

NET



“those who understood the times
and knew what Israel should do...”

1 Chronicles 12:32



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF
LOS ANGELES, SOUTHWEST AND HAWAII
**ANNUAL MINISTRY REPORT
2020-2021**

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EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT

Rev. Andy Quient



Rev. Andy Quient

Dear Friends,

The theme for this year's region-wide annual meeting is "Next!" You might hear that expression and think of being in the food line or at the dry cleaners; you hear that it is your turn, and you're next—it's a good thing! Conversely, in the pandemic mindset, the word might evoke fear and dread. "Uh oh, Joe Bagadonuts has got it, gulp, maybe I'm next." Still, others might desire to move to the middle, to the status quo. Case in point, I'm hearing a new phrase being tossed around as some are admonishing people to prepare for the "next normal."

Frankly, as much as I crave the next "normal" or the status quo, when I am at my best I realize that what I really want is what God wants, whether I, or anyone else, considers it "normal." I desperately want to be open to His will, not mine. My prayer is that He crucify my flesh so that I no longer live, but that He live in me (Galatians 2:20).

It has been a difficult year. We have had to do ministry differently, and we've lost loved ones to Covid and other causes. Yet, not once did I hear any member of your ABCOFLASH staff pine for the "way it was before" or state that "we can't do it that way; we've never done it like that." To the contrary, they've kept our mission and values in focus as they've found new ways to do ministry. What is that mission?

We continue to exist to make churches stronger. Keep in mind that "we" does not simply mean the staff alone! "We" includes you, us (including our volunteers and board members), our churches, and especially the God that we all so faithfully serve. To help make churches stronger we have (forgive the "EPIC" acrostic, old preacher habits die hard!) continued to:

EQUIP OUR CHURCHES. While our "in-person" events were scaled back as we followed the ever changing federal, state, and local guidelines, we did not stop conferring with our people. Supplementing the many one-on-one phone, text, and email encounters, we did God's business via Zoom, including our popular weekly calls and special topical discussions. So I don't "steal their thunder," please see the reports on the following pages from your Region Resource Ministers (RRM's). I am so proud of them.

PROTECT PROPERTY. Whether large or small, churches can be vulnerable to takeovers, either from malicious or benign motivations. It is important to see the legacy of past saints honored and the cause of Christ continued. Therefore, your region has spent a lot of money and has interviewed several lawyers to come up with the best approaches to protect church properties. While the approach may vary, depending upon your church's needs, in most cases the church continues to hold title and functions as they were before. As American Baptists, we value church autonomy. Your region is here to support, not dictate, your efforts. With property protection, your church continues to make decisions, independently, in the best interest of your local congregation. Because it is such an important program, ABCOFLASH is willing to pay for the paperwork and legal fees, yet the attorneys will work directly with your church, acting according to your board's instructions.

EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT

Rev. Andy Quient

CONTINUED

INTERVENE (when asked). Believe it or not, even good Christians can disagree from time to time. Fortunately, we Baptists are unified, right? Not hardly; that is why there are over 70 different Baptist denominations in this country alone. To stave off potential division, your region and ABC (American Baptist Churches) value the autonomy of the local church. We focus on Jesus, agree to disagree on some of the lesser issues, and do mission together. This year it has been our honor to help a few of our churches walk through difficulties.

CONNECT. My personal report card has some good marks and some not-so-good marks in this area. With roughly 150 churches (spread out over a significant portion of four states), dedicated missionaries, our regionally validated ministries (see their reports, too!), and several connections within the ABC family, I am not always able to connect with everyone as I would like. Having said that, if I have missed a visit with your church, I'll take most of the blame! However, please do me a favor...invite me! I have NEVER refused an invitation for a meeting, to preach, or simply attend church, unless I'm already booked elsewhere. I have even made the great sacrifice of visiting our Hawaii churches! (I know, it's a tough job...) I can't do it alone; that is why I rely on your Region Resource Ministers (RRM's). I love how much they care about you. Have I mentioned how proud I am of them?

On a related note, I would be remiss if I didn't mention your other ABCOFLASH staff members. They do not have a by-line in the reports on these pages and don't appear on the platform, but they are essential to what we do every day. In the accounting office we have Charlotte and Tina. Deborah works with the office of the Executive Minister and supports our RRM's, Berta coordinates our Latino Ministries, and Gloria takes care of our facility and works on a plethora of special projects. Some of our staff are part-time but all are full-time in their dedication and love for you and The Lord!

Speaking of "part-time," we have many volunteers who are paid in "heavenly rewards." Included in this group are our committee members, like our ordination committee, headed up last calendar year by Rev. Melanie Mar-Chow and this year by Pastor Shawn Zambrows of First Baptist, Redlands. Last, but not least (they are my bosses, after all!), is our board of directors. They are dedicated and give their time unselfishly; I'm grateful for their prayerful leadership and hope you are, too!

Finally, I stand on the shoulders of giants, like past leaders, including my immediate predecessor, Dr. Sam Chetti. He is consistently a source of inspiration and wise counsel.

Even after a challenging year, your region is stronger spiritually, financially, and in so many other practical ways. Thanks to you, with your dedication and encouragement, I can say, "Next!" in glorious anticipation of what the Lord has for us next in this corner of the vineyard we call the American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles, Southwest, and Hawaii.

In His Service (and yours),

Andy

Executive Minister

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 2020 and 2021 until the end of June.

OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUE	Jan-Jun 2020	Jan-Jun 2021
United Mission	\$51,595.05	\$55,802.18
America for Christ	8,666.18	5,375.99
World Mission Offering	19,427.42	21,584.90
Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering	27,397.58	7,133.95
One Great Hour of Sharing	10,289.99	3,468.38
Region Offering	46,400.29	52,517.49
Institutional Support Program	4,416.65	7,425.22
Specifics	32,350.83	19,930.31
Targeted	98,294.98	108,053.22
Total	298,838.97	281,291.64
Portion of Support for ABCOFLASH Ministries	\$85,431.16	\$92,354.25

ABCOFLASH SUPPORT

your gifts help support:

- Annual Celebrations
- Arizona Association Annual Meeting
- Board of Directors
- Church Legal Assistance
- Church Property Protection
- Conclaves and Consultations
- Financial Commitments to ABCUSA
- Hawaii Association Annual Meeting
- New Church Planting Program
- Pastor and Church Hardship Assistance
- Resource Staff Travel and Other Expenses
- Specific International Ministries Projects
- Training Events
- 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
Ministry to adults with developmental disabilities
 - Turkish Connection
Church Planting & Pastoral Care in Turkey

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Steve Simons

As I was driving to the gym at 5:30 this morning to work out, my thoughts were drawn to the days of my youth. Sunday morning church services, supper at the grandparents, and far fewer problems in the world. My, how the times have changed. Or have they really? In Malachi 3:6, we hear the Lord's words, "I the Lord do not change."

Over the years, our mission at ABCOFLASH has not changed. Read our Mission Statement – it starts with "Our mission is to Plant and develop healthy congregations that manifest the glory of God in worship and proclaim the Kingdom of God on earth..." This has been our mission since the early days.

In the early 60s, our mission field included the San Fernando Valley. Thanks to the generosity of one of our supporters, we planted small neighborhood churches throughout the San Fernando Valley. I grew up in one of those church plants. I still attend one of those church plants. Now our mission fields include all of the Los Angeles and Southern California Region, the Southwestern portion of the United States, and Hawaii.

With the COVID problems of the past 20 months, the challenge has been to reach those mission fields. Looking to Ecclesiastes 3:1, we read, "There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens..." Yes, our message stays the same, but our method has changed. With the Lord's guidance, we have continued our mission efforts. Only now, we reach out online, via Zoom conferences, social media outreach, and more. And yes, we still do face-to-face ministry as well. Through the efforts of our dedicated staff, we have seen continued growth in our ministries.

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus tells us:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

As the times change and our new normal becomes part of our daily practices, we will continue to reach out, to conduct Christian educational and conferencing ministries designed to impact those in the community through the teachings and values of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here at ABCOFLASH, we will continue to proclaim the Word of God to all those we can reach.



Mr. Steve Simons

Steve

BOARD MEMBERS • 2020-2021

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

TREASURER'S REPORT

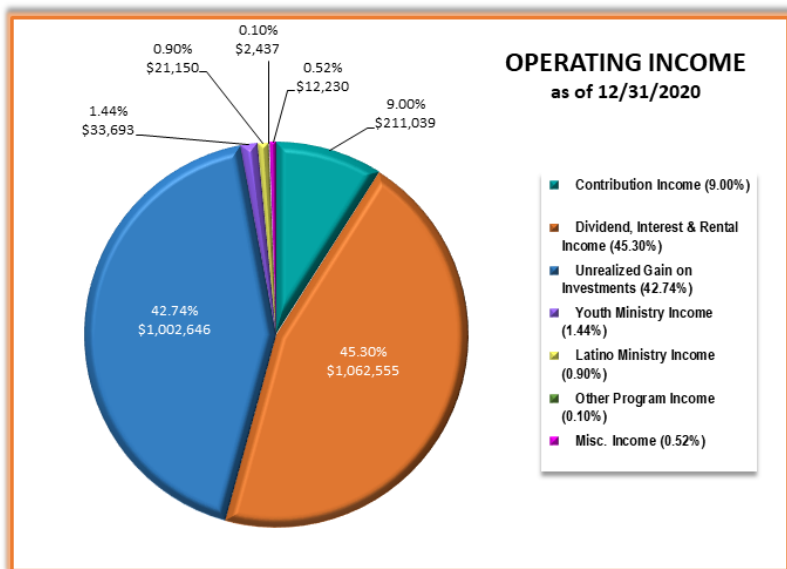
Mrs. Lydia Floyd, Treasurer

The ABCOFLASH board has worked to examine the financial statements and make decisions to improve or maintain our financial position. The staff has ensured that expenditures did not exceed budgeted amounts. We consider this our work, God's work, to manage the finances as well as govern. In a time of what is being called recovery, we have not recovered, not yet. Recovery means the process of combating an issue or problem. We are still fighting, but we have not won because the battle is not ours – it is His. As long as we continue God's work, he will see to it that we recover, in due time – His time, not ours.

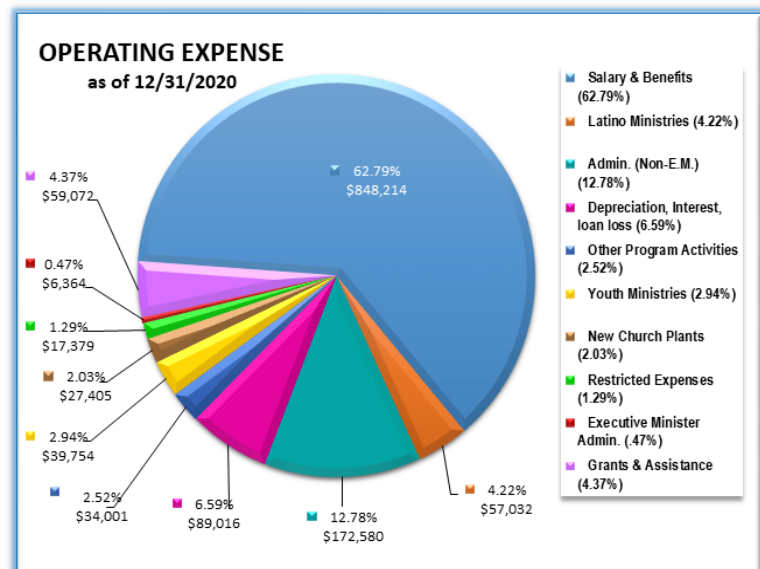


Mrs. Lydia Floyd

As churches reopen, our work is to keep everyone safe. When we plan for events and activities, we should do so slowly, with forethought. Our budgets have changed drastically. In-person gatherings have decreased, so income and funding have also decreased. Due to this, we have to spend responsibly and gradually return to some type of normalcy when we can. Proper financial management is a part of our commitment to the future of our churches and our community. It is an honor to serve as Treasurer and work with an excellent board and staff to maintain our finances in the face of the current crisis. We are here to assist church leadership. Please do not hesitate to contact the ABCOFLASH office should you need any type of assistance.



OPERATING INCOME



OPERATING EXPENSE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

Current Assets

	2020	2019
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 841,892	\$ 652,219
Accounts receivable	85,008	57,063
Prepaid and other assets	27,052	42,486
Accrued interest	56,338	67,982
Promise-to-give receivable	48,925	220,000
Notes receivable - current	582,297	975,737
Total Current Assets	1,641,512	2,015,487
Investments	7,104,410	5,569,936
Notes receivable, net of current	18,009,682	18,003,607
Certificate of Deposit	230,384	230,384
Investment In real estate	735,000	735,000
Equipment and improvements, at cost, net	113,658	56,023
Total Assets	\$ 27,834,646	\$ 26,610,437

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Accounts payable	26,471	22,482
Accrued expenses	82,477	87,567
Forgivable loan	166,400	-
Current portion of notes payable	29,759	1,279,714
Capital leases payable - current	41,465	24,165
Total Current Liabilities	346,572	1,413,928
Notes payable, net of current	1,236,206	-
Capital leases payable, net of current	83,022	22,596
Total Liabilities	1,665,800	1,436,524

Net Assets

Net assets without donor restrictions	24,320,083	23,241,080
Net assets with donor restrictions	1,848,763	1,932,833
Total Net Assets	26,168,846	25,173,913
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 27,834,646	\$ 26,610,437

Note: Financial Statement from Independent Accountant's Review Report, Dec 31, 2020 and 2019

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY

	2020			2019		
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUE						
Contribution income	\$ 146,161	\$ 64,878	\$ 211,039	\$ 183,193	\$ 234,242	\$ 417,435
Investment income						
Notes receivable interest income	792,418		792,418	809,519		809,519
Dividend, interest and rental income	173,146	96,991	270,137	338,371	75,079	413,450
Unrealized gain(loss) on investments	1,002,646	-	1,002,646	836,774		836,774
Youth ministry income	33,693		33,693	56,565		56,565
Latino ministry income	21,150		21,150	157,501		157,501
Other program income	2,437		2,437	31,224		31,224
Miscellaneous income	12,230		12,230	23,530		23,530
Net assets released from restrictions						
Release time restriction of promise to give	220,000	(220,000)	-	-		-
Release specific ministry projects	25,939	(25,939)	-	47,779	(47,779)	-
Total Support and Revenue	\$ 2,429,820	\$ (84,070)	\$ 2,345,750	\$ 2,484,456	\$ 261,542	\$ 2,745,998
OPERATING EXPENSES						
Administration (Non E.M.)	172,580	-	172,580	203,632	-	203,632
Salary & Benefits	848,214	-	848,214	846,245	-	846,245
Executive Minister Administration	6,364	-	6,364	14,149	-	14,149
Latino Ministries	57,032	-	57,032	227,141	-	227,141
Youth Ministries	39,754	-	39,754	70,622	-	70,622
Other program activities	34,001	-	34,001	85,413	-	85,413
Restricted Expenses	17,379	-	17,379	35,777	-	35,777
New Church Planting	27,405	-	27,405	43,583	-	43,583
Grants and assistance	59,072	-	59,072	30,446	-	30,446
Depreciation	17,196	-	17,196	28,695	-	28,695
Reserve for loan loss	-	-	-	20,000	-	20,000
Interest expense	71,820	-	71,820	70,420	-	70,420
Total Expenses	\$ 1,350,817	\$ -	\$ 1,350,817	\$ 1,676,123	\$ -	\$ 1,676,123
Change in Net Assets Before Non-operating Revenue	\$ 1,079,003	\$ (84,070)	\$ 994,933	\$ 808,333	\$ 261,542	\$ 1,069,875
NONOPERATING REVENUE						
Gain on sale of property	-	-	-	-	-	-
Change in Net Assets	\$ 1,079,003	\$ (84,070)	\$ 994,933	\$ 808,333	\$ 261,542	\$ 1,069,875
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	23,241,080	1,932,833	25,173,913	22,432,747	1,671,291	24,104,038
Net Assets, End of Year	\$ 24,320,083	\$ 1,848,763	\$ 26,168,846	\$ 23,241,080	\$ 1,932,833	\$ 25,173,913

Note: Financial Statement from Independent Accountant's Review Report, Dec 31, 2020 and 2019

ORDINATION STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Rev. Dr. Shawn Zambrows, Chair

One of the important responsibilities of the wider body of American Baptist Churches is to support churches in the ordination of ministerial leadership. A church recognizes the call of God on a woman or man's life and requests the region of churches affirm that calling and make a recommendation to the church to ordain that candidate. ABCOFLASH does this process through the Ordination Standards Committee.

Joined by some regional staff, the members of the Ordination Standards Committee for 2021 are:

- Rev. Brandon Bouldin, Park Windsor Baptist Church, Los Angeles
- Rev. Dr. Seth Clark, First Baptist Church, National City
- Rev. Janna Louie, Epic Church, Fullerton
- Rev. Victor Olivas, Primera Iglesia Bautista Panorama, Arleta
- Rev. Dr. William Thurmond, Retired
- Rev. Alvin Tunstill, Jr., Trinity Baptist Church, Los Angeles
- Rev. Dr. Shawn Zambrows, First Baptist Church, Redlands

In 2020, two candidates came before the committee and, after examination, were recommended to their respective churches for ordination. These candidates were Alejandro Roque of Primera Iglesia Hispana de Lompoc on February 7 and Thien An (Mary) N. Duong of First Baptist Church of Maywood on April 13.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve on this committee, being a part of the process of the raising up of ministerial leadership within the American Baptist Family and the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Thien An (Mary) N. Duong during the Ordination Standards Committee meeting. Her ordination service was held on Saturday, September 25 at the First Baptist Church of Maywood, California where Pastor Melvin Valiente serves as the Senior Pastor.

YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS

Rev. Doug Hubbard, Regional Minister

The churches in our region have been challenged in facilitating ministry during this Pandemic. Much of regional ministry took place virtually as we continued to discover new ways to provide resources in equipping churches for ministry. Our prayer is that all of us will seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for new and fresh ways to reach people with the love of Jesus and provide leaders with the tools for effective ministry! Here are a few highlights of the past year:

The Friday Conversations

When the Covid-19 Pandemic began in March of 2020, ABCOFLASH started "The Friday Conversation." The weekly meetings continued until June of 2021. Pastors and leaders gathered on Zoom to connect for conversation around current events, sharing of concerns, prayer, and presentations on various topics, including:

- Black History Month in February included hearing from Dr. Jini Cockcroft and her experience of the Civil Rights Movement and working with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Women's History Month in March featured Lauran Bethell, American Baptist Global Servant, serving with International Ministries, and additional sessions that focused on the ordination of women.
- Hearing from International Ministry Global Servants: Glen and Rita Chapman (the Democratic Republic of the Congo); Jon and Amanda Good (Hungary); Melanie Baggao (Lebanon); Deliris & Moise Carrión-Joseph.
- Connecting with Dr. Jeff Woods – Interim General Secretary, ABC/USA; Dr. Jeffrey Haggray - Executive Director - American Baptist Home Mission Societies and Judson Press; Rev. Sharon Koh - Executive Director and CEO - International Ministries.

Through our Friday gatherings, a deep sense of community developed among those in attendance every week. One of our pastors who attended the Friday Conversations was Dr. Bill Godwin, Pastor of Peace Christian Fellowship in Desert Hot Springs. Bill would always sign on early and talk about his life, ministry, and beloved Dodgers and Lakers. He also shared about his health challenges and upcoming surgery. Sadly, Bill passed away while recovering from that surgery in March. After his passing, those who gathered on Friday mourned his death and thanked God for his life. Our ABCOFLASH family misses Bill and profoundly appreciates the warmth he shared with everyone and his passion for ministry, justice, and American Baptists.

Walter Clarke from Panorama Baptist Church, who attended many of the Friday Conversations, shared his thoughts about our time together: "I want to thank ABCOFLASH for arranging the Friday with the pastors' sessions. They were particularly interesting and stimulating. It was great to see old faces and to meet some new, energetic young faces. I appreciate the cross-section of our denomination. During the height of the Pandemic, we had each other to pray for our country and the world. I can sum up my experience in 5 words, To God Be The Glory."



In January, Silvia Hernandez gave a presentation on "Dealing with Mental Health Challenges" in the Pandemic.

YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS

Rev. Doug Hubbard, Regional Minister

CONTINUED

Praying For Myanmar

In February, we learned about what was happening in Myanmar. The first American Baptist missionary was Adoniram Judson, who went to Burma 200 years ago. His legacy continues until today with many believers in Myanmar who continue to connect to American Baptists. We learned the history, the government struggle, and the fight for freedom and democracy.



Children's Ministry - Workshops and Connecting on Zoom.

While many churches were not meeting in person during the Pandemic, those serving in children's ministry struggled to find ways to minister to children. In November of 2020 and April of 2021 ABCOFLASH offered two workshops on Children's Ministry. We also provided several Saturday morning Zoom meetings for those involved in Children's ministry to come together to share ideas and support one another in the challenge of leading Children's ministry in a pandemic. Rev. Cheryl Sneller from First Baptist Church of Redlands facilitated those gatherings.

Pat Brabon, a Sunday School teacher from Temple Baptist Church of Los Angeles, attended all the workshops and Saturday morning meetings. She shared some reflections of those meetings:

"Ministry has changed in this time of Covid. I have appreciated having the Zoom workshops on Children's Ministry to keep learning and being encouraged in my work with children. The monthly conversations with others serving in children and youth ministry have provided ideas and solutions to the challenges presented online and in-person changes our usual way of doing ministry. The workshops and conversations have provided a way to turn obstacles into opportunities."

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY WORKSHOPS

KELLI ESPIRITU ROMERO

Saturday, November 14, 2020

5 Things We Need To Unlearn When Teaching Children Online After Disruption

Have you noticed the novelty of online teaching has lost its curiosity and impact on the children you teach? Well, there are some pre-Covid methods that need our attention and adjustment if we're going to be effective teachers heading into our tomorrow's.



Ali Tonnesen

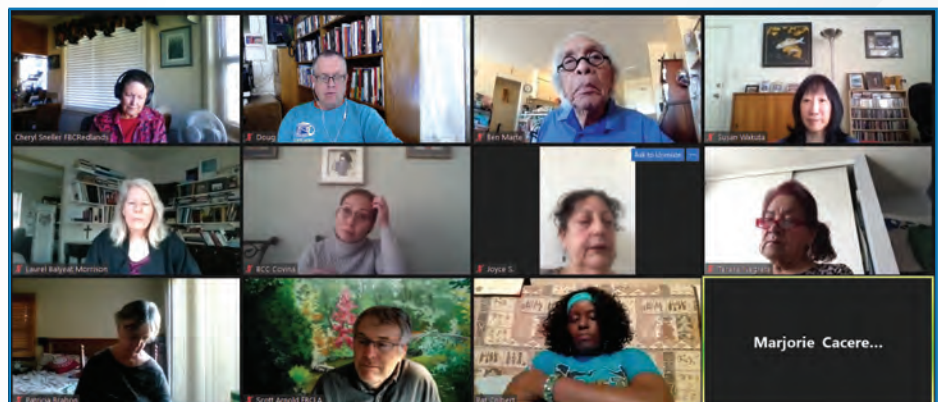
Saturday, April 10, 2021 @ 10 AM

The Return after Exile: Reopening Children's Ministries

We'll be discussing what our post-covid church experience will be like: how to prepare to reenter a physical space for children's ministry. Drawing from the Israelite's Babylonian captivity, we'll also discuss how to spiritually reengage in children's ministry.



Children's Ministry Workshops



Children's Ministry Conversation

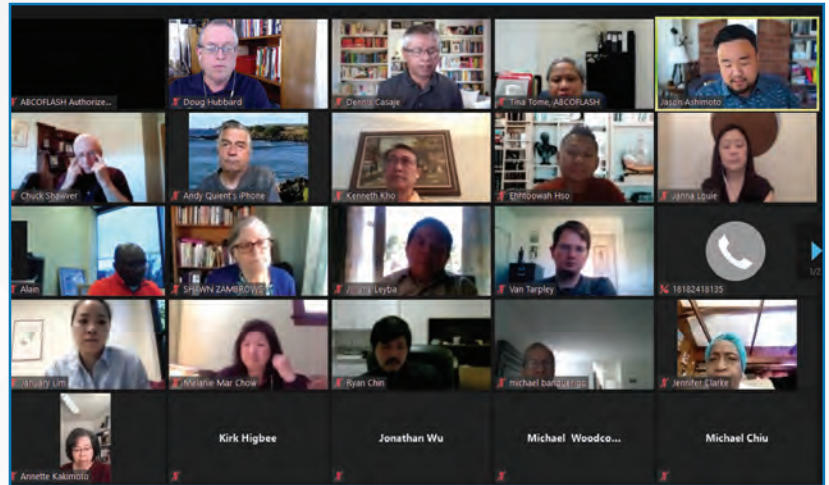
YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS

Rev. Doug Hubbard, Regional Minister

CONTINUED

Supporting, Listening, and Praying With Our Asian American Churches and Community - March 2021

In light of the Atlanta shooting in March and the rise of discrimination against Asian Americans, we were invited to listen to the concerns of Asian American leaders in our region. We heard from Pastor Ehhtowah Hso, Arizona Karen Baptist Church in Phoenix; Pastor Jobeth Leyba, Valley Christian Outreach Church; Rev. Janna Louie, Epic Church; Worship Pastor January Lim, Evergreen Baptist Church of L.A.; Rev. Jason Ashimoto, Evergreen Baptist Church of L.A.; and, Rev. Dennis Casaje, who facilitated the follow-up discussion. We concluded our meeting with prayer. It was an enlightening time for all who participated.



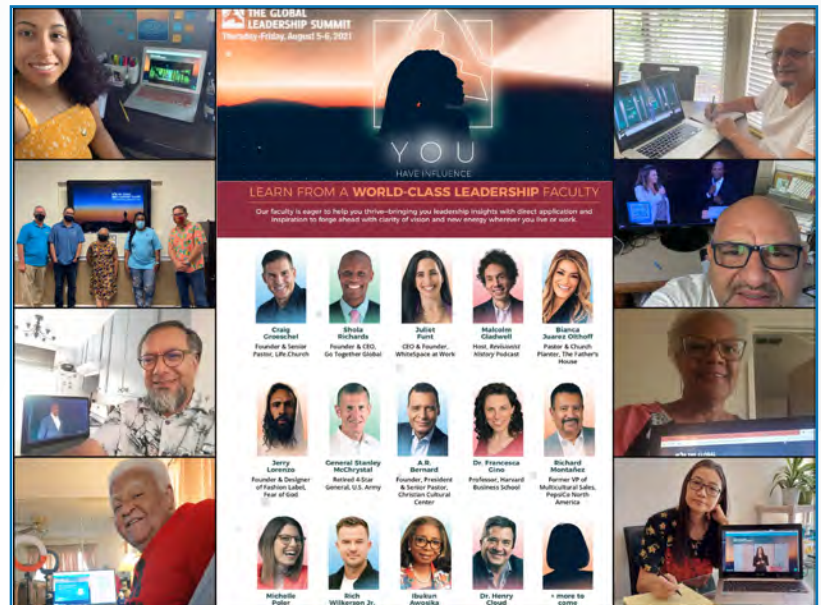
Global Leadership Summit - August 5-6, 2021

The Global Leadership Summit (August 5-6) is an annual opportunity for church leaders to be challenged and inspired by some of the world's top experts and thought leaders in leadership. This region offers opportunities to equip leaders to impact the churches and communities where they serve effectively.

Here are some reflections from a few of the GLS participants:

"Pastor Craig Groeschel's session was full of empiric wisdom. Michelle Poler's perspective of life on facing her fears is invigorating, to say the least! General Stanley McCrystal's presentation is so illustrative about how to make any organization work better. Soula Richards was so refreshing with KINDNESS vs. Niceness/Politeness. Ibukun Awosika was so emphatic regarding INTEGRITY. Thanks for inviting us to take advantage of such great teachings!" - *Pastor Angel Campos - Monte Vista Cross-Cultural Church - Phoenix*

"Bianca Olthoff presented this dynamic session, 'Chosen to Lead.' I believe that all who have chosen to attend this conference have been chosen to lead, have a desire to lead; and realize that leadership requires preparation, continual education, and training." *Rev. Venus Butler - Second Baptist Church, Los Angeles*



Global Leadership Summit

YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS

Rev. Doug Hubbard, Regional Minister

CONTINUED

Global Leadership Summit - August 5-6, 2021 - Continued

"The Global Leadership Summit has reminded me of our purpose, our capability, and our strength in Christ even when everything is stacked up against us when we are confronted with rejection, or we become weak and tired as humans. It has taught me the importance of being a leader that not only leads by doing but that cares and wants to see others succeed in the will God has for them." *Phoebe Gabriel - First Baptist Church of South Gate*

"The GLS impacted my life because I can relate to some of the speakers, especially in their persistence. Never let go of the dream. It also impacted me to be reminded that we have been chosen as leaders, even though we have not been seeking to be leaders. I am glad I said 'Yes' to God. The new word 'PUC' presented by Craig Groeschel also impacted me because pain is necessary for the leader. A good leader has to experience Pain. Also, moments of 'uncertainty' are a time of opportunity because this time of 'uncertainty' creates opportunities that come unexpectedly. We also have to go through 'chaos' and not avoid it; knowing that through the chaotic moments, the Lord is with us. The leader not only plans for the opportunities, but also for the unexpected situations that come their way." *Pastors German and Zandra Galvez - Iglesia Camino Al Cielo*

Growing Young - January - October 2021

Churches from our region were invited to participate in the "Growing Young" cohort with churches from American Baptist churches across the country to learn and implement these principles in their churches:

- Unlock keychain leadership
- Empathize with today's young people
- Take Jesus' message seriously
- Fuel a warm community
- Prioritize young people (and families) everywhere
- Be the best neighbors

The American Baptist Home Mission Societies offered this opportunity to help churches address the challenge of keeping young people connected to their faith and their church community in light of the trend of young people leaving the church.

Four churches from our region participated and have begun to see the impact in their churches. *Dr. Scott Arnold, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Los Angeles*, shared his reflection of the Growing Young process: "Growing Young has provided a process for listening, and a diagnostic tool to assess our church's DNA. We realize our strengths and weaknesses in our ministries more clearly with youth, children, and young adults. We have discovered ways we have both succeeded and failed at being a nurturing community for upcoming generations. The application of initial understanding has helped us begin claiming our adaptive challenges, and we must move into God's future going beyond our previous approaches, breaking into God's call to care and respond to younger generations and our diverse urban community."

YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS

Rev. Doug Hubbard, Regional Minister

CONTINUED

Growing Young - January - October 2021 - Continued

Leila Kho from Temple Baptist Church of Los Angeles, wrote her reflection of the Growing Young process for her church: “Although our church is a smaller church, we managed to bring together our Growing Young Committee composed of five members. After completing our initial assessment, the group committed to having weekly Zoom meetings every Wednesday evening for eight weeks. Every week, we discussed our learnings about one of the core commitments based on the video presentations provided by the Fuller Youth Institute. We engaged in thoughtful conversation, answered each other’s questions, and planned for the future. Additionally, the committee gathered once more to discuss the results of the one-on-one interviews each committee member had for the Listening Project. This project focused on getting direct responses and opinions from the youth and young adults regarding their views on the church. Following those eight weeks, we decided to present the Growing Young project to the congregation. We are presenting this project by directly connecting each topic to the sermon. Each sermon is preceded by a presentation that introduces that individual core theme or topic. Pastor Kenneth Kho integrates the coinciding theme with the sermon. Following the church service, the afternoon Bible study sessions continue the conversation by sharing the videos by the Fuller Youth Institute with those who attend. This gives the congregation another opportunity to properly understand the core commitments of Growing Young, ask questions, and share their own opinions, ideas, or suggestions.”

Connecting with Youth Pastors and Leaders



Youth Pastors met several times throughout the year for support and sharing ideas about doing ministry in this challenging context. Additional meetings were held with volunteer youth leaders to connect and share resources.

YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS

Rev. Doug Hubbard, Regional Minister

CONTINUED

Global Mission

We encourage churches to support the mission work through American Baptist Global Servants serving with International Ministries. These Global Servants need support through prayer and finances from churches and individuals and giving to the World Mission Offering and United Mission. You can learn more about Global Servants at <https://www.internationalministries.org/>. Take advantage of their presence when they are in the area and invite them to connect with your church! Ask them to connect through Zoom or send a video greeting to update your church on their ministry if they aren't here!

Here are updates of the Global Servants connected with ABCOFLASH:

- *Mike and Jill Lowery*, who served in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have returned to the U.S. Mike's retirement will be effective at the end of 2021. Jill is now serving as a Donor Advisor with International Ministries. They are living in Southern California.
- *Glen and Rita Chapman*, who also served in the D.R. Congo, will retire at the end of 2021 and live in Redlands.
- *Ingrid Roldan Roman* has retired from serving with International Ministries but continues to live in Panama doing the same ministry, but not as a Global Servant.
- *Faye Yarbrough* was commissioned in June of 2020 and moved to South Africa to begin her ministry in January of 2021.



- *Jae Stockton* was commissioned in February for ministry in Mexico and is attending language school and will move to Mexicali in the Spring.
- *Moise Carrión-Joseph* was commissioned as a Global Servant with International Ministries in September of 2021. Moise and his wife Deliris are returning to Tijuana early in 2022 to begin their ministry with migrants settling in Tijuana and to continue serving with Deborah's House, a home for women and their families who have experienced domestic violence.
- *Pieter and Nora Kalkman* are returning to the U.S. in the Fall of 2021 from Europe and will be sharing their ministry with churches in our region and around the U.S. They will be living in Southern California.



YOUTH & GLOBAL MISSIONS

Rev. Doug Hubbard, Regional Minister

CONTINUED

Global Mission - Continued

- *Lauran Bethell* has moved to Fresno and continues to serve as a Global Consultant to help fight human trafficking.
- *Juan and Denise Aragón* have completed their first term of service in Mexico and are spending their deputation year in Nicaragua.
- *Tim and Patti Long* continue to serve in Mexicali at the seminary and teach students in the Palmer Seminary program for students all over Latin America.
- *Joseph and Amy Vo* are continuing to raise support as they prepare to serve in Vietnam. They live in Orange County.



- *Mike and Becky Mann* continue to serve in development and agricultural ministry in Northern Thailand.
- *Emerson and Ivy Wu* have returned to the United States for deputation and are preparing to return to China.
- *Phil and Corenne Smith* continue to bring hope and new life to youth with broken lives in Brazil.



- *Matt and Lori Mann* are in the United States to raise support to continue their ministry with children in Laos.
- *Daniel and Sarah Chetti* continue to serve in Lebanon in equipping those who share God's love in the Middle East.
- *Melanie Baggao* serves refugees in Lebanon looking for hope and new ways to build their lives.
- *Rich Freeman* continues to support pastors and church planting in Turkey. Rich and Laura live in Southern California.



ASIAN MINISTRIES

Dr. Dennis Casaje, Regional Resource Minister

Since the beginning of last year, we have witnessed and experienced two dreadful and very deadly things.

First, it's the Covid-19 virus that wrought havoc on our lives, economy, and plans.

Second, it's something that has been in the heart of man.... "HATE," specifically against Asians.

Focusing on the state of California, the article "Covid 'hate crimes' against Asian Americans on rise" (BBC News, 21 May 2021) reports:

- From March to May 2020 alone, over 800 Covid-related hate incidents were reported from 34 counties of the state, according to a report released by the Asian Pacific Policy Planning Council.
- Those numbers have since intensified in Orange County, where anti-Asian hate incidents are up by an estimated 1200%, according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism.
- In neighbouring Los Angeles County, hate crimes against Asian Americans are up 115%, CBS News reported.

On March 24, 2021, our ABCOFLASH region responded to this concern by sponsoring a well-attended Zoom conference where participants listened to testimonies and presentations by our Asian American pastors and church leaders and prayed for our Asian churches and community.

With unwavering faith and courage, our ABCOFLASH Asian American Baptist churches continue to proclaim and show God's love and fulfill the Great Commission.



Chevy Chase Baptist Church "Fathers' Sunday" with Pastor Nilo Banquerigo

ASIAN MINISTRIES

Dr. Dennis Casaje, Regional Resource Minister

CONTINUED



WILSHIRE BAPTIST CHURCH of Los Angeles celebrated its 108th Church Anniversary despite the pandemic. WBC always participates in the country's National Day of Prayer aside from having its Annual Prayer Sunday at the beginning of the year.



Pastor Htwe Din Nyu with some of the Burmese Christian Church family, joined in the tour to the Holy Land. ▲►



WBC's Prayer Caravan "Drive, Stop, & Pray," Prayer & Fast for Election, Ladies Tea Party & Men's Gathering via Zoom were also some highlights of 2020.



LATINO MINISTRIES

Dr. Jose Menendez, Regional Resource Minister

Pastors and lay leaders from our American Baptist churches, as we are still struggling with the pandemic post effects, what has the Lord been teaching me and you about ministry during the pandemic?

We were closed and suspended many events and activities from the middle of March 2020 to April 2021. We have fewer events to report, but during the pandemic there were a lot of needs among churches, pastors and the families from our Latino ministries.

Millions of Americans embrace worship as an essential part of life. For many faith traditions, gathering together for worship is at the heart of what it means to be a community of faith. But as Americans are now aware, gatherings present a risk for public health.

I know pastors and other vocational ministry leaders will be wondering and asking themselves, “what point has the pandemic affected our ministry and our churches?” Perhaps, you will be searching eagerly to see if anyone has a word of encouragement or a word of wisdom to navigate in the pandemic and after we start reopening all churches.

The vast majority of pastors with different denominations and their lay leaders are saying that the church was not prepared for this pandemic, a trend we have not seen in our lifetime, which will affect the way we will do ministry in the coming years. Why has this period of great discouragement ensued? Of course, it is connected to COVID-19, but the pandemic really just exacerbated trends already in place. We would have likely gotten to this point in the next three to five years regardless.

Our faith in God is not a magic formula that will free us from experiencing tribulations in this world; the apostle Paul, and Peter remind us that the church will go through trials. We will suffer in this world; nevertheless, Jesus will give us the victory thru the end.

Ministry in our Latino churches

In the months of December 2020 and January 2021, I helped with the funerals of four pastors that were called by our Lord. Additionally, when possible, I attended and conducted meeting with pastors following CDC state and local guidelines.



LATINO MINISTRIES

Dr. Jose Menendez, Regional Resource Minister

CONTINUED

In February the Latino churches in Arizona had an event for Sunday School teachers in which I participated by zoom. Later in April 2021, I attended Iglesia Bautista Hispana of Glendale, Arizona celebrated their 101 anniversary. I also participated with some churches and preached live and online.



Additionally, in April we had the ordination of Rev. Alejandro Roque of Primera Iglesia Bautista of Lompoc, CA.



Ministry in our Latino churches

In the month of May I had the blessing to be part of a new service in English with 2nd generation members of the First Baptist church of South Gate with an attendance of 45. Also in May, we had a continuing education retreat for pastors with an attendance of 52 in which we gave tools and ideas on how to restart the churches after the pandemic.

As our churches slowly began to reopen I had visited them, encouraging them through the loss of about 30% of their members and 45% of their giving.



Ministry with women, men, children, and pastors in our Latino churches

As we are able, before the end of 2021, we will have events for men, women, and children. As we look ahead for what God has for us we believe that “the best is yet to come.” The task is big and we approach new challenges with prayers for all the churches, pastors and lay leaders. Let’s reenergize and take the promises of God to “fight the good fight!”

Blessings to all of you!

URBAN MINISTRIES

Dr. Tahlib McMichaux

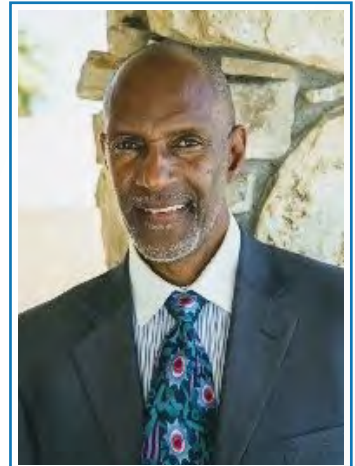
The pandemic and a national lockdown, and the social distancing restriction made a difference in reaching out and connecting with the pastors within our region. With these restrictions, I began to call churches during the pandemic only to find another roadblock which was that many of the church's secretaries were not in the office.

Looking for a way to utilize my time wisely, I got approval to put together a subcommittee to assist me in connecting with the ministers in our region. I knew I needed two experienced and well-connected pastors who believe in the vision of our region as much as I do. Two people came highly recommended:

Pastor Terri Knox – Immanuel Baptist Church

Pastor John L. Jefferson- Del Aire Baptist Church

I am honored to work with these seasoned pastors.



Dr. Tahlib McMichaux

Our first project was to create a three-part survey for all the Urban churches within our region.

Part I. Pastors

This part addresses if pastors were using self-care to stay mentally healthy.

Part II. Congregation

This part of the survey addresses the relevance of the church from the perspective of the congregation.

Part III. Church Leadership

This part of the survey addresses the church's mission and vision and how it can reach its full potential.

Recommendations will be made after the survey is completed. The subcommittee contacted Lydia Floyd, a trainer who agreed to present a series of workshops based on the church's needs:

Financial Management • Nonprofit Management
Board Development • Event Planning
Succession Planning

These workshops can be scheduled by contacting the Urban Ministries Regional Resource Minister or Debbie Gentry (818-839-6070).

After lifting the restriction, my subcommittee and I began calling all the churches within our region to connect. This is an ongoing process and will not be completed until the last minister on our list has been reached.

URBAN MINISTRIES

Dr. Tahlib McMichaux

CONTINUED

Zoom Town Hall

The latest project for the Urban Ministries Resource Subcommittee was a Zoom Town Hall called "Re-Engaging during and after the pandemic."

The purpose of this event was to get pastors and leaders talking about ways to re-engage their congregation in the new norm.



URBAN MINISTRIES RE-ENGAGING AFTER COVID-19 ABCOFLASH Discussion

July 29, 2021, 10:30 a.m.

Dr. Warren H. Stewart, Sr., Keynote Speaker
Senior Pastor of First Institutional Baptist Church,
Phoenix, Arizona

Moderator:

Rev. Dr. Tahlib McMichaux

Panelists:

Rev. Larry Ginn

Rev. Brandon Bouldin

Josh Alvarado

Rev. Dr. James Baylark

Rev. Dr. Bill Thurmond

I have not personally met all the ministers, yet I wish to visit you and experience your service. I would love to hear what is working for you in the region, even those things not working for you. If you have not heard from me, please feel free to call the number listed below, and I will set up a time to meet with you over the upcoming months. Until then, please keep the faith and remember

Romans 12:21,

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."



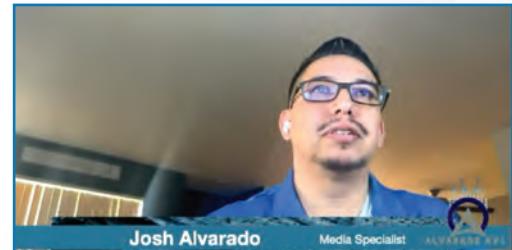
Rev. Larry Ginn



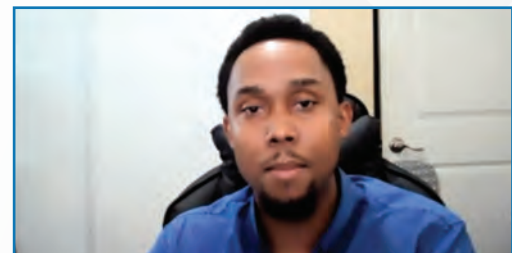
Dr. Warren H. Stewart, Sr.



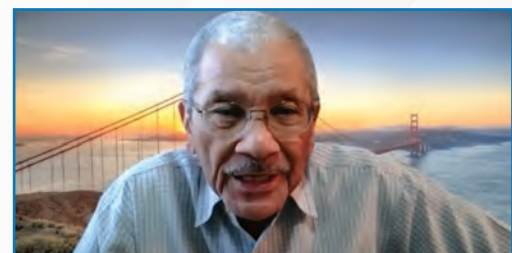
Dr. James Baylark



Mr. Josh Alvarado



Rev. Brandon Bouldin



Dr. William Thurmond

ARIZONA ASSOCIATION

Rev. Stan Crews, Regional Resource Minister

Over the last year and a half, the eight churches of the Arizona Association have been stretched and challenged. They have sought God's will and purpose for their ministries. As people begin to return and things get back to normal, each church praises God for all they have learned and seeks God's new purpose for them in this new time. In this annual report, I would like to focus on one church that houses 3 of the eight churches in our association.

The Monte Vista Baptist Church started in the early 1950s as a neighborhood church in Phoenix. Its early beginnings started in one location and soon moved to the present location on 36th street and Oak within a few years. The vision of the church has always been to minister to the needs of the neighborhood. They have had some great youth programs and VBS programs that focused on the needs of the people that lived around the church. They had some solid visionary pastors who evangelized the community around the church, and the church grew rapidly.

At that time, the neighborhood was primarily Anglo with some Hispanic presence. By the year 2000, the community had changed, and over 80 percent were Hispanic. The church leaders met many times to evaluate what direction they should go. They could sell the church and move north where there was a larger Anglo community or stay where they were and reach out to the Hispanic neighborhood. The decision was to stay and bring on a bilingual pastor that could help start a Hispanic congregation. Over the next few years, a Hispanic church was started. The new pastor of the Hispanic church had a real vision for ministering to the neighborhood's needs. For a while, he became the crossing guard for the local elementary school and soon began to work with the school as a translator.



Youth Retreat



Mikoma family
from Malawai



A guest from
Tonga Sione Vilingia



Pastor Kawpoelah Benny
celebrating his birthday
at the Advisory Board meeting

In 2018, the government agency ICE approached the Hispanic pastor to help with the legal immigrant issue. Many people who had received their documentation were left at the local bus station with no direction as to what was next. Pastor Angel Campos took on this challenge and organized the neighborhood around the church for the next two years to come and help these people find their way. They provided meals, clothes, showers, a place to rest, and many other needs of these people coming to a new country. In 2020 with COVID 19, they had to stop, but they were back at it again the following year. God has used this church to remain faithful to the original call to be a neighborhood church.

Today the Monte Vista houses three churches. Each plays a part in the ministry to the neighborhood. They work together through an Advisory Board to keep the three congregations moving together in neighborhood ministries.

- The Karen (Burmese) church, led by Pastor Tha Ser Tun, ministers to the refugee community that has come to the US from Burma.
- The original Monte Vista Baptist Church, led by Pastor Cindy Darby, continues to reach out to the church's English-speaking community.
- The Hispanic church continues to minister to the neighborhood around the church.

HAWAII ASSOCIATION

Rev. Barry Lovett, Regional Resource Minister

Like for so many of our sister churches 2021 has proved to be another challenging year for our Hawaii churches, but I am happy to report that all our churches are open for in person worship, most continue to provide live streaming & Zoom options, and none have reported any covid cases. Two of our churches report ministering to far more people now than pre-pandemic times.



Rev. Barry Lovett

Throughout the pandemic First Baptist Church of Honolulu has continued to be a place where meals and groceries are distributed three times each week. As the need grew so did the number of people being served each week. Their Operation Christmas Child shoebox ministry has also continued to thrive. Last year over 800 shoeboxes were prepared and delivered to needy children. They are on track to reach that same number this year.



In July Trinity Missionary Baptist Church launched a food distribution ministry and will begin providing groceries and fresh produce to those in need. Also, in July Trinity held its second annual Faith on Fire Tent Revival ministering to the spiritual needs of people as well. Pastor Cook's weekly radio program has especially proven to be a blessing to many who have had limited access to the outside world.



Our Association of Churches will be meeting in person for our Annual Meeting October 16th. We are especially looking forward to gathering this year as we were not able to do so in 2020. This year's event will include

worship, a key-note address, a report on the State of the Region, special music by each participating congregation, and workshops. Covid safety measures are being taken.

As we continue to navigate the waters of these changing, challenging times we are reminded that our God is a God of redemption, and He uses us in the midst of so much that is bad to bring good. To God be the glory!



SAN DIEGO / ORANGE COUNTY ASSOCIATION

Rev. Van Tarpley, Regional Resource Minister

This continues to be a season in which hope and uncertainty wrestle with each other. The major work in San Diego and beyond has been:

1. To equip churches and pastors with reliable information as they make difficult decisions about worship and ministry.
2. To encourage and pray with church leaders as they offer their best to God in a time awash in anger and division.
3. To encourage connections between churches, the region, and the larger American Baptist family to counteract the debilitating effects of isolation.



Rev. Van Tarpley



In our area, we have celebrated the ordination of pastors via Zoom. We have encouraged those taking their first steps into the ordination process. We have discussed the relative merits of indoor worship, outdoor worship, hybrid worship, modes of Christian programming, and ways to fulfill our legal and community obligations as we live out our calling as church. We have taken part in conversations through ABCOFLASH and ABC-USA on the crisis in Myanmar/Burma, justice, what is happening in ministries around the globe, and promising approaches to ministry in our current context.

We face many challenges – housing unaffordability, homelessness, wildfires, and the continuing COVID pandemic. And yet, we look forward in anticipation to all that God continues to do through our churches in the power of God's Spirit.

AMERICAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL CENTER

Dr. Enrique Torres



Dr. Enrique Torres

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

It has been an extraordinary year at the American Baptist Theological Center. Covid-19 has brought new challenges to our students, faculty, and staff. However, new challenges also bring new opportunities better to serve our ABTC community without interruption for academic success.

Student Financial Resources.

The Hispanic Convention Scholarship Committee gives us full support with scholarships to our University of La Verne (ULV) and Fuller students.

KOSA Scholarships: The Fuller Foundation, the administrator of KOSA Scholarships, keeps us well informed about the ABC students receiving a scholarship.

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) provides substantial scholarships to our students.

Student Orientation. Student orientations continue by video conferencing throughout the year

Our Domain and Website. We continue to post valuable information and pictures to our students and constituencies about activities and news related to ABTC (myabtc.org).

Christian Lay Leadership Academies. We continue to serve our constituencies, via the internet, with five lay leadership academies:

A. Los Angeles, CA: Paradise Baptist Church and Hispanic Baptist Church

B. Glendale, AZ: Hispanic First Baptist Church

San Diego, CA: First Mexican Baptist Church

Anaheim, CA: First Baptist Church

Relationship with Fuller Theological Seminary. We maintain a good relationship with Fuller Theological Seminary.

University of La Verne Academic Enhancement. We provide our students with support and advisor skills to our students.

Progress Report of students in our three programs:

A. Fuller: 40 students

B. ULV: 15 active students and 30 transition students, a total of 45 students.

C. The Academies: 75 students.

ABTC financial actualization. We are sincerely grateful to all our financial contributors. Our gratitude to ABCOFLASH, Rev. Andy Quiant, and Dr. José Menendez (Executive Minister and Latino Ministries, Regional Resource Minister, respectively) for their financial support of \$12,000 to ABTC during 2020-2021. Also, Mr. Ronald Banes has been a great column of support to our ABTC program with his consistent financial support and leadership throughout many years.

Thank you for your continued support to ABTC by helping us academically prepare leaders and pastors for the extension of God's kingdom.



FAITH IN CHRIST MINISTRIES

Dr. Joe and Mrs. Gwynn Browne



The Shutdown Created a Huge Void

Covid brought about some disconnect with the larger community. There were times of depression. There was the stress of having to learn new technology skills. There is a growing sense that something is brewing on the horizon. Change is coming, and the Church must be prepared like the ten virgins awaiting the bridegroom. Matthew 25: 1-13 has been our guiding verse.

So, when COVID-19 hit, we said, “So What!”

People will still be hungry. FICM never stopped serving. Our primary food team is 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.

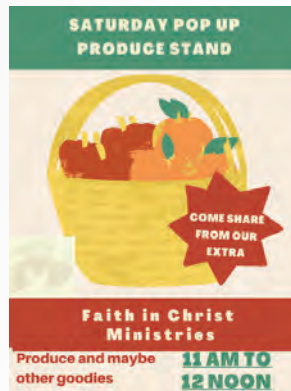
God protects us as we adhere to all the current CDC guidelines. It’s undoubtedly our fortune, a blessing that God has Ms. Val Peacock, a retired nurse, to keep us on point. Thank you, Ms. Val

Also, Ms. Val’s career experience positioned us to provide a new service to our community to help facilitate residents and transitional people to participate in the Presidential election and be a location for the COVID vaccination to be offered.

We were willing to try new ways to address hunger and eliminate the waste of food.



Presidential Voting Site



Being blessed with an abundance of fresh produce, we tried offering the excess when it was available.



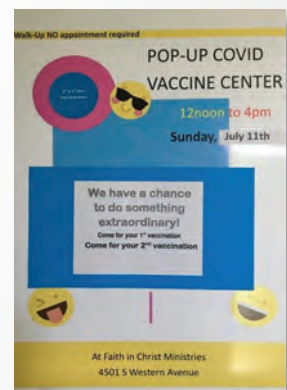
Our teen volunteers assisted with setting appointments



Our site was an encouragement to our transient community to get vaccinated



We followed the lead of our state officials and offered incentives to get people vaccinated



We are grateful to be part of the solution

FIBCO FAMILY SERVICES

Chiquita A. Taylor, Executive Director

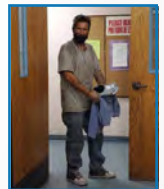


As the pandemic spread in Arizona, FIBCO restructured its services to keep our clients, staff, and volunteers safe and healthy while tending to the community's needs. We started the year with a strong emphasis on health awareness and access to health care and education. We held a Virtual Community Health Fair where over 200 participants had access to 29 virtual workshops on varying health and social determinants of health topics. The workshops included COVID-19 question and answer sessions with doctors, COVID-19 testing, mental health, diabetes management, cancer, Alzheimer's, faith & health, oral health, access to affordable housing and much more.

We also partnered with multiple churches, healthcare facilities, and community organizations to host a vaccine event intended to provide access to the vaccine for underserved communities. Over 850 individuals received the vaccine at our event!

We continue to serve the community through our four service pillars:

Quality Food: Throughout the year, FIBCO provides free meals and food boxes to low-to-no income individuals and families. Many people need meals and food boxes due to financial emergencies or general food insecurity. In addition, through our "FIBCO Mobile" program, we visit low-income communities twice a month and distribute food boxes containing pantry staples, fresh produce, diapers, backpacks, school supplies, and toiletries. We have served over 14,000 meals and over 450 emergency food boxes.



Quality Clothing: At least three days per week, we welcome people to select donated, slightly used ready-to-wear clothing items from our racks. The apparel that FIBCO provides is appropriate for casual, daily use as well as for business settings. We want to empower people to dress suitably for employment opportunities that may better their current circumstances. We have provided over 4000 articles of clothing.

Quality Affordable Housing: For low-income individuals who might otherwise be among the over 25,000 residents experiencing homelessness in Maricopa County throughout the year. We have served 106 residents within our 12 housing residences.

Compassionate Immigration Assistance: Preserving our African/African American Connections (PAAACs) is dedicated to meeting some of the basic needs of African immigrants settling in the USA to start a new life and/or reunite with family in Arizona.

We have supported over 80 individuals in employment assistance, immigration process support, reunification support, and transportation.

We are humbled to continue to serve the community and to provide people with knowledge, skills, and support to empower their lives.



FIBCO Mobile
Distribution in
Community Clinic



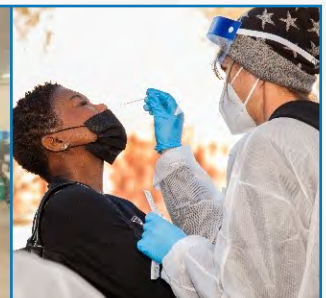
Receiving
COVID-19
Vaccine



First Institutional
Baptist Church Campus
Food Distribution



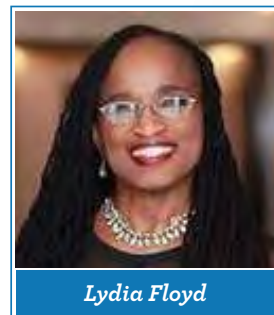
FIBCO Mobile
Community
Distribution



On-site COVID-19
testing during our
Virtual Health Fair Event



Founded in 2000 by Ms. Lydia Floyd and located in First Baptist Church of North Hollywood, Hands4Hope LA continues to provide safe, quality, free after school programs and low-cost STEAM-based summer camp (in-person & online) as well as workshops and referrals for under-resourced single parents in the San Fernando Valley



Lydia Floyd

Youth Program

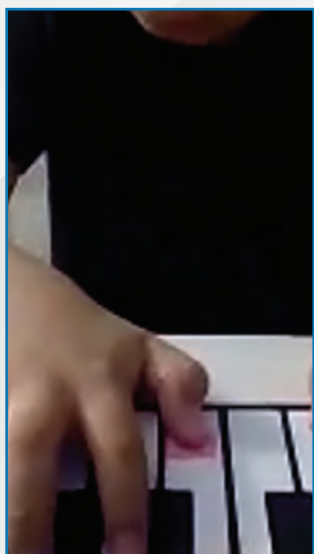
In 2020, we launched a hybrid program for our students (ages 8-18). We offer extensive online after school classes (dance, music, cooking, homework tutoring), as well as in-person programs, covid-permitting. For summer, we offer both in-person camp as well as virtual classes. We sustain a safe, individualized environment as students and their families seek pandemic recovery.

Teen Program

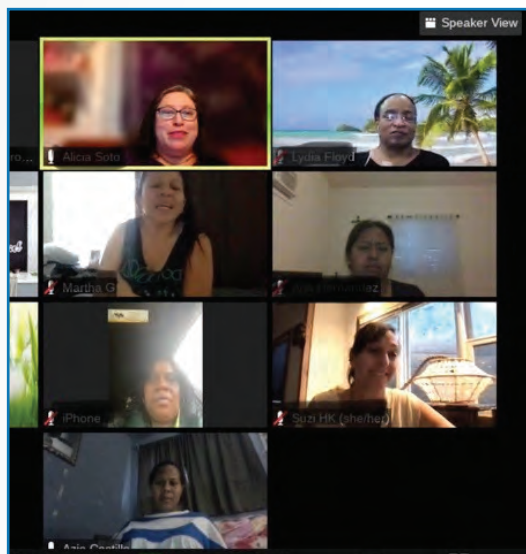
Our high school students participate in weekly college planning and job readiness workshops. Guest speakers from local businesses discuss their work, expanding the students' sense of possibility. Individualized support helps translate goals into reality, as teens are given resources and information for internships and scholarships.

Parent Program

Hands4Hope LA provides workshops and one-on-one referrals to assist parents when facing job loss, housing insecurity, food scarcity, grief and loss related to covid or mental health needs. Funding from LA County Department of Mental Health allows Hands4Hope LA to deepen our mental wellness programs with more parent workshops, increased program staff and professional training regarding trauma-informed care.



Virtual Piano Lessons



Parent Program



Summer Field Trip 2021

Thank you, ABCOFLASH! You have been with us from the start.
For more information, please visit our website at hands4hopela.org
or contact Suzi Hoffman-Kipp, Associate Director, at 818-763-4673.

RAINBOW ACRES

Gary W. Wagner, President & CEO

Rainbow Acres is a Christian community with the heart that empowers persons with developmental disabilities to live to their fullest potential with dignity and purpose.

All across the Ranch, we have renewed hope that the COVID-19 pandemic is behind us! We look forward to a brighter future in the Promises of God.

Heroic employees in action and prayer implemented every possible precaution to “stop the virus at the gate!” Despite our best efforts and CDC protocols, Rainbow Acres had nine cases of COVID among the Ranchers. Thank the lord the symptoms were mild and no one was hospitalized.

We were blessed with the highest levels of cooperation from Rancher Families. We Celebrated Christmas in the midst of the pandemic with Chaplain Mitch Koonce reading the Christmas Story over the Rainbow radio station KOTR; mountains of gifts under the Christmas Trees at each house on Christmas Morning and a traditional Christmas Dinner for over 80 Ranchers and their Caregivers.

The Rainbow Acres Academy Team maintained quality educational and enrichment activities as the precautions increased and Ranchers’ were confined to their homes. The Academy Team modified their approaches four or five times to help everyone through that stressful time.



Gary Wagner



The Ranchers’ attitudes and acceptance of the precautionary measures were beyond our expectations. When the COVID vaccine became available in Arizona, the Ranchers’ were patiently waiting for Rainbow’s turn to host a Vaccination Clinic. Over 90 percent of the Ranchers completed the vaccination process. They have a 99 percent participation in the Seasonal Flu Vaccination. The Ranchers are strong and healthy!

Rancher life has nearly returned to familiar activities; Academy Classes of 12-15 Ranchers per-class sessions, with nearly perfect attendance in 33 different Classes and Arts & Crafts. Ranchers are returning to employment opportunities on Ranch and in Sedona and the Verde Valley where safety practices are in place. Most important of all they are enjoying being outdoors and walking Hoover Circle with their friends.

RAINBOW ACRES

Gary W. Wagner, President & CEO

CONTINUED



Rainbow Acres

Other good news, First Baptist Church of Redlands, and Richard Bladorn an American Baptist from Oregon, provided the funds to complete an amazing new covered patio at the Worden Taber Center. The new covered patio provides the Ranchers a gathering place with fresh air and protection from the sun. Prayer Circle and Sunday Worship are held on this patio. Attendance is the highest since COVID.



Nearly every day the Ranchers ask “when the Youth and Adult Mission Work Teams are going to return?” It has been two summer seasons without Mission Team and that leaves a big hole in their lives and experience.

Many Congregations have been faithful in their mission giving for Ranchers and Rainbow Acres, during the COVID Pandemic! We are deeply grateful for your support! If a Congregation is unable to send their mission gifts, we simply ask that you continue to remember the Ranchers and employees in your prayers.

The Greenhouses yielded nearly 7,000 pounds of fresh produce for use in the Palmer Center Kitchen, with plenty to share with Senior Centers in Sedona and the Verde Valley. An automated irrigation system has been installed in the outdoor garden to increase production and water efficiency.

We are in the midst of planning for renovations of Frese House, now 20 years old, to improve the comfort for the Ranchers and to improve energy efficiency.

There is always excitement with the arrival of new Ranchers, several admissions are pending for this summer.

We are deeply grateful for the sustaining support of the American Baptist Congregations across the USA.

Respectfully,

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 60th church in early 2022. 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 2020/2021, we were blessed to see:

- The establishment of six new churches throughout Turkey. One of these new churches is an Arabic fellowship that is reaching Arab refugees in Istanbul. We now help and partner with three Arab-speaking, largely refugee fellowships!
- 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 common occurrences. 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 massive difference in these difficult days!



Rev. Rich and Mrs. Laura Freeman



One of our pastors to Syrian refugees, Pastor and Mrs Hannan.

Thank you for your partnership!

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