

**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 System, Building Management, AMOs -- June 2019 – November 2019

ABCUSA

- Prepared 2020 Budget for Board approval at November meeting
- Preparing for 2019 year-end closing
- 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
- Personnel supervision for Accounting, ABCIS, Building Management and Warehousing
- Finalized office relocation to new facility
- Finalized purchase of new office and construction plans
- ABCIS – Created new reports for ABCIS users, and working on updating receipting processes

Regions:

- Conferred with Regions and churches on financial and administrative issues
- Ongoing collecting agency responsibilities for 13 regions
- Continuing to perform accounting services for Philadelphia Baptist Association and Cleveland Baptist Association.

ASSOCIATED MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS

(AB Historical Society, AB Women's Ministries)

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

588 ASSOCIATES

- Coordinated relocation to new offices
- Continuing to work extensively with Mission Center consultants and legal counsel on sale plans
- 2018 Tax Returns; accounting functions
- ABF Relocated; Tenants – Finalized termination of Presser lease
- Insurance reviews/renewals
- Supervision of building administrative staff and day-to-day operations

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

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.

Some highlights:

Celebrating Ministering Women: Radical. Redeemed. Ready. June 16 – 19, 2020

This unique denomination-wide celebration marking the 40th anniversary of the birth of the **Women in Ministry Project** will be held at Green Lake Conference Center. *Everyone* is invited! Planning is well underway with hopes to have registration open by December 1. Plan to register and bring a friend!

“After Party” – Biennial Mission Summit – Following the Friday evening service of the opening night of the Biennial, more than 100 people gathered for a promotional launch of the *Celebrating Ministering Women* conference. Featuring Rev. Dr. Marie Onwubuariri as the DJ and highlighting women *Sheroes* present and past, this was an energetic and enthusiastic launch and celebration of Ministering Women!

WomenWord – a new issue produced in time for the Biennial focuses on the upcoming Celebrating Ministering Women conference featuring a variety of voices and perspectives. Pick up an issue!

BICTE/BWA - participated in the Baptist International Conference on Theological Education whose theme was TOGETHER: Re-Imaging, Re-Reading HERSTORY in the Church, and presented a paper on Women in Ministry at the Commission on Gender, Racial and Economic Justice.

Chin Christian University – earlier this year I was able to travel to Myanmar at the invitation of Rev. Dr. Henry Siang Kung, President of the Chin Christian, to connect with women MDiv students who are looking for support and longing for models of women in ministry.

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 previously noted, we have begun to offer training events to develop intentional interim ministers who can help to guide churches during times of transition. An overview of the training was offered as one of the Academy tracks at the Biennial Mission Summit.

As many of you know, Rev. Dr. Larry Swain who had been serving as the Transition Ministries Training Coordinator recently passed away. Larry had been very committed to developing the new training events and this emphasis will continue as a legacy that he leaves.

In both of these ministry resource areas, 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

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

Creation Justice

The Creation Justice video debuted at the Biennial. Members of the Creation Justice Network have shared the video with several congregations who are interested in creation care. The video allowed us to officially launch the *Become a Creation Justice Congregation* initiative to encourage churches to register their creation care efforts with ABCUSA and to inspire those churches who are new to creation justice efforts to join the network. We worked with Bridget Lipin to create a Creation Justice portal on the ABCUSA website for churches and pastors to access educational resources.

The Creation Justice Network is determined to continue the great work they have started on behalf of the denomination though they have come to the end of the funding cycle from BGM. CJN has applied for a grant from ABHMS and is exploring other funding opportunities. We are excited to welcome Rev. Rebecca Driscoll as the new Minister for Creation Justice. She will work closely with the CJN to develop programming and outreach to churches across the country.

ABCUSA continues our partnership with Blessed Tomorrow. We are working together to develop webinars and Creation Care ambassador training.

Civil Discourse

In collaboration with the National Institute of Civil Discourse and other religious organizations, we launched Golden Rule 2020 on November 3rd. This initiative is to engage the faith community in promoting civility during the election season. Clergy can go to our website and access teaching and preaching resources related to the Golden Rule to share with their congregations. For ABC this will serve as a launching pad to introduce more regions and pastors to our Civil Discourse work.

Chestnut Street Baptist Fund

I convened a meeting with OGS, IM, ABHMS and Asian Alliance to discuss the distribution of the funds from Chestnut Street Baptist Church. OGS has established the Chestnut Street Baptist Church Endowment Fund to support Asian ministries in compliance with the decision of the Philadelphia Attorney General and the Court of Common Pleas. Approximately \$19,000 will be distributed annually from the fund to support different projects as discerned by the selection committee. The group decided in year one each partner would receive up to \$3800 to provide scholarships to those who do not have the resources to attend ABC gatherings. The following year, the team will reconvene to decide how to disseminate funds for 2021. The goal in 2021 is to provide funding for specific programs.

Additional Activities

In July, I represented ABCUSA at the Disciples of Christ Annual Gathering as one of their ecumenical partners. The ecumenical partners were introduced on opening night at the General Assembly and then we were invited to a meet and greet with the General Secretary.

In October, I served as one of the keynote speakers for TABCOM's Mission Works conference. I spoke on "Hope in the Unseen on the Mission Field." I also presented two workshops: one on the four ABC offerings and United Mission and the second on ABC's work with refugees in Myanmar and Malaysia.

I attended the National Council of Churches Unity Gathering. This was a great opportunity to reflect on the Quadrennial – the 400 years since slavery began in the United States. I had the privilege of participating in the ceremony of remembrance at Point Comfort, VA. I served as proxy for Dr. Spitzer at the NCC board meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Marsha Scipio

Board of General Ministries Report**By: Kevin A. Walden, Associate General Secretary for Congregational and Pastoral Effectiveness****Re: Updated Report of Activities****OTABL Update:**

We completed the 2019 Orientation to American Baptist Life (OTABL) programming after gathering together at the 2019 ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The 2019 cohort was comprised of 107 participants: seminarians (19) and new ministers (76) and their guests (12), who represented 29 of our 33 American Baptist regions. The OTABL program included three pre-Biennial Mission Summit webinars and attendance at the 2019 ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit.

The three ninety minute webinars, held in March, April, and May, provided the participants an opportunity to learn from, interact with, and ask questions about the denominational family's mission and ministry partners. The webinars featured presentations by: the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary, the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, American Baptist International Ministries, American Baptist Men USA, American Baptist Women's Ministries, the ABCUSA Ministers Council, Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board Financial Services, and the Regional Executive Ministers.

At the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit, the OTABL cohort participated in mentor groups led by regional executive staff members. These mentor groups met four times and focused on sharing some simple ideas for exploring their faith and encouraging healthy and effective ministry. In addition, the Biennial portion of OTABL included a Sunday morning breakfast presentation by ABCUSA General Secretary Dr. Lee B. Spitzer; and opportunities for participants to attend Biennial programming such as workshops, plenary sessions, and worship services.

A special thank you to this year's OTABL mission sponsors for making our programming, travel, and accommodations possible through their generous support: Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board Financial Services, United Mission, the American Baptist Home Mission Societies and Judson Press, and International Ministries.

Accounting Outcomes: The income/revenue numbers have not all posted to the OTABL line item. We began with a reserve of \$39,375 left over from the 2017 event. The final UM contribution will not be final until the end of the 2019 audit; but is estimated to come in around \$31,000. We had estimated \$40,000 for the UM contribution. My best estimate is that we will have around \$10,000 as a reserve for the next event. By far our largest expense was the travel piece at just under \$96,000.

We have already started brainstorming about income sources for a 2021 event.

This is the second time that OTABL programming has been incorporated into the ABCUSA Biennial Mission Summit events. There is considerable advice from regional executives and the partner organizations to consider going back to a stand alone event. I believe more conversations are needed by contributing partners before a decision is made.

OTABL Advisory Team:

Rev. Dr. Kevin Walden (Coordinator), OGS
Rev. Dr. Robert Cochran, DC Baptist Convention
Rev. Dr. Mary Miller, The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts
Rev. Dr. Harry Riggs, The American Baptist Churches of Connecticut

Regional Mentors:

Rev. Soozi Ford, ABC Indiana/Kentucky
Rev. Marlene Gil, TABCOM
Rev. Dr. Jeffrey, ABCOPAD

Rev. Dr. Isaac Castaneda, ABC Metro New York
Rev. Doug Hubbard, ABCOFLASH
Rev. Dr. Andre Towner, DC Baptist Convention

Representing ABCUSA at National, Regional, and local church Events

This summer I attended an informational and organizational meeting of some ABC Camps, which was hosted in Nebraska. There was a very good spirit and a desire to work more together in the future.

75th Anniversary of Green Lake Conference Center in August. I was honored to represent ABCUSA and the Office of the General Secretary at the 75th Anniversary of Green Lake Conference Center in August. My parents joined me for the celebration. My father, Fred Walden, had been sponsored by his church 70 years ago to attend a youth camp at Green Lake, and his story was highlighted in the anniversary magazine.

I participated in a Fresh Expressions Vision Day in the ABC of Massachusetts (TABCOM). They are the newest region seriously planning on implementing some Fresh Expressions of ministry. The region and local churches have backed this up financially with commitments to fund experiments.

This fall I have attended and represented ABCUSA and the Office of the General Secretary at the ABC Ohio and ABC Wisconsin Annual meetings. ABC Wisconsin was celebrating their 150th anniversary and Rev. Dr. Priscilla E. Eppinger, ABHS Executive Director asked me to present their certificate.

Also this fall I joined co-Executive Minister, Rev. Jane Gibbons of ABC Ohio in celebrating the 200th anniversary of First Baptist Church of Hubbard, Ohio. Rev. Luke and Katie Oskin are pastors. Rev. Luke requested that I come in costume, so I preached in a fairly authentic preacher costume from the 1800's. It was a truly wonderful celebration, and extremely well attended. Dr. Eppinger also asked me to present the Historical Societies certificate to the Hubbard Church.

Occasionally I am asked to speak at pastor conferences, and that is the case this October for the Vermont/New Hampshire "Rekindle the Fire" conference. I will be speaking on "Discipleship and Church Growth."

Board of General Ministries Report

Regional Ministries Activity (June thru November of 2019)

After twenty years of service as executive minister of the **ABC of Michigan**, Rev. Dr. Michael Williams has announced his retirement. I have been working with the seventeen-member search committee to extend a call to their next executive minister by the end of the year. Robert Cochran has also announced his retirement from the **DC Baptist Convention** effective March of 2020. I am also providing facilitation services for this search committee that should post their position announcement soon.

In addition, I regularly provide facilitation for a number of small groups and task forces related to our executive ministers. Most recently, I have been asked to facilitate a change process for a program called **"Face to Face"** that seeks to bring together potential candidates and local church search committees in the same setting so that they can get acquainted with one another and explore the possibilities of a future call. This happens to be a program that I helped to launch with now deceased Rev. Sandra Heizer over twenty years ago. Over time, trends and technology influenced this event, which is in need of a new vision. We identified criteria for success, assessed willingness to change, surfaced and evaluated format changes and future scenarios and are refining the prioritized option.

The **Regional Executive Ministers Council** held an impactful continuing education event in conjunction with the Biennial Mission Summit. Rachel Meyer presented highlights from ten years of working with pastors on clergy health. During my monthly column to the REMC, I am continuing to supplement information from this presentation as well as the MMBB complementary presentation from Matt Bloom. Our executive ministers are being encouraged to provide a model of self-care for our ABC pastors. Our executive ministers provide outstanding service to their congregations, pastors, and boards. Take a moment to give a word of encouragement and appreciation to your executive minister.

As time allows, I also provide several **local church consultations** every year at the request of the corresponding executive ministers. In the last six months, I assisted the First Baptist Church of Indianapolis with their restructuring process, provided healthy church seminars and retreats for a church in Ohio, and two congregations in New Jersey, and a congregation in New York State.

At our **Biennial Mission Summit**, 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 Mission Summit Conversations, provided staffing for the executive ministers, retired executives, and CCUIR banquets, and assisted with setting up the OGS display where I learned that building construction is not one of my spiritual gifts!

The next round of the national survey called **"Faith Communities Today"** will be distributed in 2020 and will include American Baptists in their distribution. The planning team met in August to review the final version of the survey. I have helped to formulate this survey since the year 2000 and it remains the largest and most complete survey of congregations in the United States.

C. Jeff Woods
Regional Ministries

ABCUSA Matthew 25 Grant

As I mentioned in June, we have not received a gift from the anonymous donor since November 2017. With only \$22,400 in funds available, and in consultation with Kelly Legg, the Board of General Ministries representative on the Discernment Team, we 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 limited the applications we received to twelve and allowed us to award more than a few hundred dollars to these ministries.

Nine grants ranging from \$1,300 to \$3,500 for a total of \$22,400, were awarded in October. The ministries which received grants include those which: furnish weekend meals to children who receive free or reduced cost meals at school; purchase backpacks for school supplies for children of low income families; provide weekly meals for homeless and disadvantaged people; provide supplies and snacks for an after school program; purchase diapers and hygiene items for families in need; and purchase new clothing for a children and youth community closet in an area hit hard by the economy.

Unless we receive another gift from the donor, this was our last round of Matthew 25 Grants. Working as part of the Matthew 25 Grant Discernment Team has been the highlight of my time in the Office of the General Secretary. It is especially fulfilling to read the followup reports submitted by recipients and to hear how we were able to help the lives of so many through the generosity of one donor. These stories can be found on our website [here](#) (or by searching the ABCUSA website for Grant Funding Stories).

Tina M. Kiernan
United Mission Coordinator



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AMERICAN BAPTIST MEN USA LAYMEN'S MINISTRY REPORT

ABMen has much to report and many blessings to share as God continues to find a great purpose in the volunteer ministry and mission of MEN. 2019 began with leadership and ministry development following our reorganization of ministries.

- Leadership Development
- Spiritual & Prayer
- Men's Ministry Development
- Historical & Records
- Disaster Relief
- Finance & Investment
- Communication & Media
- Governance
- NEW- Work Party Ministry

The men continue to assist volunteer teams traveling to Puerto Rico to join the "Rebuilding, Restoring and Renewing" ABC commitment of support. ABMen has coordinated 7 trips to Puerto Rico since February 2018. Anticipated to be an ongoing commitment for some time into the future, ABMen have formally established Puerto Rico as its 14th District of ministry nationally with Julio Quiros, recognized as President of the ABMen Puerto Rico Region and Felipe Candelaria recognized as the ABMen District 14 Representative.

ABMen, with assistance from ABC USA and ABHMS, purchased and later deployed two new ministry shower & laundry trailers to Nebraska and New Jersey. This equipment has been a blessing to those in need, saving members of one community a 40 plus-mile round trip to shower and launder their clothing as they continue their rebuilding.

ABMen hosted its National Men's Breakfast at the 2019 Biennial where approximately 80 men participated in fellowship and heard how God is working all through our ministry. The men were blessed to hear Pastor Carl Ratcliff of United Faith Community Church in Valley, NE speak to the ways God has laid hands on his church and community during the flooding. Many friends were made throughout the conference. Ministry work parties, Green Lake work party, and Regional Men's conferences and ongoing flood ministry relief work has taken up most of August through October nationally.

ABMen Executive Director, Kenna "Lucky" Ray attending its National Board Meetings in July in Nebraska announced his resignation due to continued health concerns first experienced on a 2018 mission trip to Puerto Rico. Upon his recommendation, the National Board appointed Bob Slechta as Executive Director at that time. The Board placed a statement into record at the meeting thanking Lucky for his leadership, dedication and service. Lucky continues in his treatments and is in all of our prayers.

Finally, ABMen USA President William Morningstar, having worked with Dr. Lee Spitzer and Dr. Kevin Walden, announced to the National Board that ABMen will have a physical presence once again within the offices of ABC USA in the new Robert A. Roblee Building in King of Prussia, PA. We look forward to having a ministry to men and boys, in conjunction with all ABC USA ministry partners, as we look toward the celebration of 100 YEARS OF AB MENS MINISTRY in 2021.

Bob Slechta - ABMen USA Executive Director



October 11, 2019

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

Ministers Council ABCUSA was pleased to be visibly present at the Mission Summit in Virginia Beach in June. Our Board meeting, Annual Meeting, and a "Servants of the Jubilee" event for all ministerial leaders preceded the Summit.

We discovered that Biblical jubilee is most clearly discerned when put into action, so we have taken an extraordinary step of faith by declaring the year 2020 as a Year of Jubilee, suspending the national dues for 2020 and inviting all American Baptist ministerial leaders to freely become members of the national Ministers Council. We encourage those of you who are clergy to take advantage of this opportunity and invite all of you to spread the word. Send those interested to www.ministerscouncil.com from November 1 on to see how to register for the free membership year.

Highlights:

- Monthly newsletter and webinar that interface with other ABC ministries;
- Grants to 16 "Together in Ministry" groups and expansion of that effort in 2020;
- Conference call connections re the revitalization of struggling chapters;
- Start of a year-long examination of potential revisions to the Code of Ethics.

We sense a positive appreciation among members of changes made and emphases embraced. We give thanks to OGS, IM and ABHMS for welcoming our volunteer representatives to denominational meetings and for acknowledging our President at national gatherings.

Yours,

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

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