

QuickLinks

Judson Press recommends the following resources to help navigate these uncertain times. For coming together in spirit with other American Baptists, consider the "ABC Reads" book "The Revolutionary Power of the Lord's Prayer"; pastors should consider "Envisioning the Reign of God: Preaching for Tomorrow"; for devotional reading, "To Live in God: Daily Reflections with Walter Rauschenbusch"; and for study "Seekers, Saints and Sinners: Life-changing Encounters with Jesus." For more resources, visit abhms.org/NewsRoom.

ABHMS regrets to announce that the Space for Grace 2020 national conference and the Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counselors and Specialized Ministries Conference slated for Sept. 21-25 in Kansas City, Mo., will not take place because of the coronavirus. Read more at abhms.org/NewsRoom.

"Extend" is a part of ministrElife—the ABHMS-created online networking platform—that allows video chatting, online meeting rooms, Webinar viewing and creation, and podcast listening and creation. Visit ministrElife.org.



Mission in America

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Executive Director
Dr. Jeffrey Haggray

Editor
Susan Gottshall

Writer
Nadine Hasenecz

Art Director
Danny Ellison

Volunteer coordinator sees gospel come alive in Puerto Rico



By **Abigaíl Medina Betancourt**

Volunteer Coordinator

Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico

This story begins on Aug. 30, 2019. That day, I was visiting several homes that had been referred for roof repair to American Baptist Home Mission Societies' (ABHMS) Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico (RRRPR) program. I agreed to meet Santos Cepeda and his wife, Denisse, at their house in Loíza with pastor Susana Rivera of Second Baptist Church of Loíza and Javier López, construction leader.

When I saw the house, my eyes filled with tears. The structure needed much more than a roof. Santos told us that, during the hurricane, palm trees fell on the house and destroyed the roof. They ran in terror to the house of a brother who lived nearby. They spent 57 days in a shelter and then were relocated to public housing. The verdict from FEMA was that the house is uninhabitable, but they would not receive help.

What good is a safe roof without doors or windows, without furniture, without a toilet? Because of the extreme need, we made an exception and included doors and windows in the repair plan.

Approximately 40 volunteers worked at the Cepedas' house for four weeks in February



2020. These groups brought funds to cover the additional needs: new electric wiring, kitchen furniture and supplies to fix the septic tank. A group that did not work at the house donated \$1,510 to buy household items. The situation that once filled my heart with anguish now fills it with immense joy at seeing God at work through people willing to respond to God's call.

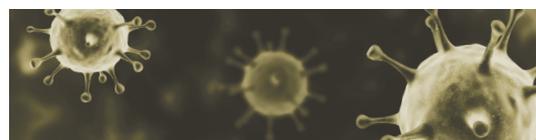
During this experience, I was able to see God's gospel come to life. Many people joined forces to improve the lives of strangers. I experience this daily through my work as a volunteer coordinator for ABHMS' RRRPR program.

ABHMS convenes roundtable to identify American Baptist needs during coronavirus pandemic, launches emergency OGHS appeal

ABHMS convened a National Emergency Roundtable in early April with American Baptist partners as a first step in responding to the coronavirus pandemic by sharing information about needs of American Baptists—members, pastors and churches—and available resources to meet those needs.

Participants included the National Executive Council, the Regional Executive Ministers Council and other members of the National Leadership Council as well as representatives of American Baptist Churches USA-related colleges and seminaries along with ABHMS' Community Outreach Ministries' network members.

The record of need collected by the roundtable informed planning of the emergency One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) appeal (at right).



To give to OGHS COVID Response for support of global relief efforts, donations can be made online at internationalministries.org/covid-19-response-for-global-relief, via your church or check payable to International Ministries and mailed to the attention of Donor Services at International Ministries, 1003 W. 9th Ave., Suite A, King of Prussia, PA 19406. Write "OGHS-COVID RESPONSE: INTERNATIONAL" on the memo line.

To give to OGHS for support of relief initiatives across the United States and Puerto Rico, donations can be made online at [abhms.org/give now](http://abhms.org/give-now), via your church or check payable to American Baptist Home Mission Societies and mailed to the attention of Leda Carter at American Baptist Home Mission Societies, 1075 First Ave., King of Prussia, PA 19406. Write "OGHS-COVID Recovery: US & PR" on the memo line.

In continuing its commitment to socially responsible investing, ABHMS was the lead filer of a human rights-related resolution presented for vote at Tyson Food Inc.'s recent annual

general meeting.

Also, ABHMS has joined other investors in the UP Community



Fund, a lender aimed at meeting the needs of under-resourced markets in the southeastern United States.

For more information about ABHMS' socially responsible investing ministry, visit abhms.org/SociallyResponsibleInvesting.

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ABHMS' ISOE program receives \$70,000 endowment from Cleveland church

Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland Inc.—a small church formerly known as Covenant Baptist Church—has blessed ABHMS' In Support of Excellence financial literacy program with a \$70,000 endowed gift.

“When we sold our building, the Lord blessed us with a decent sum of money,” says the Rev. Christine A. Smith, the church's senior pastor and author of “Beyond the Stained Glass Ceiling: Equipping & Empowering Female Pastors” (Judson Press, 2013). “We believe in tithing, so we wanted to pay a tithe as an offering.”

The endowment will support at least two African-American female pastors yearly who serve as senior solo pastor to 300 maximum congregants. The pastors need not be affiliated with American Baptist Churches USA.

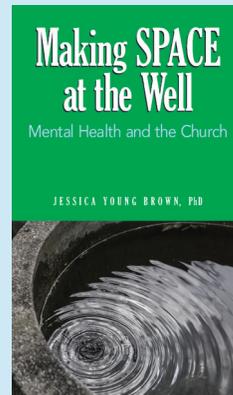
Herself once a struggling pastor, Smith points out that African-American women in ministry are often called to



economically depressed, small churches that can't pay a living wage. Therefore, her congregation, she said, developed a heart to help other women however possible.

The 25-member church had been in great debt, but, “In spite of all that, with prayer and thankfulness, with stewardship and with working together in one accord, God blessed us to accomplish great things,” she says. “We hope that this [endowment] can be used to help another struggling pastor—that she can see that there's a bright side.”

Book calls black church to engage families facing mental health concerns



Drawing upon the biblical motif of the village well, where water is sought to sustain life, the book “Making Space at the Well: Mental Health and the Church” calls the black church to rally its historic resilience to engage families who are facing mental health concerns.

Author Jessica Young Brown, Ph.D., a psychologist, uses the acronym SPACE to discuss:

- Silencing the Stigma: naming the negative attitudes and mistaken assumptions about mental illness;
- Presence and Persistence: identifying the importance of authentic relationships in healing;
- Application and Action: highlighting practical steps to address needs as they emerge;
- Cautions and Crises: acknowledging the fears and risks, including the importance of referrals; and
- Expression and Exhortation: using the power of testimony to access the healing power of God.

Accessible to all church members, this book employs a framework of mental health—rather than mental illness—and presents a research-based model of best practices.

To order, visit judsonpress.com
or call 1-800-458-3766.

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