

## **BGM Item 4A:**

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

**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, OTC, Associated Ministry Organizations (AMOs) – **November 2022 – June 2023**

**ABCUSA:**

- Preparing proposed 2024 Budget
- Finalized ABCUSA 2022 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 2023 Biennial Mission Summit
- Personnel supervision for Accounting, ABCIS, Office of Travel and Conference Planning, and Building
- Applied for Employee Retention Credit
- Attended NLC meetings in Green Lake and provided update about NetSuite Implementation status

- **ABCIS:**

**ABCIS to Oracle NetSuite Conversion Update**

The initial Oracle NetSuite implementation is complete. The system is working properly as intended. NetSuite is dynamic, and we intend to improve our processes and fully use its capabilities.

We went live on November 15, 2022. It took two years to go live. A usual NetSuite implementation takes at most six months. But because of the complexity of how we operate, it required an extended period to configure the system and write the scripts.

The old ABCIS legacy system is still accessible and temporarily available through the Microsoft Edge browser. We don't know how long Microsoft will continue providing this workaround after discontinuing Internet Explorer as of February this year.

Since January, all the mission receipts and distribution have been processed through Oracle NetSuite. The receipting and distribution module is functioning properly after parallel testing for two months during November and December.

All historical receipts for the churches and donors were uploaded, going back as far as 1983.

It was challenging migrating data from our legacy system to NetSuite. It was tedious and time-consuming.

We provided several training sessions to users in NetSuite. The training sessions were recorded and available for review for those unable to attend the live training. We will continue providing training as needed. Our goal is to ensure that all users get comfortable using the system.

The old ABCIS system has approximately 400 custom reports. Many of the reports provide the same information in different formats. We already have some reports in NetSuite. Additional reports are being created.

Some of the regions started updating their churches' annual reports in NetSuite. At the end of May, 643 churches' annual reports were updated in NetSuite for 2022. Ultimately, we aim to have the churches complete their annual reports online into NetSuite.

**OFFICE OF TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE PLANNING:**

The Office of Travel & Conference Planning continues to support MMBB and International Ministries, as well as, meetings sponsored by ABCUSA/Office of the General Secretary.

The Hospitality Industry continues to evolve in a positive direction. OTCP continues to plan many successful in-person meetings. Hotels are open for business and ready to serve. Depending on the time of the year and location, we are finding hotels to be sold out. Attendees continue to meet in person however, still consider Zoom or Hybrid meetings from time to time.

Planned for the Biennial Mission Summit and Board of General Ministries Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico (June 2023).

**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)

- Prepared 2022 Audits
- Accounting functions, ongoing consultations, insurance reviews, renewals, re: financial and operational matters
- Planned and prepared converting from using MIP to NetSuite for financial reporting
- Represented ABCUSA/QGS and NEC at ABHS board of managers meetings

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

June 2023  
Report to the Board of General Ministries  
Interim Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries

Status of regional searches for executive ministers:

- ABC of the Dakotas – A new search process was initiated following the January resignation of Dr. Dan Cash. The region board extended a call to Dr. Aaron Kilbourn, who begins on June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ABC of Greater Indianapolis – The search team expects to recommend a candidate to the region board by mid-June.
- ABC of Nebraska – The search team has been gathering information and expects to post the position opening by mid-July.
- ABC of Pennsylvania and Delaware – Dr. Jeff Woods and I will conduct an orientation session for the search team in mid-June.
- ABC of Vermont/New Hampshire – The region board expects to name a search committee in early fall.
- Cleveland Baptist Association – The search team, staffed by Dr. Jeff Woods, is receiving applications through the end of June.

Monthly Zoom calls, offered for executive ministers, continue. Recent topics have included Intercultural Ministries resources (ABHMS staff); The Generosity Project (Dr. Stacey Emerson); and Transitional Ministries (Dr. Patricia Hernandez.) Following the unexpected passing of a cherished ABC colleague, Rev. Dr. Yvonne Martinez-Thorne was invited to assist the group in processing their grief and identifying steps for self-care.

The REMC met at Green Lake in May and celebrated the upcoming retirements of Rev. Joan Friesen of ABC of Greater Indianapolis (July 1<sup>st</sup>) and Rev. Dale Edwards of Vermont/New Hampshire (September 1<sup>st</sup>.)

I provided a brief orientation for Rev. Gilbert Foster (Growing Healthy Churches) earlier in the year. In March, I provided an in-person “what I still need to know” second-level orientation for several executives.

I have attended monthly Leadership Team meetings in King of Prussia. In March, I participated in the Prairie Pastors event in Omaha and was the guest preacher for an Indiana church’s annual Renewal Weekend.

I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve the wider ABC family during this season.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Soozi Whitten Ford

## Report from Associate General Secretary of Mission Resource Development

The position of Associate General Secretary of Mission Resource Development has been an enjoyable journey over the last eight months. My task has been to bring United Mission to the front in our Regions and our Churches. The primary way I have done this over these last several months has been through personal interviews with our Regional Executive Ministers. I have contacted all but a few of the thirty-three Regions. These contacts have included an interview with me asking the Executives what the status of United Mission is in the regions they serve. I asked, "What is working for your region in regards to United Mission?", "What is not working with UM in your region?", and "What can I do to help with making UM work for your particular region?" Every region executive I have talked with has shared good ideas and some positive feedback about how UM works. The many conversations brought many common themes. The major theme was a need for more resources highlighting the work of UM readily available for regions and churches. This includes complete transparency of how the dollars are spent and who participates in the distribution of funds. Our regions and churches need to feel a part of this mission. MRD staff are in the process of creating a United Mission Tool Kit on our website. We are compiling all of our resources concerning UM and putting them in one place on our website, clearly marked United Mission. This will also include a password protected section for Regional Executives to have access to resources that can be customized for their regions. The UM tool kit will include letters of support, sermon starters, charts, videos, and recorded webinars on stewardship and generosity. Some of the resources created by the Generosity Project will be included in the tool kit.

A new flagship video has already been created for our churches and regions. It is a two-minute video with a brief overview of United Mission and how it impacts our mission together. The video will be premiered at the 2023 Biennial Mission Summit in Puerto Rico. It will be available in English and Spanish.

The social media and email connections with our churches and regions have also been increased and will continue to grow. We are working on expanding and cleaning up our database for direct giving. We sent out an end of year appeal in November of 2022 and participated in the Giving Tuesday emphasis in 2022.

The second responsibility I have in this position is supporting the 2023 Biennial Mission Summit. MRD staff contacted all of our past exhibitors from past biennials, sent out invitations to those who

have sponsored the biennial in the past, and contacted the award-winning churches who will receive recognition at the biennial.

The final area I work with is in with advocacy for religious freedom specifically in Burma and India. This has taken me to my second International Religious Freedom Summit. There were over 40 different faiths in attendance, and over 1000 people from all over the world. The ABCUSA group was able to present a workshop concerning Burma and speak into the anti-conversion laws being passed in India. Along with the summit I have been able to visit with Senators, Representatives, and members of the State Department about the Burma Act of 2021. Currently working to get our Burmese Diaspora brothers and sisters in front of their state's representatives to fund the already passed and signed bill.

Locally, in the Kansas City area, I have connected with the Chin Community of Kansas. This has led me to working with CCK in getting support from local government and ABC partners for an after-school tutoring program for their children.

There is much work to do, and I am excited and passionate about this call on my life. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Rev. Dr. Robin D. Stoops

## **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:**

- Prairie Pastors Conference – gathering of women in ministry
- Sister Circle – online gathering of women in ministry; presented on barriers to calls
- Partnered with DCBC for WIM luncheon to support and encourage
- Women's History Month presentation on the changing landscape of WIM
- Presented workshop at ABWM/NYS on gifts and callings
- Planned and participated in the 67<sup>th</sup> UN Commission on the Status of Women with Ecumenical Women and a BWA delegation of women leaders from around the world

#### **Noteworthy:**

- **New Stoles** with the ABWIM logo and ABCUSA logo are being made in Puerto Rico. A small sample was available at the Radical. Redeemed. Ready conference. Stop by the ABCUSA booth at the Biennial
- **“After Party”** at the Biennial – Fun and Festive celebration featuring “Live” music in the spirit of Puerto Rico and celebrating our Puerto Rican sisters in ministry. **Join us!**

### **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.

**Training** – Rev. Dr. William Tatum, Transition Ministries Training Coordinator, led an online training event for intentional interim ministry last year. Given the positive responses, 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**

We have been renewing and refreshing a website that includes resources for those seeking to deepen spiritual practices as well as for certified Spiritual Directors to connect. Check it out at: [www.abspiritualformation.com](http://www.abspiritualformation.com) A link to it is also located on the ABCUSA home website.

**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 General Secretary Rev. Dr. Jeff Woods, 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. Hernandez, AGS ABWIM & Transition Ministries ABCUSA**

Ministry Report  
Ministers Council, ABC-USA  
Submitted by Rev. Dr. Matthew Sturtevant, President

### **Covenant and Code of Ethics**

We are excited to announce that the Ministers Council has updated the Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of ABC-USA. Over the course of 2021 and 2022, a diverse team led by Jacki Belile created listening sessions and creative conversations in conjunction with our local chapters. Language was crafted and discerned in community, and was voted on for approval by those same chapters. The updated language was overwhelmingly approved, and on February 1, 2023, we began using the new update. Region staff leadership has already begun using this updated language, and the NLC held a ceremonial joint signing of the document in their May meeting. The team continues to work on a Learning Guide that will accompany the use of the document, and will be available in multiple languages.

### **Clergy and Chapter Health**

Following the disruption of the pandemic, many local Ministers Council chapters have found themselves in need of development and reinvigoration. The Leadership Team is working with these chapters, often in conjunction with Region staff, to strengthen leadership and build momentum. Excellence in Ministry grants continue to be awarded for those chapters seeking support. Meanwhile, clergy health remains a priority after the pandemic, through the use of Together in Ministry grants, continuation of programming such as MC Live (every third Thursday), and development of new and creative ways to connect and support clergy.

### **Biennial Program**

On June 22, from 9:30 to 1:30, we will be hosting a program at the Biennial in San Juan. Our speaker, Rev. Juan Angel Gutierrez Rodriguez will be speaking on "Collegiality for Such a Time as This: Baptist Covenants for Following Jesus and Resisting Evil." The program will include his reflections, worship, round table conversations, and a luncheon. In addition, the Ministers Council has been able to give several dozen scholarships to clergy to attend the Biennial. Many participants will be afforded the opportunity to attend their first Biennial!

### **Transitions**

The Ministers Council held elections last Fall and our new iteration of the Leadership Team began January 1, 2023. I am thankful for the tireless work of my predecessor, Rev. Randy Miller, and the contributions of those Leadership Team members who have helped make the transition smooth. Meanwhile, we also have seen the transition of our former Program Administrator, Michele Turek, into a position with ABHMS, and in March we welcomed Rev. Dr. Valerie Andrews into that role. Rev. Dr. Andrews is passionate about the work of supporting clergy, and has been a wonderful addition to the team.