



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF
LOS ANGELES, SOUTHWEST AND HAWAII

2019 ANNUAL MINISTRY REPORT*



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EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT

Rev. Andy Quient

Dear Friends,

Way back on June 20, 1974, I was a foreign exchange student in the bush country of South Western Australia, standing with my entire senior high school class of about 50 on a rocky hill that rested on a remote peninsula of land jetting out between the Indian and Southern Oceans. Joining us was an international cadre of astronomers. What were we all doing there? It was the only land mass from which a total solar eclipse was visible. I remember how it looked, and felt, before, during and after. As the moon blocked the sun, the temperature dropped, a cool breeze unfolded, the birds were silenced, and it got darker; it looked like the sun was setting from every direction. Then guess what happened? It got warmer, the birds resumed their singing, and it got lighter. The eclipse did not prevail.



Andy Quient

So what? If we are not vigilant, we can allow the Covid-19 virus, racial tensions, and political polarization to eclipse the blessings that God is continuing to provide. Technically, the purpose of the annual report is to let you know of our activities and the financial condition of our prior year, 2019. As we ministered, our events and meetings were well attended. We prospered financially and spiritually. Please read the attached treasurer's report for the details. 2019 was a good year.

2020 looked to be equally promising, at first. It seems like a "no brainer" now, but I remember meeting with the team, agonizing over whether we should move forward with our planned Arizona Association meeting, scheduled in March. Within just three days before the gathering, it became obvious that the event needed to be scrapped, at least for the time being. One by one as the weeks rolled on, similar decisions were made as meetings and events were jettisoned, postponed, or reconfigured. Even a couple of months ago, it seemed that we might be able to have our annual meeting in person. However, to be conservative, we decided to have a virtual meeting, October 1-3.

So, were our blessings "eclipsed?" Were we (and are we) just waiting for things to get back to "normal," back to the "good old days," back to the way things "used to be?" Certainly not! Praise God! Thankfully, God blessed us with technological solutions to continue to stay in touch, in some ways even better than before. Prior to Covid-19, we did not have many virtual meetings. Now, routine meetings and trainings with pastors and church leaders take place with greater frequency via Zoom. Moreover, it's not just the region; many of our churches are doing better than ever. One pastor, Jim Schultz of Atwater Park Baptist Church, has found that, via Zoom meetings, attendance and giving are up and his outreach goes far beyond his former community.

EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT (CONT.)

He now has attenders in Ohio, Arkansas, Oklahoma and even Norway. I recently asked him if, in his 85th year of life, he ever expected that he would have such an outreach. He said, "No, I never did...I pray that God will use me as long as He gives me the energy physically and morally and spiritually and intellectually. He has blessed me."

We join you in that prayer, Pastor Jim, as we pray for all our pastors. Not all are doing so well, however. Thankfully, we have been blessed by givers who contributed to our "Pastor's Emergency Fund." Thanks to you, we gave to several pastors in need and we are poised to continue to help when called upon.

We will not allow current circumstances to eclipse our mission of strengthening churches by equipping them (live or via Zoom), helping to protect their ministries, intervening (when asked), and finding ways to connect our pastors and churches with one another and with ministries near and far. Please check the following pages to see the hard work of our staff, missionaries, volunteers and board. We are thankful for these great servants of God as we also honor the legacy of our past servants, such as my predecessor, Dr. Samuel Chetti.

Most of all, we are grateful to our Lord. When His earthly ministry came to an end, things looked their darkest as He struggled on the cross and breathed His last in between two criminals on a hill called Calvary. What appeared to be the longest eclipse of all time wasn't really an eclipse at all. The moon did not block the sun, though it was dark for three hours (Luke 23: 44-46). Darkness did not prevail, nor did death. You know the story; Jesus was buried; then, He rose again. The light of His love continues to shine today throughout the whole world, in the southwest corner of remote Australia, in the southwest corner of the U.S., and in your corner, too.

I paraphrase the Apostle Paul who, in his letter to the Romans (8:38-39), said that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, including Covid-19, discrimination, unrest, political tension, and economic strife, will be able to eclipse the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Grateful to be on this journey with you,

Andy

"Nothing in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God..."

Romans 8:39

AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSION SUPPORT

We thank you for your generous support of the United Mission, Regional Support, and the entire American Baptist Mission Support. Below is a comparison of 2019 and 2020 until the end of August

	Jan-Aug 2020	Jan-Aug 2019
United Mission	\$58,767.09	\$55,971.82
America for Christ	9,066.18	13,637.86
World Mission Offering	20,624.72	29,681.95
Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering	27,397.58	28,468.03
One Great Hour of Sharing	17,387.75	27,709.00
Region Offering	55,166.46	44,359.37
Institutional Support Program	6,759.14	10,121.52
Specifics	57,540.82	165,433.84
Targeted	136,511.70	125,430.24
Total	389,221.44	500,813.63
Portion of Support for ABCOFLASH Ministries	\$99,363.85	\$88,581.52

• Regional Annual Celebration

• Hawaii Association Annual Meeting

• Latino Ministries Annual Meeting

• Arizona Association Annual Meeting

• Regional New Church Planting Program

• Regional Training Events

• Regional Board of Directors

• Regional Resource Staff Travel and Other Expenses

• Our Financial Commitments to ABCUSA

• Regional Conclaves and Consultations

• Regionally Validated Ministries

• Faith in Christ Ministries

Mission to Underserved Community

• FIBCO Family Services

Ministry to Individuals & Families- Phoenix, AZ

• Hands for Hope Ministry

Mission to Urban Children & Youth

• Highway Ministries

Ministry to Center City Men & Women

• Rainbow Acres

• Turkish Connection

Church Planting & Pastoral Care in Turkey

• Specific International Ministries Projects Conducted by our Region-Based International Ministries

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Steve Simons

We are living in challenging times. As I write this report, I know that we are faced with new issues daily. Social unrest, pandemic and fires burning all around our state to name a few. We have reason to be anxious, right? But, in Matthew 6:31-33 our Lord Jesus Christ said, "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ... for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

By not focusing on these things, we can focus on His work, the work of bringing Christ to the areas we serve, from the far eastern reaches of Nevada and Arizona to the far western shores of Hawaii, and everything in between. Throughout this past year our Board has met, planned and implemented a number of outreach programs to help you, as our members, spread the Word of God throughout the areas we reach. It has been challenging. With the introduction of the Corona Virus earlier this year, we have been forced to switch our methods. Now, in place of face-to-face meetings, we have Zoom, FaceBook and teleconferencing. We are forced to more strategically plan our events to obtain the maximum information in the shortest amount of time, just as you do in your Sunday morning services.

ABCOFLASH has also put together a list of resources to help you spread the message of love and redemption that comes through our Savior. I encourage you to reach out to our staff, and our Executive Minister, Andy Quient, to allow us to try to meet your needs.

May the Lord bless and prosper your ministry in the days to come.

Steve



Mr. Steve Simons

Board Members • 2019

Miguel Albanez • David Cheng • Walter Clarke
William De Leon • David Fields • Lydia Floyd • Lilian Rivera
Steve Simons • Shawn Thompson • William Thurmond

TREASURER'S REPORT

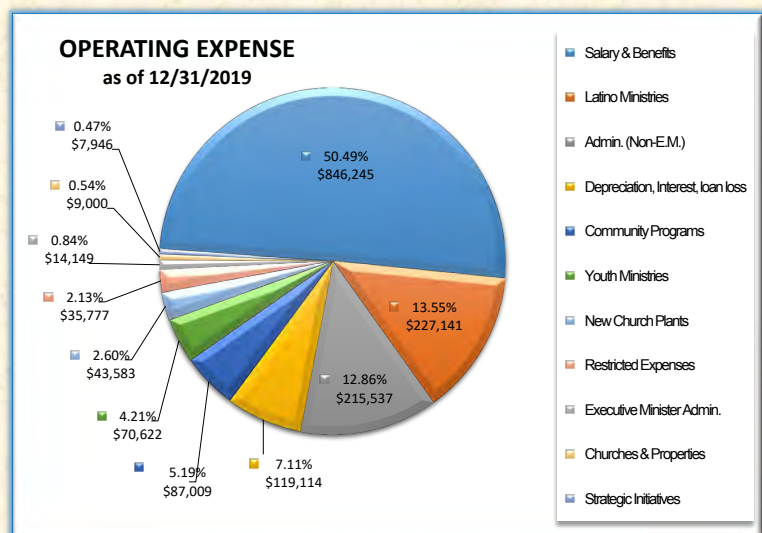
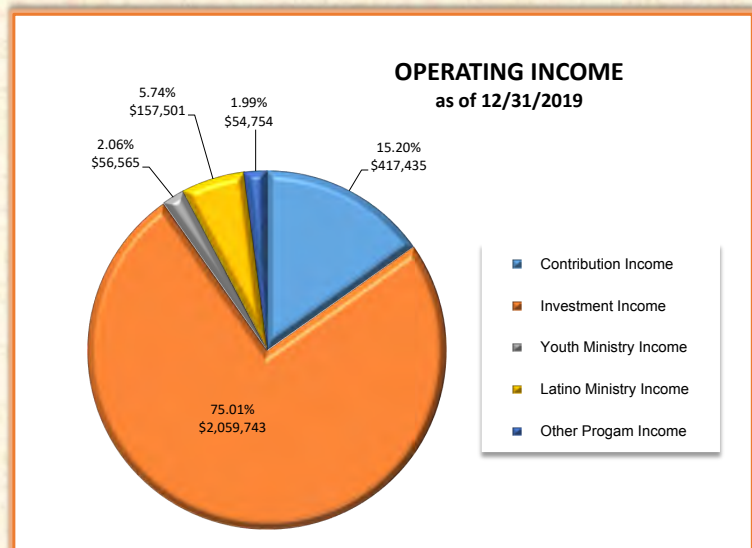
Mrs. Lydia Floyd, Treasurer

I want to commend all of the ABCOFLASH team, board, and staff, for stepping up to continue to serve during this very trying time in our history. It is so vital for us to be available and present for our churches. They need our help to support their congregations who are experiencing life-changing events such as COVID illnesses and deaths, trauma from isolation, or other issues that are heightened at this time as well as economic hardships. We are here to help. Please let us know how.

The ABCOFLASH staff has been short-handed this year due to a long time staff member leaving, but they have managed to continue to provide whatever programming we can, virtually.

I was scheduled to speak on Effective Financial Management at the Equip Conference, but it was canceled due to the pandemic. Please be on the lookout for the Equip workshops, which may be offered virtually, and sign up. Hope to see you there. If any church needs support in financial management or any other area, please do not hesitate to contact the ABCOFLASH office.

Our finances have been stable in the face of the economic changes and the markets' ebbs and flows. We are monitoring our funds and ensuring its continued growth as best we can. Please take a look at the charts describing our finances for the past year. Thank you to our excellent Business Manager, Charlotte Chang, for her work to provide accurate information. We appreciate any and all donations or endowments, which enable us to continue to assist churches in need.



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2019	2018
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$652,219	\$452,229
Accounts receivable	57,063	100,937
Prepaid and other assets	42,486	24,352
Accrued Interest	67,982	72,089
Promise-to-give Receivable	220,000	-
Notes receivable - current	975,737	1,089,850
Total Current Assets	2,015,487	1,739,457
Investments	5,569,936	4,447,777
Notes receivable, net of current	18,003,607	18,288,755
Certificate of Deposit	-	52,680
Certificate of Deposit provided as collateral	230,384	280,000
Investment in real estate	735,000	755,000
Equipment and improvements, at cost, net	56,023	82,971
Total Assets	\$26,610,437	\$25,646,640
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$22,482	\$57,107
Accrued expenses	87,567	110,305
Current portion of notes payable	1,279,714	1,305,052
Capital leases payable - current	24,165	23,474
Total Current Liabilities	1,413,928	1,495,938
Notes payable, net of current	-	-
Capital leases payable, net of current	22,596	46,664
Total Liabilities	\$1,436,524	\$1,542,602
Net Assets		
Net assets without donor restrictions	\$23,241,080	\$22,432,747
Net assets with donor restrictions	1,932,833	1,671,291
Total Net Assets	\$25,173,913	\$24,104,038
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$26,610,437	\$25,646,640

Note: Financial Statement from Independent Accountant's Review Report, Dec 31, 2019 and 2018

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

	2019			2018		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUE						
Contribution income	\$183,193	\$234,242	\$417,435	\$212,858	\$16,316	\$229,174
Investment income	1,984,664	75,079	2,059,743	583,657	(30,917)	552,740
Youth Ministry income	56,565	-	56,565	52,887	-	52,887
Latino Ministry income	157,501	-	157,501	129,142	-	129,142
Other income	54,754	-	54,754	31,722	-	31,722
Net Assets Released from Restrictions						
Specific Ministry Projects	47,779	(47,779)	-	18,432	(18,432)	-
Total Support and Revenue	\$2,484,456	261,542	\$2,745,998	\$1,028,698	(33,033)	\$995,665

OPERATING EXPENSES

Administration	\$215,537	-	\$215,537	\$188,165	-	\$188,165
Salary and benefits	846,245	-	846,245	875,809	-	875,809
Executive Minister-Administration	14,149	-	14,149	48,181	-	48,181
Latino Ministries	227,141	-	227,141	202,547	-	202,547
Youth Ministries	70,622	-	70,622	72,647	-	72,647
Community Programs	87,009	-	87,009	92,378	-	92,378
Strategic Initiatives	7,946	-	7,946	5,875	-	5,875
Restricted Expenses	35,777	-	35,777	21,005	-	21,005
New Church Plants	43,583	-	43,583	49,451	-	49,451
Churches and Properties	9,000	-	9,000	22,188	-	22,188
Depreciation	28,695	-	28,695	47,439	-	47,439
Reserve for Loan Loss	20,000	-	20,000	60,000	-	60,000
Interest expense	70,419	-	70,419	57,513	-	57,513
Total Expenses	\$1,676,123	-	\$1,676,123	\$1,743,198	-	\$1,743,198

Change in Net Assets Before Non-operating Revenue	\$808,333	\$261,542	\$1,069,875	(\$714,500)	(\$33,033)	(\$747,533)
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NONOPERATING REVENUE

Gain on sale of property	-	-	-	95,732	-	95,732
Change in Net Assets	\$808,333	\$261,542	\$1,069,875	(\$618,768)	(\$33,033)	\$(651,801)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	22,432,747	1,671,291	24,104,038	23,051,515	1,704,324	24,755,839
Net Assets, End of Year	\$23,241,080	\$1,932,833	\$25,173,913	\$22,432,747	\$1,671,291	\$24,104,038

Note: Financial Statement from Independent Accountant's Review Report, Dec 31, 2019 and 2018

ORDINATION STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Rev. Melanie Mar Chow, Chair

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, knowing that in the LORD your labor is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

My preface is that the year is still 2020 and a new year into another decade. Every day I begin with the promises of God, and by lunch, I find how much I cling to those promises in light of the pandemic and other interesting challenges of the year.

I'm thankful to Rev. Andy Quient., ABCOFLASH Executive Minister, who is journeying to his first full year of service as the Executive Minister; Deborah Gentry, ABCOFLASH Regional Coordinator, who works with the committee alongside Regional Resource Ministers in Revs. Van Tarpley (San Diego), Doug Hubbard (Youth & Global Missions), Stan Crews (Arizona), Barry Lovett (Hawaii), Dennis Casaje (Asian Ministries), and Jose Menendez (Latino Ministries). Current members are Revs. Shawn Zambrows, Bill Thurmond, Alvin Tunstill, John Polite, and Carlos Arce. In 2020, we added Rev. Janna Louie, Epic Church member and InterVarsity Graduate and Faculty Ministries Southern California Director. The year also began with the departure of Rev. Ruben Casas who served well during the transition from Dr. Chetti to Rev. Quient.

However, meeting in person had become a challenge after the February committee meeting. Acknowledgingly, with the number of ordination candidates in waiting, we were in for a busy year. Because of the pandemic, we have changed many things, including meeting by Zoom. Our originally scheduled meeting for April was rescheduled to March 31, and we planned to meet every other month— March, May, July, September and November.

We recommended the following to be ordained by their churches:

Jon Bancroft, First Baptist Church in Santa Barbara
Nick Quient, First Baptist Church in Redlands
Bobby Uchida, Ocean View Baptist Church in San Pedro
Jean Paul Molyneaux, Ocean View Baptist Church in San Pedro
Brandon Bouldin, Park Windsor Baptist Church in Los Angeles
James Chang, Gardena Valley Baptist Church in Gardena
Jon Nichols, First Baptist Church in National City



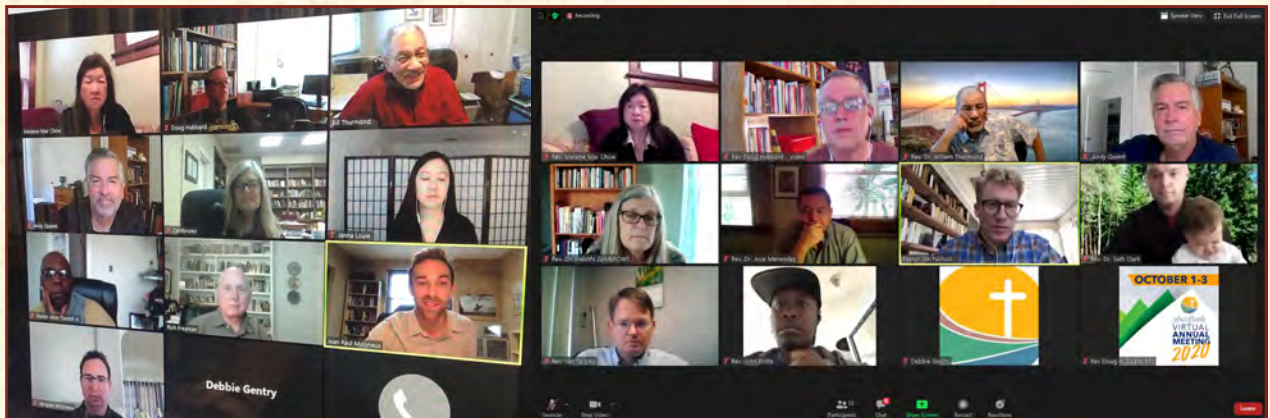
ORDINATION STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Rev. Melanie Mar Chow, Chair

On a personal note, I was blessed to be on the other side of the table as Rev. Rich Freeman represented the two candidates from Ocean View Baptist Church. When I was ordained, Rev. Freeman was the ordination committee chair. I was thankful for God's faithfulness to have that happen under my tenure.



In light of the pandemic, our churches are still spurring one another onto love and good works. We hope to add 1-2 more members to accommodate openings in the committee. We still have several candidates for ordination to be reviewed this year. It has been my privilege to serve as the chair of this blessed committee and grateful for my colleagues who have been part of the journey. It's a blessing to serve those who, in turn, will serve God's gifted and diverse people throughout ABCO-FLASH.



YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS

Rev. Doug Hubbard, Regional Minister

We have had a fruitful year of ministry! God continues to bring us together as a family of American Baptists to equip our pastors, leaders and youth for ministry in the local church.

A few of the highlights (not described in the following pages) include:

- Having the way we do ministry challenged and changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and working from home.
- Planning events such as Equip 2020, Arizona Annual Meeting, Dodger Night, Magic Mountain Day and having them canceled due to the pandemic.
- A Zoom “National Day of Prayer” prayer gathering for our region on May 7th.
- Sponsoring a Zoom Children’s Ministry workshop in July followed by “Children’s Ministry” conversations led by Kelli Romero, a children’s ministry expert.
- Encouraging a continuing connection with our churches and our American Baptist International Ministries Global Servants:

Mike and Jill Lowery, Glen and Rita Chapman

Juan and Denise Aragon, Tim and Patty Long,
Deliris and Moise Carrion Joseph, Jae Stockton

Mike and Becky Mann

Matt and Lori Mann

Joseph and Amy Vo

Faye Yarbrough

Phil and Corenne Smith

Ingrid Roldan Roman

Daniel and Sarah Chetti, Melanie Baggao

Rich and Laura Freeman

Pieter and Nora Kalkman

Emerson and Ivy Wu

Lauran Bethell

D.R. Congo

Mexico

Thailand

Laos

Vietnam

South African

Brazil

Panama

Lebanon

Turkey

Europe

China

World Consultant

YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS (CONT.)

Youth Discipleship Formation

Youth Discipleship Formation brought 13 youth together from several ABCOFLASH churches to equip them to become lifelong followers of Jesus Christ. After the first three retreats in October, November and January the group continued to meet online. The retreats focused on learning spiritual disciplines, what we believe as Christians and deepening our walk with Jesus Christ.

Here are some thoughts of one of the YDF Students from First Brazilian Baptist Church of Los Angeles (PIBBLA):

“My name is Carol, and this past year I got to be part of the YDF program. YDF works to create disciples of God. The program gave me an opportunity to grow in faith and in my relationship with God, as it taught me ways of bringing salvation to those around me and myself. YDF consisted of a healthy and safe environment, where I was able to make good friendships. YDF also consisted of activities such as praying moments, cooking, cleaning, and writing; all the activities came with an explanation as to why we did it and the importance of it. We had Discipleship Toolkits that taught us from the beginning as to why God matters, to what a Christian’s job description is and The Great Commission. We worked on all of this throughout our retreats which also included learning about other faiths, one of my favorite parts. We continued the program together during quarantine over zoom, and with our small groups we would text each other or FaceTime as well. I am grateful for the opportunity I had to be part of this program, as I learned a lot, and have been putting it all into action.”



YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS (CONT.)

Winter Youth Retreat 2020 – February 15-17, 2020

Youth and leaders from our region gathered at Camp Cedar Crest to connect with God and one another. Through dynamic worship and messages from Rev. Chris Tong, the Pastor of The Rock (an ABCOFLASH Church in Las Vegas), and dialogue with others, the students were given tools and inspiration to respond to life's pressures through the theme: Under Pressure. Many thanks to the planning team, worship team, participating churches and Rev. Tong for letting God use you to facilitate a life changing experience for those who experienced WYR 2020!



YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS (CONT.)

Friday Conversations

When COVID-19 pandemic began we invited pastors and leaders to come together via Zoom for Friday Conversations. Those calls have focused on a variety of topics including: Doing Ministry Online; Ministering during the Pandemic; Responding to Racial Tension; Reopening Churches and more. In those gatherings pastors found support and connection with one another.



Zoom Call 1

Zoom Call 2

“I am glad that we have the Zoom meetings and are able to share with others who join with us. We can learn from each other and gain wisdom too. We need each other, and I appreciate that we can have these meetings during these very challenging days.”

Dr. Jim Schultz – Pastor – Atwater Park Baptist Church

“The Friday Zoom meetings have been a blessing to me as far as connecting with other pastors and seeing that we are all experiencing the same emotions. I have truly enjoyed the interaction as well as getting to know other pastors from different parts of the city and region. I think that the pandemic has forced pastors and the region to improve the way we communicate with each other and I pray that when the pandemic is over that we continue to meet via Zoom or in person.”

Rev. Greg Morris - Pastor of Athens Baptist Church

“The Friday Zoom meetings for pastors have provided an invaluable service to us, especially under the current circumstances. They have been helpful because of the information they have provided from experts and the encouragement they have given from hearing what is happening with other pastors in their churches.

Dr. Michael Cocoris – Pastor, Lindley Avenue Church

“The Friday Zoom calls with the ABCOFLASH ministerial leaders have been an unexpected blessing of this pandemic time. I have appreciated and have been nourished by the connection and conversation that comes each week. I hope that an association of ministerial leaders will develop out of this that will outlast COVID-19.”

Rev. Dr. Shawn Zambrows – Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Redlands

YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS (CONT.)

Faye Yarbrough Commissioning – June 27, 2020

Faye Yarbrough, a member of Trinity Baptist Church of L.A. was commissioned by International Ministries to serve as a science and math teacher at the Teleios Christian School in South Africa. At the end of the service Faye shared her reflections about her call to missions:

“Hello everyone, I am Faye Carol Yarbrough. I am black and my life matters. It matters because my Father in heaven knew me long before I was born to Sydney and Maureen Small in Georgetown, Guyana. I am not a movement but I am called, saved and moved to ministry by Christ. God set a plan for my life that in obedience I must follow.

My life is a daily surrendering of my life to Christ in order that the Holy Spirit can work in me and through me to make a difference in the lives of Children and young adults here in my local church Trinity Baptist and soon in Teleios Christian School in King William's Town, South Africa.

When a new life is born it did not happen by chance. The odds that it happened at all is 1 in a million. We have to look at every child and give them the opportunity to grow into that God given potential living inside. I thank God for giving me this ministry of letting Christ be known through Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. I am also thankful for the many partners in prayer and sacrificial giving who are also called to this ministry.

Teleios means to make complete. Through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, children are given the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. These children are made whole in Christ. Then and only then do we see real and lasting change in our world. Only Let us all be instruments that cherish life and allow young people to breathe until their Heavenly Father takes back His breath of life.

Holy Spirit Breath on Us!”



■ ABCOFLASH celebrates with Faye and Trinity Baptist Church in her call into the mission field in South Africa!

YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS (CONT.)

Global Leadership Summit 2020 – August 6-7, 2020

33 people from our region participated in the live-stream of the GLS 2020. Leadership principles from a wide range of business, religious and authors challenged everyone to grow as leaders and lead with excellence.

“I especially liked the Resiliency and Time Management sessions. I am replaying those and plan to put them into practice immediately!” Lydia Floyd – ABCOFLASH Board Member

“The most important message I received from the GLS 2020 can be summarized as follows: Life is dynamic and is in constant change, leadership is essentially important to deal with change from the family structure to the most complexed company/organization. This is the time for leaders to realize that the old ways of doing ministry or serving others will not work to respond effectively to the pandemic changes, to racism ingrained in oppressive social systems and the challenges we all face due to climate change. We are called

to re-set, open up to God's call to adjust to the moment we are called by Him, to seek justice, cooperation and compassion, where prayer is essential to manage our pace as leaders. As leaders achieving a new pace of grace means realizing that IF BLACK LIVES DO NOT MATTER, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS, because they too are the image of God and ourselves. I found in the GLS2020 an ongoing invitation to re-set and open up to the creative opportunities our God is inviting us to participate.” Mario Morales – former Pastor and International Ministries Global Servant and currently serving as a Hospice Chaplain

“The mass information from GLS can be applied in several areas of my life. Let me begin with TD Jakes’ “metrics of greater thinking” presentation. His “Migrative Thinking” challenged me to broaden my table of influence. I have the platform to invite many stakeholders in the workforce system to discuss employment and training programs. However, TD Jake’s adaptability quotient challenges me to invite a coalition I cannot control. A challenge to sit down with someone who has a perspective I cannot teach and to find what connects rather than divides. This sets up a disruption of the status quo and digs deeper to discuss solutions in this pandemic for delivery of services for employment and training programs.

Cesar Valladares – Ministerios Manantial de Amor Board Member



ASIAN MINISTRIES

Rev. Dr. Dennis V. Casaje, Regional Resource Minister

Our Region's Asian Churches are continuously using every door of opportunity that God has opened in serving their church family and communities. The closed-door of physical gathering for worship in the past months helps them discover that God's Word can be shared in ways reaching far more than we could ever imagine. Their Worship celebrations' live streaming is reaching far greater numbers, in far greater places they have not reached before.

The following pictures show some of the amazing ways they still served God in this Pandemic months.



Wilshire Baptist members minister to Los Angeles's homeless community and honor our front liners, those in the ER, and the COVID task force by surprising them with a sumptuous meal for the whole department team.

We can see their smiles behind those masks! Praying with our Nation via Zoom!



Rev. John Mark Lindongan of Life House International Baptist Church is thriving through their virtual worship, and even their mission work in the Philippines is being ministered to via Zoom. (Their Patriarch and Church planter, Rev. Johnslay Lindongan passed away last January 9, 2020, due to Cancer.)

Indonesian Baptist Church with Rev. Edy Loekmono had their 2019 Christmas service. We all surely missed our regular worship gatherings, our choirs, and praise team. God is still on the throne, regardless of how or where we worship and serve Him! "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Galatians 6:9

LATINO MINISTRIES

Dr. Jose Menendez, Regional Resource Minister

We started the year 2020 with the goal and expectation of accomplishing all the events and activities we had planned. We also continued to provide prayer support to all our ministries and associations. We had much enthusiasm as we hosted and held many events in the months of January and February. By mid-March, everything came to a halt because of the coronavirus pandemic.

On a personal note, my family was devastated when my wife Rosario was diagnosed with lymphoma/leukemia. We are still reeling from this news but we thank God for daily strength, provision and grace we receive from him. We also thank and appreciate all our family and friends, churches, brothers and sisters in Christ, who have been praying for us.

Our goal for 2020 is to train pastors and leaders. From January to March, we continued conducting our “Pastoral Assessment” classes for about 19 to 25 very motivated pastors. The training was focused on subjects like Family Foundations, Multimedia, and the Changing Community.



Latino Pastor Couples Retreat



Children's Ministry / Sunday School Teacher Training Event

The year also started with events for different ministries: women, men and children's leaders. On January 18, a group of 32 women from the Arizona and Nevada Latina Women's Associations met at the Monte Vista Cross Cultural Church for breakfast. On the same day, the Latino Pastor's Wives group also met and enjoyed their own breakfast fellowship and other activities.

On February 8, a training event for teachers and leaders of children's ministries was organized by our leaders Cristina Arce and Javier Hernandez from the Los Angeles Association. The training was held at Iglesia Bautista Unida and attended by around 60 leaders.

On February 21, 96 people attended a breakfast meeting for Latina Women of the Los Angeles Association, under the leadership of Judith Martinez at Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana.

On February 22, around 30 women from the San Diego Association, led by Elsie de Leon, held a breakfast and a prayer vigil at the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana in San Diego.



Latina Women Ministry / Los Angeles, San Diego and Arizona Associations

LATINO MINISTRIES (CONT.)

Also on February 21 to 23, we had a marriage enrichment retreat for the associations of Arizona and Nevada. This retreat was held at the Residence Inn, Prescott, Arizona. It was a very blessed retreat for the 28 couples who attended it.



Lay Couples Ministry / Los Angeles, Arizona and San Diego Retreats

Also in February, all the Latino churches of the San Diego Association had a fellowship event. This was coordinated by Pastor Carlos Contreras, association leader.

On February 29, we celebrated our Annual Latino Couples Dinner. It was attended by 138 couples and they were all blessed and encouraged to be examples in our society by living out biblical family values.

On March 7 and 14, we had the Latino Men's Ministry breakfast meeting for the Los Angeles and San Fernando Associations. Attendees were blessed and empowered to be witnesses and light in the world. Erick Soriano leads the Los Angeles Association whereas San Fernando is being led by Pastor Juan Carlos Aguiluz.



Latino Men Ministry / Men's Retreat and San Fernando Valley Prayer Breakfast

LATINO MINISTRIES (CONT.)

After the middle of March, all our planned events were either postponed or canceled due to the pandemic. We are now having our pastors' meetings by Zoom and many of our Latino churches are using Facebook Live as a way of responding to many challenging situations in our communities, cities and states.

The following is a list of people who are in the leadership role in our Latino Ministries:

New Church Planting Committee

Rev. Andy Quient
Pastor Enrique Santis
Rev. Rubén Casas
Dr. José Menéndez

Continuing Education Committee

Dr. Carlos Arce, Director
Pastor Adely Ardila, Secretary
Dr. Enrique Torres
Dr. Saúl Maldonado
Pastor Melvin Acevedo
Pastor Miguel Albanez
Dr. José Menéndez

Latino Ministries Task Force Team

Dr. Saúl Maldonado
Rev. José Romero
Dr. Miguel Altamirano
Pastor Miguel Albanez

Latino Churches Associations

Los Angeles Association:
Pastor William Cárcamo, Leader

San Fernando Association:

North Coast Association:
Pastor Alejandro Roque, Leader

Orange County Association:
Pastor Ruperto Ucan, Leader

San Diego Association:
Pastor Carlos Contreras, Leader

Arizona and Nevada Association:
Dr. Miguel Altamirano, Leader

Latino Ministries

Latino Ministers' Council:
Dr. Carlos Arce, Leader

Latino Men's Ministry:
Pastor Manuel Martínez, Leader

San Fernando Valley Association:
Juan Carlos Aguiluz, Leader.

Los Angeles Association:
Erick Soriano, Leader.

Latina Women's Ministry:
Juana Valdez, Leader.

Los Angeles Association:
Judith Martínez, Leader.

San Diego Association:
Elsie de León, Leader.

Arizona Association:
Pastor Imelda Altamirano, Leader.

Latino Youth Ministry

Latino Children's Ministry
Pastor Cristina Arce, Leader.

Javier and Liliana Hernandez,
Los Angeles Association Leaders.

Latino Family Ministries Team
Erick and Karla Soriano
Blas and Juana Valdez
Alex and Judith Martínez
Dr. Saúl and Rosamaría Maldonado

We thank you for your prayers and your continued support to all pastors and church leaders in various ministries; and, to pastors who voluntarily serve on any Latino Ministries Committee.

ARIZONA ASSOCIATION

Rev. Stan Crews, Regional Resource Minister

The year 2020 has been one of great challenges and at the same time opportunity to rethink our ministries. Our annual meeting this year was to be held at Rainbow Acres in March. It was necessary to cancel the meeting because of the pandemic and the very dangers which continue to plague our world. Prior to the annual meeting date, the host church, Bethany Baptist Church in Clarkdale, and the staff at Rainbow Acres, had put in many hours of planning. The theme supposedly was "What is God doing in your church?" The plan was to have each of our 8 churches share their ministry and discuss how we can encourage each other. Our speaker this year would have been Warren Stewart from the First Institutional Baptist Church in Phoenix. We regret not being able to meet even with all the hard work and preparation that was done. We are still very much up in the air as to what will happen in 2021. We know that God has a purpose in all these things and it will be exciting to see where He is leading us as we move through this time of doubt and struggle.

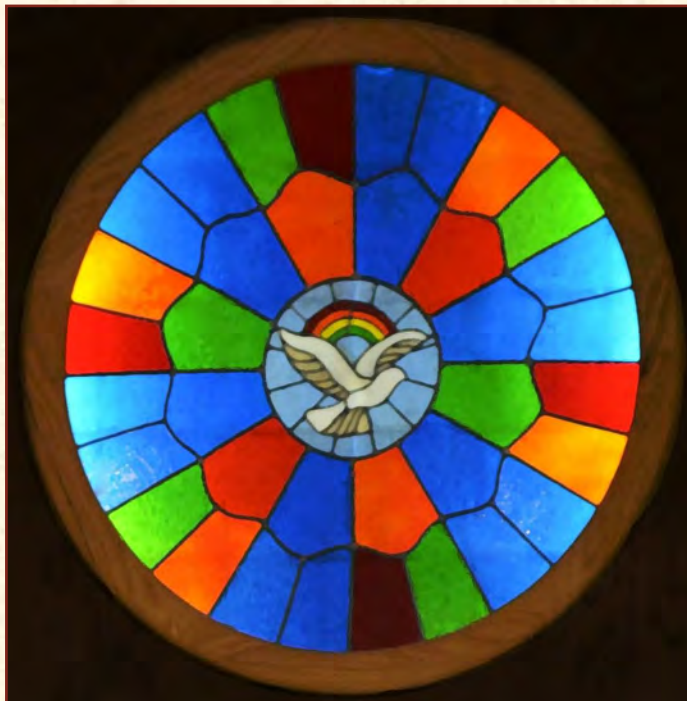


Rev. Stan Crews

Each of our 8 churches has found ways to keep their ministries alive. *The Poston Community Baptist Church*, under the pastorate of Shawn Thompson, has started a podcast in which Pastor Shawn is able to share with the community in Poston. He has many more people listening to the podcast than he had attending the church on Sunday morning. This has been a real encouragement to the church to know that they are really reaching the community with the gospel.



Poston Community Baptist Church



Bethany Baptist Church Clarkdale

kept gatherings to a minimum on their reservation. Pastor Larry Jackson has continued to stay in touch with his congregation even though they are not able to meet together.



Iglesia Bautista Hispana de Glendale

The Iglesia Bautista Hispana de Glendale, Arizona, under the leadership of Miguel Altamirano, was to celebrate their 100th anniversary in April. They have tried to celebrate their centennial on alternative dates but were not able to. Their current plan is to celebrate 101 years in April of 2021. Bethany Baptist Church in Clarkdale has not been able to have worship services since April and the authorities of the Apache Nation have

ARIZONA ASSOCIATION

The three churches that meet at the facility of *Monte Vista Baptist Church* are all finding ways to gather in smaller groups. The Monte Vista Baptist Church is small enough that Pastor Cindy Darby has been able to meet with this group at 9:00 a.m. every Sunday. They continue to wear masks and social distance. The *Arizona Karen Baptist Church*, which has around 300 people attending on a regular basis, has not been able to gather as a congregation at the Monte Vista church facility since April. They have used Zoom for Bible studies and the pastors have been working with small groups. A young couple, who were part of the original youth that came from the refugee camps in Thailand in 2007, had their wedding at the Monte Vista church in August. The wedding video was posted on Facebook and we were all able to enjoy the celebration as only a few could attend the live ceremony. The *Monte Vista Cross Cultural Church*, under the leadership of Angel and Marisol Campos, has continued to do ministry in the community. Pastor Angel is on the local school board and brings a fresh Christian spirit to the meetings. The congregation is not able to meet on Sundays but they do gather in smaller groups for prayer time and Bible studies. They recently had an outdoor camping experience in the mountains of central Arizona.



Monte Vista Baptist Church



Arizona Karen Baptist Church
Pastor Kawpoelah Beney,
Pastor Tha Hser Tun, Pastor Ehhtoowah Hso



First Institutional Baptist Church in Phoenix, under the leadership of Pastor Warren Stewart, has been using different types of media to stay in contact with their congregation. They live stream their worship services on Sunday morning and use Zoom for their children's programs and Bible studies. They hope to resume in-person services in October while following guidelines for group meetings.



Monte Vista Cross Cultural Church

First Baptist Church Scottsdale has been meeting on Sunday morning in the sanctuary since July. They have been successful in following guidelines of wearing masks, taking temperatures, and practicing social distancing. Pastor Jim Coston offers a video sermon on Sunday morning for those who are not comfortable coming to the church. They are trying to raise 15,000 dollars to buy the necessary equipment to do live streaming.



Scottsdale First Baptist Church

All the churches in Arizona are doing their best to keep their congregations together. It has been a challenging time but each pastor has a vision to bring their congregation back together when all this difficulty has passed.

HAWAII ASSOCIATION

Rev. Barry Lovett, Regional Resource Minister

On October 12-13, 2019, we gathered for our 7th Annual Association Meeting. The theme of the Annual Meeting was “Here Am I Lord, Send Me.” This two-day event included Worship, a report on the State of the Region, special music by each participating congregation, a choir consisting of individuals from each of our congregations, and relevant seminars. Andy Quient was the keynote presenter and he spoke on “The Missionary on Mainstreet.” Seminars were presented by Daniel Jacobson on “Christ-centered Leadership” and by Patrick Pang on “3 keys to Increase Your Churches Annual Income.” A highlight of our annual meeting was the Saturday evening potluck which featured a variety of food representing the wide diversity of our churches. A small group of people from each congregation had been meeting throughout the year to plan the Annual Association Meeting and consider other opportunities for ministry and fellowship.



Barry Lovett

This year, First Baptist Church of Honolulu celebrated its 90th anniversary on February 9th and 12th. Each of our Association churches and their pastors were in attendance as was our Regional Minister Andy Quient.



On March 11th, our Association sponsored a concert by the Wheaton College Gospel Choir. It was hosted by Trinity Missionary Baptist Church. The concert was well attended. Prior to the concert, a meal was prepared and served by Trinity and enjoyed by all. While on tour in Hawaii, the choir learned that their college campus was being shut down because of the coronavirus crisis and that classes would be online.



SAN DIEGO / ORANGE COUNTY ASSOCIATION

Rev. Van Tarpley, Regional Resource Minister

The San Diego region ended 2019 with a joyful Advent gathering at The Refinery. We continued our celebration and learning in 2020 with a lovely Pastor/Leader Lenten Luncheon hosted by OB1Church on March 3. We congratulated Moise Joseph on his endorsement to serve through International Ministries with his mission partner and wife, Deliris Carrión-Joseph.

The somber and reflective aspects of Lent 2020 have lasted longer than anyone expected. Since the Covid-19 pandemic hit in force, efforts in the region have focused on aiding church communities as they make difficult decisions about worship and ministry in the context of a once-in-a-century public health event. As the picture below suggests, we have placed the pandemic at the feet of Jesus through prayer. However, we have also taken practical measures, such as informing pastors about the CARES Act and changes in state and county regulations involving houses of worship. Virtual meetings and sessions with congregants and leaders throughout ABCOFLASH have been crucial in maintaining connection between churches at a time of isolation. We have also worked with faith leaders throughout San Diego and within ABCOFLASH to craft a faithful, gospel-centered response to our national need for peace through justice and racial reconciliation.



FIBCO

FIBCO Family Services, Inc. is located in Phoenix, Arizona on the campus of First Institutional Baptist Church. It was founded by Pastor Warren Stewart, Sr. in 1986. Since then, we have been serving the most vulnerable populations in Phoenix through our mission of providing people with knowledge, skills and support to transform and empower their lives.



Pastor Stewart praying before our 1st FIBCO Mobile distribution.

Food and school supply distribution event

Our amazing volunteers!

By God's grace, during these times we have been able to continue to serve the community in our three program areas:

- **Quality affordable food and clothing distribution** - Because they need, we feed. Throughout the year FIBCO provides meals, food boxes and clothing at no cost to low to no income individuals and families. Many people need meals and food boxes due to financial emergencies or general food insecurity. At least three days per week, we welcome people to shop from our racks of donated, slightly used, ready-to-wear clothing items. We want to empower people to dress suitably for employment opportunities that may better their current circumstances.
- **Compassionate Immigration Assistance - Preserving Our African/African American Connections (PAAACs)**. This is dedicated to meeting some of the basic needs of African immigrants settling in the US to start a new life and/or reunite with family in Arizona.
- **Quality affordable housing** - We provide Houses of Hope. This is for seniors, veterans, and mentally or emotionally challenged, low-income individuals who might otherwise be among the 25,000 residents experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County throughout the year. In a FIBCO property, residents have a safe place to call "home" and receive additional FIBCO services.

FIBCO remains faith-based and action-driven to do more and better for the community. We strive to continue to facilitate independence and build comprehensive opportunities.



Distributing food at the Hope Center on First Institutional Baptist Church campus

Feeding the community during our FIBCO Mobile Events

RAINBOW ACRES

Rev. Gary Wagner



Christian Ministry life at Rainbow Acres is centered on the love of Jesus. That love is shared in prayer and conversation at meal times around the table in each home. Before COVID-19 impacted our life on the Ranch, mornings began with Prayer Circle—a time for Ranchers to share concerns, personal needs, and focus on being a person of value with a special purpose in their life. Until we can resume meeting in larger groups, our Chaplain and a Team of Volunteers provide an inspirational devotional on the airwaves of Rainbow Acres Radio KOTR, before the start of classes and other activities of the day.

The Ranchers hail from 23 U.S. states and range from their early 20s to their 80s. Rainbow Acres serves adults with a wide range of developmental disabilities. We seek to be inclusive and serve an ethnically and culturally diverse community.

Before COVID-19, the Chaplain hosted Bible Study every Monday evening, drawing 22-24 Ranchers interested in an in-depth study of God's word. Since COVID-19, Ranchers have been enjoying doing Bible Study in their homes with a housemate. On Tuesday evenings, a group of 14-16 Ranchers assisted with the Bread of Life Mission, an organization that serves over 700 people through their feeding program; but now, our Ranchers have temporarily stopped as being involved presents a significant risk of exposure to the coronavirus.

Before COVID-19, the Ranchers enjoyed attending Churches of their choice throughout the Verde Valley area, with the support of Caregivers and Volunteers. During COVID-19, the Chaplain and the President lead an open-air worship service (with an average attendance of 50) on Sunday Mornings at 8:30 a.m. before the temperatures rise. Personal witnessing about Jesus' love has led six Ranchers to seek baptism in 2018, five Ranchers in 2019, and one pending baptism this summer. Baptisms are well attended and take place in the Rainbow Acres pool.

After Labor Day in 2019, the Chaplain and several Caregivers organized a Spiritual Growth Camp at Tonto Rim Camp. It was made possible by a gift from the Worden Family Endowment. The camp was a first time in more than 20 years. The Ranchers had fun and it was truly a life-changing experience for many! Unfortunately, COVID wiped out plans for Camp in 2020. We are planning for Camp in 2021.



RAINBOW ACRES (CONT.)

Rev. Gary Wagner



Rainbow Acres has been blessed by the support of many donors who have shared the same vision for beautiful and modern facilities. For the first time in 45 years, the Health & Wellness Team has an outstanding environment to provide Ranchers' care. The new Medical Center has offices for five nurses, a records storage room, two examination rooms, a room with a hospital bed, a therapy room, and other essential space. The Medical Center hosts visiting physicians and therapists; however, during COVID-19, telemedicine has taken the place of off-ranch office visits.



Other Facilities Improvement since July 2019:

1. Created a new Weaving Room in the Daehler Building.
2. Paul Higgins, CFO, created a plan to replace laptops with Chromebooks for Medication Administration and Programming in each house. This project was funded by the Parents/Guardians of the Ranchers! Installation is pending.
3. Honeywell Building (aka old weaving room) has been renovated to create the new Music Studio for the Ranchers. Moving the music studio to the Honeywell Building has opened up a new classroom in the Worden-Taber Center. These facility improvements have enabled Rainbow Acres to respond to the COVID-19 social distancing requirements.

Your involvement as a “stakeholder” in Rainbow Acres has allowed us the opportunity to continue providing service in programming, facilities, and most of all, Spiritual life. Thank you for your faithfulness to Rainbow Acres and your generosity of love.

For the Ranchers!

Gary W. Wagner
President & CEO

HANDS FOR HOPE

Mrs. Lydia Floyd



HANDS4HOPE LA is a free after-school and summer program that has served North Hollywood and neighboring communities for 20 years. It is located at First Baptist Church of North Hollywood. Thank you to Andy Quient, ABCOFLASH, and all of the American Baptist Community for supporting our efforts. Covid-19 has made this year challenging, but we were still able to pivot and continue to support at-risk youth ages 8 to 18 from low-income and predominantly minority households. We had a summer program in the park where everyone wore masks and were socially distanced from each other. We took temperatures each day and used LOTS of hand sanitizer. The kids also did several learning and fun activities on Zoom before the summer and we are planning to do more engaging programming in the fall to enrich their lives during such a stress filled time. We also gave care packages to their parents as they tried to care for their children and survive.



Hands4Hope LA kids at the park

20TH ANNIVERSARY

Hands4Hope LA is celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2020 and what a year we have had. We will be having three Jazz events via Zoom to celebrate.” STARLIGHT JAZZ @ HOME” will be hosting the first of the Zoom events on Saturday, Oct. 3rd. We would like to raise \$20,000 this year, a \$1,000 for every year we have been working to help kids in our community. We are sending an invitation for the October event to all who make an anniversary donation of \$20 or more. To donate or find out more go to <http://www.hands4hopela.org/events>.

FEATURED ARTISTS



Gail Jhonson



Dwayne “Smitty” Smith

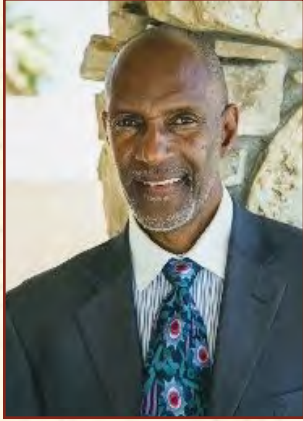


JS Floyd

Please like us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @hands4hopela
Hands4Hope LA • www.hands4hopela.org • 818.763.HOPE (4673) • info@hands4hopela.org

URBAN REPORT

Dr. Tahlib McMicheaux, Regional Resource Minister



Dr. Tahlib McMicheaux

Upon accepting the position as Urban Regional Resource Minister, my initial, self-appointed, task was to contact the ministers within my assigned area. However, the Coronavirus abruptly interrupted my progress and put a halt to everything. Soon after the virus began, America witnessed the untimely death of George Floyd and the repercussion resonated around the world. Cities experienced civil and uncivil protest, looting, and the burning of personal property along with the demand for the dismantling of law enforcement around the world. Although people from all races marched under a united banner, it appeared America's racial divide had come to a head and no one knew what to say or how to begin the long overdue conversation about racism in America.

It was during this time that the Executive Minister, Andy Quient, approached me about facilitating a forum to address racism. This meeting was held June 12, 2020 via Zoom. There were over 50 pastors in attendance that included several ethnicities. The discussion was received by the participating leaders as an entree into the unspoken conversation that many churches have refused to hold due to its sensitive nature. After leading this group, the Executive Minister and I had subsequent conversations about how we could move our region forward with a deeper understanding of cultural sensitivity without compromising theology. I was then asked to facilitate a group of pastors and leaders that would look at drafting a document on cultural sensitivity, racial biases, and religious liberties. From this concept, the 2020 Unity Focus group was created. The group consists mostly of the ethnic groups within our region. We agreed to meet for six weeks, hold discussions, review videos on each cultural group participating, and demonstrate how discrimination, prejudice and bigotry are experienced across the board. As our focus, the 2020 Unity Focus Group selected the following five tenets:

- Righteousness
- Mutuality
- Liberation
- Love
- Renewal

Once the groups were selected, the work began. The goal was to create a framework that would theologically and sociologically challenge the core values of the 21st century churches within our region to move toward being more proactive in race relations and justice. The finality of this project is to use the diverse group that met for six weeks to create a video focusing on "Who's my neighbor?" and "Why do I care?" The video is to be shared with the churches in our region.

5 TENETS FOR UNITY

Renewal • Love • Righteousness • Mutuality • Liberation

The 2020 Unity Focus Group is a diverse group of pastors and leaders from across our region's churches. The group consists of Native Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Caucasian Americans, and African Americans. Our process was to share in a discussion of the fundamental character of the Christian experience and the church drawing on our cultural, theological, and social diversity; watch videos on aspects of systemic racism in America; and seek ways to address cultural biases and bigotry from a Biblical Christian perspective.

Gathering in the light of our diversity, we did not all agree on the same things at the same time, but we pressed forward with respect. We believed that if we could achieve this goal, so too could the local church. Below are the tenets that we drafted outlining Biblical, theological, and sociological principles for the Body of Christ to live by as believers. However, before we get to the tenets, we would like to share the operating principles we came to value as a collective body, and that we agree are crucial for the 21st century church as a whole:

- Communication and Listening
- Relationships
- Valuing Diversity and Inclusion

We agreed that churches must create spaces to hold difficult and sensitive conversations around issues that are often intentionally overlooked. Deep listening to the experience, pain and contributions of those around us is crucial in this process. We must create opportunities in the church where honest communication is not only embraced but received with love and empathy.

Relationships

It was suggested in our group that pastors and leaders of diverse backgrounds be intentionally brought together to share their stories. It is believed that through these stories not only will the leaders and pastors be enlightened, but their congregations will benefit from this enlightenment.

Valuing diversity and inclusion

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said "It is appalling that the most segregated hour of Christian America is eleven o'clock on Sunday morning." We are living in a time and day where we can no longer allow this mentality or behavior to exist in the church. This behavior will only change when we are intentional in making sure all groups are included and promoted. We must make allowances for cultural differences but stand firm on Biblical and theological principles. Valuing inclusion is as simple – and as difficult -- as accepting and embracing the unique qualities of each individual and the family and cultural traditions through which they faithfully live out their religious beliefs.

The 2020 Unity Focus Group is in agreement that when these steps are addressed within our churches' communications -- listening, the development of relationship, inclusion and valuing of our richly diverse backgrounds -- we will grow mutually in Spirit and mission with more ease, grace and purpose.

5 TENETS FOR UNITY

Renewal • Love • Righteousness • Mutuality • Liberation

Renewal

For Christians, “renewal” means partnering with God to restore something to the way God always planned for it to be. The process begins with repentance as we turn from the mistakes and sinfulness of our past and move in the power of the Holy Spirit towards a future in which we more closely live into the Kingdom of God.

Right now, on the issues of racial justice and deep inequality, our communities of faith and our society cry out for renewal. We are called to “sing to the Lord a new song” (Ps. 96:1). The old song -- everything is fine, don’t cause controversy, not my problem -- does not reflect the transformative power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2). We need to renew our minds:

- To see each other as people made in the image of God and precious to God.
- To understand our history and the structures and systems in which we live, so that we may transcend the past and transform our social structures to safeguard the dignity, safety, and opportunity of all.

In this process of renewal, we need to humbly examine ourselves. Then we can come together, learn from each other, and find common ground where we can serve together in the love and power of God.

Love

I Cor. 13:4-6 tells us, “Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.”

In our life and mission as the church, love must be the motivation, the process, and the goal of all that we do. God is love. God has called us to be agents of God’s saving, sustaining, transforming love in the world. We read in 1 John 4:7-8, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

To love other people in God’s love means to see them, to hear them, to include them fully, and to seek their good before our own. This is not an easy process. The love of Jesus led Him to the cross. Our love for others leads us to cross the boundaries of what is familiar and comfortable. Love calls us to challenge prevailing social norms that prevent us from operating in unity. Despite setbacks, pushback and mutual incomprehension, we keep pressing forward. As we accept our role as fragile jars of clay bearing the precious treasure of God’s love, we serve and grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

5 TENETS FOR UNITY

Righteousness

Righteousness is standing in right relationship with God, and by extension with the people around us. We are called to be new people in Jesus Christ. As we live out this call, we more truly reflect the compassion and love of deep, restorative justice that is at the heart of Christ.

Accordingly, we are called to reflect high moral and ethical standards. Righteousness demands that we as believers live by a standard that embraces all people as precious in God's sight. This leads to our embrace of cultural diversity, justice and religious liberty. Righteousness must become the lifestyle by which we extend love to a hurting world and the standard by which we position ourselves as believers in addressing social issues. Our "spiritual contract" with each other is drawn from the Word of God, and God sets the bar high. Amos 12:24 tells us, "But let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Mutuality

Our God is a Triune God -- One God in three Persons. The unity, love and relationship at the heart of God are a model for the expression of mutuality within the church. Elements of mutuality include community, service, and solidarity with one another as forgiven sinners called to live God's love in this broken world.

God's love can, and should, lead us to a place of deep empathy for one another and for "our neighbor." The example of Christ's compassion moves us to receive others as they are without prejudice or judgment. Like Jesus, we seek to serve, not to exercise power over, others. Finally, the unifying power of the Holy Spirit leads us to live the Fruit of the Spirit both in the church and the world.

Liberation

The tenet of liberation is central to the Christian faith. In the Bible, we see the concept of liberation in Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage, in the nature of Jubilee pronounced in Leviticus 25, and ultimately in Jesus, who comes to liberate the world through His resurrection from the power of sin and death. At the start of His ministry, Jesus reads the stirring words of Isaiah 61 and declares, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).

The gift of liberation through Jesus calls us to be liberators in response. The church must lovingly and faithfully work to bring liberation to all, including those who have been marginalized. Fundamentally, the church is the fellowship and community of the liberated, redeemed, and reconciled. The blessing of this gift of liberation recognizes what we had become in our fallen state and who we are under the authority of and in response to God through Jesus Christ. It bespeaks our new life on the earth and beyond the earth into eternity.

5 TENETS FOR UNITY

Conclusion

We live in challenging times. To be faithful as the church in this moment means much hard work to bridge divides in our society, to humbly listen to others without reacting defensively, to recognize that God has set many places at the heavenly banquet table to which He has invited us. We encourage pastors, leaders and congregations to carefully, prayerfully, and lovingly engage in conversations about race, fairness, justice and inequality. Some concrete steps to promote unity include:

Raising up within congregations thoughtful and responsible leaders who reflect the cultural, ethnic and theological diversity of the broader church.

Recognizing that leaders in welcoming/greeting/hospitality roles in congregations must extend a broad and equal welcome that reflects the wideness of God's love to all.

Ensuring that voices of younger and older congregants are heard and heeded in all congregational matters.

Recognizing, remembering, and speaking to our history, even the painful parts, in the context of how far God has brought us and how far we need to go.

Intentionally fostering conversations that engage our differences and our varied traditions with the aim of building stronger, more cohesive, more purposeful local churches.

Considering the cultural gifts of many peoples as we craft worship, music and other expressions in designing our church life.

Including the need for justice and equality in church conversations about giving, missions and ministry.

Creating opportunities for substantive sharing and learning between congregations with different cultures and traditions.



TURKISH MINISTRIES

Rev. Rich and Mrs. Laura Freeman

“Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill treated, since you yourselves are also in the body.” Hebrews 13:3

We are so thankful for the support of our ABCOFLASH region in partnering with our work in Turkey. Our goal is to help establish 100 churches in one of the most unreached countries in the world. We hope to establish our 56th church in early 2021. The Turkish Christians of Turkey are so grateful to know that their brothers and sisters in America care about their struggles and want to stand with them.

As a result of your support during 2019/2020, we were blessed to see:

- * The establishment of five new churches throughout Turkey. One of these new churches is an Arabic fellowship that is reaching Syrian refugees in Izmir. They will soon baptize three new believers.

- * The encouragement of many Turkish pastors and their families, especially during this pandemic. Christians are viewed as "traitors" to the country as they do not follow the majority faith of Islam.

Threats and persecution are a common occurrence. Many cannot find work to support their families. We stand with these dear Christians on your behalf.

- * The enlargement of ministries to Syrian refugees.

The Turkish pastors we work with are active in showing the love of Jesus to refugees. They are setting up care and learning centers and are making a huge difference in these difficult days!

Thank you for your partnership!



FAITH IN CHRIST MINISTRIES

Pastor Joe and Gwynn Browne



A Special Life Encouraging Trip to the Holy Land



Change is inevitable; change isn't always easy. Thank goodness, God never changes. God is faithful and continues to provide in changing times. Pastor Joe and Gwynn are so grateful for the opportunity to have visited the land May 2019 where Jesus walked and ministered.

Pastor Joe and Gwynn were photographed in front of the massive lion. Looking at it confirms my inner sense of our Lord saying "I AM with you." The blue butterfly is a reminder that His mercies are new every morning. "Great Is Thy Faithfulness".

Our main prayer in 2019 was to have a youth leader for the youth in our community. September 2020, God has given an intern for 1 day a week for our youth.

So with great anticipation for the coming year of 2020, we will walk with the Lord in determining His will.

AND THEN COVID-19 HIT

So, when COVID-19 hit, we said "So What!"

People will still be hungry. FICM never stopped serving. Our main food team was comprised of adults with underlying health conditions of over 50 years of age. Fear raised its head for just a moment, but God already had a brand new team of volunteers ready to step in to carry on, to ensure Pastor Joe's vision never dims.

God protects as we adhere to all the current CDC guidelines. It's certainly our fortune, a blessing, that God has Ms. Val Peacock, a retired nurse to keep us on point. Thank you Ms. Val.

Thank you ABCOFLASH Regional office for the N-95 masks we have shared with our essential workers and clients who come for our food program.

THE 2019 SCHEDULE

Saturday Breakfast 9 am	Boxes of Love for 50 families
Tuesday Bagged Groceries 9 am	Navidad En El Barrio serving 144 families
Thanksgiving Day Celebration, 2,000 + meals served	Christmas Day Meals and gifts for children

To Donate or Volunteer in person or virtually, Call 323-291-9636 or Email: gwynn@ficmla.com

FAITH IN CHRIST MINISTRIES

Pastor Joe and Gwynn Browne



2019 Numbers

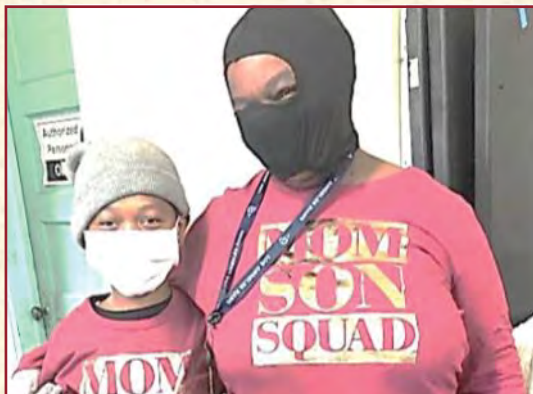
- 1820 Breakfast meals served
- 2080 bagged groceries distributed
- 832 homeless bags given
- 14,000 pounds of Idaho potatoes received from New Plymouth FBC Idaho, lead by Pastor Phil Pittman who brought a team down for a week working with FICM and a church in Long Beach.



One of the 14 plus volunteer groups through Center for Student Missions from 2019 to 3/5/2020.



Our faithful volunteers from Park Windsor BC, Pastor Song and his family and community young adults who have grown up with us.



4501 S Western Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90062 gwynn@ficmla.com

REGIONAL MINISTERIAL TEAM

Rev. Andy Quiant, Executive Minister

Dr. Dennis Casaje, Regional Resource Minister, Asian Ministries

Rev. Stan Crews, Regional Resource Minister, Arizona Association

Rev. Doug Hubbard, Regional Resource Minister, Youth and Global Missions

Dr. Barry Lovett, Regional Resource Minister, Hawaii Association

Dr. Jose Menendez, Regional Resource Minister, Latino Ministries

Rev. Van Tarpley, Regional Resource Minister, San Diego/Orange County Association

Dr. Tahlib McMichaux, Regional Resource Minister, Urban Ministries

Dr. Samuel Chetti, Executive Minister Emeritus

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Ms. Charlotte Chang, Regional Business Manager

Ms. Deborah Gentry, Regional Coordinator

REGIONAL SUPPORT TEAM

Mrs. Gloria Bravo, Staff Support

Ms. Tina Tome, Administrative Assistant, Accounting

Mrs. Berta Villacorta, Administrative Assistant, Latino Ministries



American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles, Southwest and Hawaii
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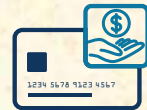
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