the General Secretary and
Associated Ministry Organizations**

TREASURER'S OFFICE:

Highlights of Treasurer's Office, Accounting, American Baptist Churches Information Systems, Building Management, Associated Ministry Organizations (AMOs) –
December 2018 – June 2019

ABCUSA:

- Secured new office space
- Prepare for 2020 Budget
- Finalized 2018 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
- Preparing for 2019 Biennial Mission Summit
- Personnel supervision for Accounting, ABCIS, Building Management and Warehousing
- ABCIS – Created and enhanced several reports for ABCIS users

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, Ministers Council)

- Completed 2018 Audits
- Accounting functions, ongoing consultations, insurance reviews, renewals, meetings with AMO executives re: financial and operational matters

588 ASSOCIATES:

- Prepared 2018 Audits
- 2018 Tax Returns; accounting functions; leasing and building management; insurance reviews/renewals
- Supervision of maintenance staff and day-to-day operations
- Worked extensively with partners, Mission Center consultants and legal counsel on sale of the Mission Center
- Worked on relocating external tenants

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

OFFICE OF REGIONAL MINISTRIES (Activity from Jan - June of 2019)

Acting General Secretary. For the first two months of the year, I served as Acting General Secretary. As I transitioned out of that role, I met with General Secretary Spitzer and provided him with a “next steps” document highlighting options for follow-up on current projects. I also submitted a complete report of my six-month tenure as Acting General Secretary to the BGM Executive Committee.

REMC Orientation. In January, I facilitated a gathering of the newest executive ministers for a three-day meeting. Each executive minister shared their journey of how they came to their position and we discussed best practices for the core tasks of being an executive minister. Prior to this group orientation, I met individually with each executive minister to provide an initial orientation. The evaluations show that the participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to get to know other executives and begin working together. They especially liked the balance of “information and interaction.” Several expressed surprise at the strong level of collegiality among the group that included a very diverse set of regions. Over the last several years, the pool of Executive Ministers has begun to better reflect the diversity of our wider ABC family. Currently, the 33 members of the REMC include 9 female members, 6 African-American members, 3 Hispanic/Latino members, and 1 Asian member.

Region consultations – I consulted with several REMC members about a variety of cases involving clergy misconduct, church wide conflicts, societal influences on congregations, local church governance, property disputes, etc. In addition, it was a pleasure to participate in the installation services for Miriam Mendez and Sandra DeMott-Hasenauer and conduct individual on-site orientations for Gregg Hemmen in the Central Region, David Gregg in Chicago, and Mark Click and Jane Gibbons in Ohio. I also facilitated the work of the REMC nominating committee, hosted conversations with the REMC innovation group, and worked with newly elected president Frank Frischkorn on the April and June meetings of the REMC.

NLC. After receiving input from the participant organizations via an online survey, I drafted the agenda and cover letter for the recent NLC meeting and had several conversations with potential presenters and members of the NLC. The meeting focused upon collaborating better to serve the local ABC congregations.

Mission Summit Conversations. I designed, distributed, and analyzed an online survey that presented options for drilling down on the seven Mission Table priorities for more in-depth discussion at the Biennial Mission Summit. The Sunday afternoon Baptist Talk/Mission Summit Conversation session will also include a brief presentation on civil discourse. Following the presentation, participants will have the opportunity to engage in conversation around one of our current Mission Table priorities or political discourse.

Other Survey and Interview Projects – I designed and distributed through the regional offices an online survey targeting bivocational ministers. One of the survey questions invited the respondent to give their contact information if the person had a bivocational ministry success story to share. I then worked with Women in Ministry Intern Rebecca Driscoll in setting up an interview protocol and conducting interviews with several bivocational pastors. At the conclusion of the project, a document was disseminated to the REMC and PMT that identified themes and patterns from the interviews; as well as, quantitative results of the online survey. I also distributed a survey assessing potential interest in networking regional camp and conferencing staff and shared these results with the BGM Executive Committee. Finally, I conducted a formal evaluation of the Baptist/Muslim Dialogue event held the previous year and forwarded these very positive results to the Department of Development.

AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN IN MINISTRY & TRANSITION MINISTRIES

ABWIM

Vision: ABWIM seeks the full participation and 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.

A couple of highlights:

- **Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges** - This initiative began in response to an invitation from Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili of the Evangelical Baptist Church to build relationships with Baptist women in ministry in the Republic of Georgia, where the beginnings of Christianity are traced back to the work and witness of a woman, “Saint Nino.” The focus for this initiative has been on breaking barriers that deny, diminish, and denigrate women and religious minorities, marring the image of God each person bears, and building bridges amongst groups that have been marginalized or denied place in the power structure of society. This spring we returned. One of the projects coming out of this is translating the brochure, “Biblical Basis for Equal Partnership” into Georgian. We hope to get it translated into other languages as well.
- **Celebrating Ministering Women: Radical. Redeemed. Ready.** - ABWIM in partnership with AB Women’s Ministries is planning a conference to celebrate the rich legacy of women in ministry and to work towards a future where all God’s people—men and women—can fully live out their call to ministry. This denomination-wide celebration marking **the 40th anniversary of the birth of the Women in Ministry Project**, which grew out of the first Women in Ministry conference in 1980, will be held at Green Lake Conference Center **June 16 – 19, 2020. Everyone** is invited! There will be a promotional launch of the conference at the ABWIM “After Party” at the Biennial Mission Summit on Friday following the evening worship service. **Join us!**

TRANSITION MINISTRIES

The goal 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.

As this ministry resource continues to develop, Rev. Dr. Larry Swain continues to serve as the Transition Ministries Training Coordinator. Introductory training events have been held in NYS, Rhode Island and the Central Pacific Coast. We have currently been developing a Level I and Level II training along with a field education component. Level I training events have taken place in NYS, Rhode Island, and Indiana/Kentucky. The first Level II training recently took place in NYS. All have been well attended, and we continue to develop and strengthen this new component of Transition Ministries. Of particular note is that at the Biennial Mission Summit, Transition Ministries will be leading one of the Academy tracks and giving an overview of the training. *If your region would like to host a training event, please contact me.*

In both of these ministry resource areas –ABWIM and Transition Ministries—I am thankful for the wisdom, guidance and support of General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Lee Spitzer, the ABCUSA Leadership Team, the ABWIM Advisory Team and the Board of General Ministries—without whom none of this could happen. Thank-you!

Patricia P. Hernandez, Associate General Secretary, ABWIM and Transition Ministries

June 2019 BGM Report from Kevin Walden
Associate General Secretary for Congregational and Pastoral Effectiveness

The big project being worked on right now is Orientation to American Baptist Life. I am pleased to report our current numbers: 83 New Ministers; 18 Seminarians for a total of 102 plus 10 Guests / Spouses of OTABL participants. We have participation from 29 of our 33 regions, which I think is exceptional.

I continue to work with the planning team: Drs. Harry Riggs (Connecticut); Robert Cochran (DC Baptist Conv.) and Mary Miller (TABCOM). I'm also working closely with the Office of Travel and Conference Planning.

Region	Number of Attendees
American Baptist Churches of Alaska	0
American Baptist Churches of the Central Region	3
Cleveland Baptist Association	0
American Baptist Churches of Connecticut	3
American Baptist Churches of Dakotas	1
District of Columbia Baptist Convention	7
Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches	5
American Baptist Churches of the Great Rivers Region	4
American Baptist Churches of Greater Indianapolis	2
Growing Healthy Churches	1
American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky	7
American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles, Southwest and Hawaii	11
American Baptist Churches of Maine	2
The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts	8
American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago	3
American Baptist Churches of Metro New York	6
American Baptist Churches of Michigan	3
Mission Northwest	0
Mid-American Baptist Churches	1
American Baptist Churches of Nebraska	4
American Baptist Churches of New Jersey	5
American Baptist Churches of New York State	7
American Baptist Churches of Ohio	2
American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast	5
American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware	3
Philadelphia Baptist Association	2
American Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico (ibpr)	3
American Baptist Churches of Rhode Island	2
American Baptist Churches of the Rochester/Genesee Region	5
American Baptist Churches of Rocky Mountains	2
American Baptist Churches of the South	0
American Baptist Churches of Vermont and New Hampshire	0
West Virginia Baptist Convention	2
American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin	3
Total Attendees and Guests/Spouses	112

Board of General Ministries Update – June, 2019
Missional Initiatives & Partnerships

Creation Justice

We have worked with ecoAmerica and a professional production team to complete the ABC Creation Justice Video. The video will be shown during the Biennial Sunday morning service. We will also launch the Creation Justice Congregation program during the Biennial to encourage churches to implement ecojustice measures to reduce their climate impact. CJN is working on a project to gather information and create a special page on our website to highlight the creation justice work ABC Churches are doing across the country.

ABCUSA was one of the sponsors for ecoAmerica's American Climate Leadership Summit in Washington DC in May. We were highlighted during the plenary as one of the denominations who are leading on climate issues.

Now that the CJN has picked up momentum, they are challenged by the fact that they are coming to the close of the grant cycle. The steering committee is committed to doing the work but will need the financial support to do so effectively.

Civil Discourse

I was invited to a convening of Christian leaders at the National Institute for Civil Discourse in May. This was a great opportunity to brainstorm and set a vision for the faith community's participation in strategic civil discourse activities during the upcoming election season. We will share these initiatives with our regions and congregations in early Fall.

I facilitated a Civil Discourse and Theology workshop in Cleveland for their annual meeting and an Introduction to Civil Discourse presentation for the Minister's Council in Rhode Island this Spring. Looking forward to working with other regions in the Fall.

Dr. Carolyn Lukensmeyer will do a short training at the Biennial as part of the Mission Summit Conversations.

Additional Activities

I participated in the discovery and advocacy trip to Myanmar and Malaysia with members of the Burma Refugee Commission. This was an opportunity for all the partners to do missions together. We returned and worked together on an article for the Christian Citizen and will continue to seek opportunities to advocate for our Burmese brothers and sisters.

I coordinated the Asian Alliance's visit to OGS in March. The new leadership of the Asian Alliance met with the staff of OGS and shared their agenda for growth of the ministry. Together we identified areas in which we can support the work of the Asian Alliance moving forward.

I have been working with a team to plan the Biennial Youth Conference – Beach Break. Youth leaders from across the country will worship, teach and preach on the theme, "Lessons at the Seashore." We will create an atmosphere for youth to have a unique encounter with Christ and exposure to ABC life.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marsha Scipio

ABCUSA Matthew 25 Grant

Working as part of the Matthew 25 Grant Discernment Team has been a highlight of my time in the Office of the General Secretary. Since I began working with MRD in October 2015, we have awarded 258 grants for a total disbursement of \$385,533.76.

We have not received a gift from the anonymous donor since November 7, 2017. Several letters, which provide updates and praise reports, have been sent to him. Unfortunately, there has not been a reply. The current balance of the Matthew 25 Grant fund is \$22,328.41.

When the last gift was received, we were asked by the donor to prioritize requests that focused on helping children. With the limited funds available, and in consultation with Kelly Legg, the Board of General Ministries representative on the Discernment Team, we have decided to limit applications to “internal ministries of American Baptist churches in good standing with their region which have a direct impact on children.” This will limit the applications we receive and allow us to award more than a few hundred dollars to these ministries.

I will continue to reach out to the donor but if no further donations are received, this will be the last round of Matthew 25 Grants. I will keep you apprised of the situation in the coming year.



Exciting things are happening at the American Baptist Historical Society!

- The *At Your Fingertips* capital campaign was intended to increase accessibility of ABHS collections. The first step in making archives accessible is cataloging, so that researchers may know what records are held in the archives. Since January, detailed inventories of fifty-seven collections have been added to the ABHS online catalog. In at least six cases, researchers have made appointments to consult specific documents within two weeks of those catalog records being uploaded to ArchivesSpace.
- ABHS made our first major equipment purchase using *At Your Fingertips* funds: a microfilm conversion scanner. The scanner allows us to convert microfilm into digital files. Once digitized, these documents can be quickly and easily accessed and shared. Digitizing from microfilm is quicker and less labor-intensive than digitizing the original documents, and allows us to protect the originals from over-handling. Our microfilm collections include International Ministries missionary correspondence, ABHMS organizational records, numerous 19th-century Baptist periodicals, and some congregational records.
- ABHS received a gift of two new computers and wide-screen monitors. One of the computers is dedicated to a book scanner and a flatbed scanner. The second computer will be set up as a media scanning station to convert audio and video recordings. We are looking forward to the exciting discoveries that await as these collections become more accessible.
- Early records of First Baptist Church of Philadelphia held by ABHS are now available online at PhiladelphiaCongregations.org. Their digitization has been done as part of an archival project spearheaded by Christ Church Preservation Trust underwritten by a grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The work of digitizing ABHS's Philadelphia FBC records is worth over \$15,000.
- We are working with teams from ABHMS and IM who are designing exhibits for their new offices. Historical Society staff have provided information and counsel regarding the display and care of artifacts (originals) and documents (reproductions), and recommendations regarding artifacts and documents from their collections.
- Priscilla Eppinger serves on the Theologians' Commission and has participated in planning the 5th Theologians Conference for the ABC Mission Summit in Virginia Beach.
- We have received numerous donations to the archival collections from individuals. In conjunction with moving offices, ABC/USA, ABHMS, and IM have transferred several decades of records.
- One of our priorities is to ensure that often-neglected and marginalized groups within our Baptist family are not erased from history. We are working to expand and deepen collections related to women clergy, racial/ethnic minorities, and AWAB.

While our financial position is strong, expansion of collections and the digitization project require increased funding. We invite *you*, ABHS corporate board members, to join in our ministry by becoming Historical Society members. At the ABHS breakfast in Virginia Beach we will celebrate the culmination of the *At Your Fingertips* campaign; it's not too late for you to contribute to this cutting-edge project!

Respectfully submitted,
Priscilla E. Eppinger
Executive Director
June 2019

May 15, 2019



Dear Dr. Spitzer and Members of the Board of General Ministries,

In its second year of transition, the Ministers Council is settling into its new volunteer reality, still focused upon the goal:

"... to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of full stature of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-12

Among other activities, this transition included the:

- move of our national office to the Baptist Church of West Chester, Pennsylvania;
- employment of a part time Member Services Coordinator (Lisa Simpson);
- approval of changes to our by-laws reflective of our new reality;
- adoption of a balanced budget for 2019 eliminating the heavy draw on our endowment.

Organizationally, we have moved from an annual to a biennial business meeting and are establishing ambassadors to represent the Council and maintain relationships with regional and national American Baptist groups. We continue in our full commitment to American Baptist Churches USA, regions, and churches and will cooperate in every way within our means with programs and emphases.

In addition to offering seasonal devotions and prayer groups, the Ministers Council continues to sponsor:

- MC Live – monthly web-casts on topics related to ministerial concerns;
- a monthly newsletter with a wide distribution;
- Together In Ministry Grants to local collegial covenant groups;
- Local Chapter efforts to make connections among members.

We will be present at the Mission Summit in Virginia Beach and will sponsor a Ministers Council event Thursday, June 20, entitled, "Servants of the Jubilee."

With God's guidance, we will remain a vital and effective means of encouraging excellence in ministerial leadership.

Yours,

Darla Turlington, President and Randolph Miller, Vice President and President-elect

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AMERICAN BAPTIST MEN USA LAYMEN'S MINISTRY REPORT 2018

As we move toward that time that we will gather for the 2019 ABC USA Biennial, we have much to report and many blessings to talk about as God continues to find a great purpose in the volunteer ministry and mission of M.E.N. (Mentoring, Evangelism, Nurturing). ABMen was very busy in 2018.

Our year began with teams of volunteers traveling to Puerto Rico and join with others participating in the "Rebuilding, Restoring and Renewing" ABC commitment of support. ABMen ministries sponsored the first of 4 mission trips in 2018 to Puerto Rico February 2 thru the 23rd, assessing and then working on many of local churches, which were destroyed or damaged. The effort is to be an ongoing ABMen USA commitment to coordinate similar mission trips for some time to come.

The ABMen USA Executive Committee met at Camp Moses Merrill in Nebraska March 21-24 in conjunction the Disaster Relief Ministry training meetings which are held every other year.

ABMen Executive Director, Lucky Ray represented ABMen USA at the 2018 National Leadership Council (NLC) meeting at Green Lake in April. A great gathering of leaders dedicated their time and energy discussing the various activities, current conditions and needs of the various Regions. We also spent time working on special policy and organizational issues.

For our 7th year, ABMen sponsored their 2018 spring Green Lake 'Work Party' also in April which was well attended by volunteers wishing to support ABMen ministries. ABMen volunteers completed many projects for the benefit of Green Lake.

May through October was very busy while various members of the Executive Committee participated in men's retreats, workshops and events nationwide (ABC of the Dakota's Region, Nebraska Region, Big Sky Region, Central Region, West Virginia Baptist Convention, ABCOPAD Region, ABCOTS Region, ABC of the Great Rivers Region).

In August, Executive Directory Ray and Disaster Relief National Coordinator, Jack Cobb representing ABMen USA along with George Bradury representing the ABMen of West Virginia traveled to Sellers, South Carolina following continuing flooding. The men presented the Mayor of Sellers, Barbara Hopkins, with over 50 large bags of clothing and \$900 in cash collected through an immediate "call" of need. The community of Sellers was very appreciative of ABMen USA's continuing efforts of support over the past several years. Never knowing the true influence of our time serving in these recovery needs, during this trip the men were blessed with a report about a young man several men had tried to mentor, who has significantly turned his life around. Praise God!

In September the National Board of ABMen ministries met at Green Lake and finalized plans for reorganization of its national ministry structure, which was subsequently unanimously approved at the following 2018 National Conference.

The reorganization established 9 specific ministries:



Following the National Board meeting, the ABMen USA National Conference and Annual Meeting were also held at Green Lake September 7-9. The theme was **"HOW to be the Hands and Feet of Christ"** with Dr. Jerry Cain, past president of Judson University as the keynote speaker. Rev. Dr. Kevin Walden, Associate General Secretary of Congregational and Pastoral Effectiveness, also spoke in place of Dr. Lee Spitzer, ABC USA General Secretary, due to a sudden medical emergency. Rev. Larry Dale of West Virginia also spoke on Sunday to the men, explaining that Jesus uses **"Crippled Hands and Dirty Feet"**. Anticipating wives may plan on attending with husbands, the men engaged the assistance of Gina Slechta to organize and host a full day of workshops (2) and outing for the women who chose to participate.

During the Annual Meeting, President Slechta formally recommended that Puerto Rico be recognized as the 14th District of the American Baptist Men USA national men's ministries and that Julio Quiros, be recognized as President of the ABMen USA Puerto Rico Region (nominee) and Felipe Candelaria be

recognized as the ABMen USA District 14 Representative (nominee). This recommendation was approved UNANIMOUSLY and both men spoke to the men in appreciation of this formal designation by ABMen USA.

Following the conference, the ABMen sponsored fall "Work Party" continued at Green Lake for another week and was well attended by ABMen ministry volunteers. Later in the month, a group of ABMen from Janesville Baptist Church in Janesville, Wisconsin returned to work along side Green Lake staff to restore the on property "Hopevale Monument", established to remind of the missionaries martyred for Christ in the Philippines.

In September President Slechta and Executive Director Ray were asked and participated in the "Safe and Healthy Churches Training: Ending Family Violence" program in San Diego, CA along with other ABC leaders. ABMen USA is proud to be a member of the ABC USA "Task Force" that is assigned with the duties of providing future policies and procedures for our ABC churches to help identify and prevent Pastoral, Congregational and Family Abuse.

ABMen USA continues to encourage volunteers to support mission opportunities in Puerto Rico, Green Lake, Bacone (Muskogee, OK) and First Crow Indian Baptist Church (Lodge Grass, MT). Each of these will be long-term opportunities for our national men's ministry.

*Humbly Submitted on behalf of Kenna "Lucky" Ray
Executive Director ABMen USA
(Leave of Absence)*

Robert B. Slechta
President, ABMen USA - 2018
Interim Executive Director, ABMen USA - 2019