

Combined Response Group Meeting – Mission Resource Development and Finance
11:00am-12:00pm, June 19, 2013

1. Robin opened the meeting with a short reflection and prayer.
2. Offering for General Ministries and Church Giving (next steps)
 - In talking with Alan and Frank, we believe that Item 6, offering for General Ministries and Church Giving, is an item that holds all of us together and touches both groups.
 - Alan distributed three pieces:
 - 1- United Mission Giving from 2010-2012 and projected through 2015
 - 2- American Baptist Mission Support for 2012 and 2011
 - 3- 2013 United Mission Proposed Distribution
 - Alan walked the group through how the projections are made
 - It will be very difficult to cut UM out. When we made a change previously, we did get hit very hard. It is difficult to get people to give money if they aren't going to get anything out of it at all.
 - In 2003, regions began receiving more through United Mission.
 - One problem now is that regions now have region offerings, which they did not before. So, when people give to the region offering rather than UM, we (ABCUSA) does not get a piece of that funding.
 - If they are raising money outside of that, would it require us to change the budget process?
 - What is different? Boards cannot campaign at the same time as other boards.
 - Targeting has always existed, but Missionary Partnership Teams is a new thing.
 - Targeted giving is increasing, as we have seen over the past few years.
 - We need to do something, and do it soon.
 - We are in a new way of members giving to churches. The old way is gone. Having that change of money coming to national headquarters, we were faced in a discreet way as ABCUSA as punitive stewardship. People who did not like some pieces of what the denomination was doing just stopped giving.
 - Transformed by the Spirit is bringing a new breeze. The new bylaws passed in Puerto Rico, the restructuring of American Baptist Churches, is bringing a new breeze and ambiance.
 - Are we making an assumption that we are not going to change anything?
 - Regions are the only place to go if changes are to be made.
 - How many churches give to UM? Over two years, about 2,000 churches of the over 5,000 churches give to UM.
 - There has to be a reason for this. Because people give differently than they did 10 or 20 years ago.

- 40 percent still participate – that is great, when you look at other denominations and churches.
- Ken gave a recommendation complementing individual regions by developing some incentive to give to UM.
- In more and more churches today, the pastor is recommending or making the decision about the budget and who to give to. We need to work with the pastors more.
- Regions have 33 votes, we have one. We need to have materials for the regions. What are the resources that BGM/ABCUSA does, for the regions and the churches? We need to identify the problem we are trying to solve first, before we begin.
- We need to start making action items, changing the covenant.
- Connecting names, faces and stories to United Mission – this is so important. Putting names, faces and stories to United Mission
- This philosophy needs to go to UM, as we examine how we can make changes to the budget covenant.
- Could we make a 2 year effort – that every church gives 2% more, or \$1000. Give a figure/option. For two years, we are going to make a concerted effort with UM.
 - While we are doing that, we work at modifying pieces of the budget covenant in a long term process.
 - This two year effort to really reach out and connect United Mission to people, adaptively look at UM and rebrand it.
 - Aim this at the churches. 2% is better than nothing.
 - We need more action, more doing things rather than simply talking about them.
- What do we need to do to shorten the budget covenant process? What can we do, rather than simply saying it is long-term?
- People are continuously asking, what is my church getting out of it? We need to show them this.
 - Right now, most regions don't have the staff or infrastructure they need.
 - If we want more funds, or need to increase our budget, either go to the same people and ask them to give more, or increase the membership in order to keep raising the funds needed.
 - How do you transfer giving from local church to UM? We need to look at it through a pastor's eyes, and see what people support and where they want money to go.
- There are openly three things that fundamentally get us from point A to point B.
 - A strong case
 - that is a believable solution
 - and is desirable.
 - But where does the region show up in all of this? Any approach to the churches has to have a buy-in from the Region Executives.
 - 2% needs a buy-in.

- We need to tell the story in a strong, believable, desirable way to get this across.
- People want to know what they get for their contribution. There has to be some benefit there for that person to be interested and listen.
- The plan of responding to Alan's need is good in a two-year period. We have a few churches, older churches, at least in Massachusetts. Some have endowments and just a handful of members. We have fewer now than we had in 2012, as you will see in the report. How are we going to expect to get the same amount of money or more money?
- Baby boomers are the largest group available to churches as new members and givers who are able to give, far more than before.
- Faces, names and stories. People need to have a reason to want their church to participate.
- UM video?

We as the Finance and Mission Resource Development committees recommend to the Board of General Ministries that we explore a Transformed by the Spirit process for United Mission. Secondly, we will work to find a two-year plan that focuses on United Mission and really get information out to churches, works to grow United Mission.

Mission Resource Development Response Group – Lunch Meeting

12:00pm, June 19, 2013

1. Matthew 25 Grants

- Beth led a discussion about the Matthew 25 Grant.
- Have we limited ourselves to just one donor?
- How should we change wording for grant applications?
- The group submitted a proposal to the BGM.
 - *The Mission Resource Development Response Group of the Board of General Ministries (BGM), recommends that the BGM approve the Matthew 25 Grant as a mechanism to distribute the funds received from a generous donor. The donor has designated these funds to address needs of "housing, feeding, education and health with regard to the less fortunate." The Response Group together with MRD staff will serve as the Matthew 25 Grant Committee and will be responsible for the appropriate distribution of the funds through a request for proposal (RFP) process.*