



American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

**BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES
MINUTES: November 13-15, 2014**

**Crowne Plaza
260 Mall Blvd.
King of Prussia, PA 19406**

“American Baptists Serving as the Hands and Feet of Christ”

Thursday, November 13, 2014; 2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.; Independence North

BGM 182

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

President Don Ng called the meeting of the Board of General Ministries to order. As a get acquainted exercise, he invited Board directors and staff to connect with another person they don't know or don't often sit with, to share weather-related stories.

President Ng introduced new BGM Directors: Nancy Adkins, West Virginia Baptist Convention; Joyce Blandon, ABC of Connecticut; Cecilia Dachtler, ABC of the Dakotas (not able to attend this meeting) and Thomas Roberts, ABC of Michigan (also not able to attend this meeting).

He shared regrets from Cecilia Dachtler and Thomas Roberts, Danny Jack (Growing Healthy Churches), Duh Kam (DC Baptist Convention & Executive Secretary, KBCUSA), Jonathon Malone (ABC of Rhode Island) and Thomas Roberts (ABC of Michigan) and he recognized the resignation of Eli Echevarria (ABC of Connecticut).

Appreciation was expressed to Julia Bebeau, ABC of Greater Indianapolis, and Kenneth Kho, Intercaucus President, for their service as Tellers for this meeting. Appreciation was also expressed to Nancy O'Neill, ABC of Wisconsin, for her faithful ministry of music shared with BGM at this meeting, as well as at other prior meetings.

BGM 183

OPENING WORSHIP/LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Judy Fackenthal, ABC Vice President/BGM Chaplain, led the Board in worship through meditation on Psalm 28:6-9 and by singing together “Come and Fill” from the Taize Community. She closed with prayer for BGM, for purpose and wisdom in these meetings.

BGM 184 CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made, seconded and it was

VOTED: To approve the Consent agenda: the Proposed November 13-15, 2014 BGM Agenda and the minutes of the June 12-14, 2014 BGM Meeting (held in Green Lake, WI), with one correction.

BGM 185 REPORT OF BGM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President Ng reported the actions taken by the Executive Committee at its September 2014 meeting held in Seattle, WA. The September minutes were transmitted to BGM for review prior to this meeting.

BGM 186 REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Election of At-Large Directors of the Board of General Ministries

The Board of General Ministries is composed of At-Large Directors, Special Directors and Ex Officio Directors. There are 33 At-large Directors, one from each ABCUSA Region, elected by the Biennial Delegates. Any vacancy for an At-large Director may be filled by a majority vote of the Board of General Ministries on nomination of the ABCUSA Nominating Committee.

Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, it was

VOTED: To elect Nancy Adkins (West Virginia Baptist Convention), Joyce Blandon (ABC of Connecticut), Cecilia Dachtler (ABC of the Dakotas) and Thomas Roberts (ABC of Michigan) as At-Large Directors to the Board of General Ministries

ABC Officers Nominations for Biennial Election

Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, it was

VOTED: To approve and to forward the following slate of ABC Officers for the 2016-2017 biennium to the 2015 Biennial Delegates for vote at the Biennial Mission Summit in Overland Park, KS:

President: Judy Fackenthal
Vice President: Josue Gómez-Menendez
Budget Review Officer: Paul Higgins

Election of BGM Directors

Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, it was

VOTED: To elect the following General Directors:

Robin Crouch (West Virginia Baptist Convention)
Marc Wallace (ABC of the Rocky Mountains)

Election of BGM Committee Members

Upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, it was

VOTED: To elect Beryl Hornberger to the ABC Nominating Committee

VOTED: To elect Alan Newton (who does not serve as a BGM director) to the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations

BGM 187 ACT ON UM

The Adaptive Challenge Team on United Mission (ACT on UM) was formed to identify the adaptive challenges facing UM funding, to explore the elements which have impacted the decline of UM, and the long history of underlying diversity of voices that have come into conversation and have made various impacts. The team, which began its initial work in April 2014, was present at this meeting to report on their work and to share a strategy for BGM's consideration.

Vice President Judy Fackenthal, a member of ACT on UM, introduced other members of the team: Rev. Kevin Doi (Walnut, CA), Dr. Jeff Haggray (Atlanta, GA), Rev. Miriam Mendez (Portland, OR), Rev. Christine Roush (Sedona, AZ), Rev. Alan Rudnick (Ballston Spa, NY) and Rev. Ashley Whitaker (Mapleton, MN). Dr. Leo Thorne, Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development, led the team in its work and Alan Roxburgh, The Mission Network (who was not present at this meeting), served as consultant.

Judy reported that UM funding has declined from \$25 million to \$9 million annually and reminded BGM that oversight for UM is the responsibility of BGM; no other organization has the responsibility to grapple with the flow and decline of UM. Having UM healthy is the way to make the denomination healthy.

BGM met in table groups to review notes ("Framing the Factors") from the January 6, 2014 meeting of ABCUSA Officers (which included Leo Thorne and Alan Roxburgh) held in Orlando with the purpose of seeking to name the critical underlying issues of UM. This document provided the context for the work of the Adaptive Challenge Team. Each table group shared with the full board one factor from the document that stood out to them.

The Adaptive Challenge Team's report was used to guide BGM through a process that included: a review of the historical shift of cultures of denominational giving; a focus on Scripture with emphasis on listening for what God is saying; exercises in distinguishing between technical and adaptive challenges; and a review of William Bridges' teaching on transitions and the psychological changes that lie behind significant organizational change (change is situational; transition is psychological; all transitions share the same three elements: an ending, a neutral zone and a new beginning).

At the conclusion of this session, President Ng explained that the BGM agenda was designed to provide time for directors to reflect, to talk together and to pray about the report presented at this session prior to the continued discussion tomorrow morning. Judy Fackenthal led in prayer.

BGM 188 BGM OFFERING

On October 29, 2014 the headquarters of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, Ekklesiyar Yan’awa a Nigeria (EYN), was destroyed by extremist insurgents Boko Haram.

President Ng announced that the Executive Committee voted to designate the BGM offering, to be collected at its session on Friday, November 14, 2014, to the Church of the Brethren for their Nigerian brothers and sisters, with a goal of \$1,000. (On November 14, the offering totaled over \$1100, and it was determined that a check for \$1200 be sent to the Church of the Brethren to use as they best determine in support of recovery efforts in Nigeria.)

BGM 189 RECESS/BGM DINNER/EVENING VESPERS

At 6:30 p.m., President Ng recessed the Board of General Ministries for Dinner in Freedom Ballroom III.

Following dinner, at 8:00 p.m., BGM Chaplain Judy Fackenthal led in Evening Vespers in the Independence North Ballroom. The Board shared in communion.

Friday, November 14, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.; BGM 2nd Plenary; Independence North

**BGM 190 RECONVENING
WORSHIP LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

BGM Chaplain Fackenthal lit the Christ candle “in the name of God who creates life, in the name of Christ our Savior who loves life, and in the name of the Spirit who is the fire of life.” She led the Board in reading and meditating upon the New Testament passage of Luke 10:1-12 and led in prayer for the board’s work and ministry together in the new day.

BGM 191 ACT on UM

The Adaptive Challenge Team on United Mission reviewed the previous day’s presentation to BGM and continued their report by identifying the following 2 critical challenges to be addressed if ministry is to be viable:

Identity

The identity of ABCUSA as the “face of the denomination” is no longer sufficient to address the anxiety, detachment, fragmentation, and confusion of its congregations. ABCUSA has not been able to address the challenge of reimagining its identity in partnership with congregations in mission in their contexts.

Leadership

While ABCUSA is engaged in numerous valuable projects and ministries, leadership is urgently needed to bring laser-like focus on cultivating a reimagined, unified sense of identity, mission and energy at the regional and congregational levels

To address these challenges, the team recommended a three-pronged strategy for BGM consideration:

- 1) Discerning God's activities in a new landscape;
- 2) Continuing UM for an interim period of at least 5 years, focusing on technical improvements while recognizing the decreasing nature of UM as a giving agent; and
- 3) Defining a new identity in partnership with regions and congregations, and proclaiming a compelling story for ABC's future based on listening and discernment activities.

A written report of the ACT on UM presentation was distributed at the meeting and is attached to the minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

Vice President Judy Fackenthal and President Ng expressed gratitude to the Adaptive Challenge Team, and to Leo Thorne, for their diligent work throughout the last 11 months which culminated in this report. He emphasized the need to reimagine our new partnership with regions and local congregations. Leo Thorne also expressed appreciation to the team, to General Secretary Roy Medley, noting that he was the impetus for the January meeting which began this process, and to President Ng for his support and affirmation.

BGM 192 SIGNING OF AMO COVENANT: ABCUSA/RAINBOW ACRES

Rainbow Acres is a non-profit organization that for 40 years has provided a ranch-style Christian residential community for adults with developmental disabilities.

In March 2014 General Secretary Roy Medley received from Gary Wagner, President & CEO of Rainbow Acres, a letter stating that Rainbow Acres would like to come into covenant relationship by becoming an Associated Ministry Organization.

At its June 2014 meeting, BGM voted to invite Rainbow Acres to become an Associated Ministry Organization of ABCUSA. On behalf of BGM, General Secretary Roy Medley extended an invitation to Rev. Wagner to be present at this plenary session of the Board for an official signing of the ABCUSA/AMO covenant.

Vice President Judy Fackenthal welcomed Rev. Wagner and Ms. Kathryn Mikesh Houser (Chair of the Rainbow Acres Board of Trustees, and a member of FBC of Johnston, Des Moines, Iowa) and both participated with ABC President Don Ng and General Secretary Roy Medley in the signing of two official copies of the covenant.

It was noted that Rev. Dr. Christine Roush, present at this meeting for the ACT on UM presentation, serves Rainbow Acres as Vice President for Development & Church Relations, and BGM's Budget Review Officer, Paul Higgins (who recused himself from the June 2014 vote), serves Rainbow Acres as Vice President of Finance.

Following the signing of the covenant, Rev. Wagner shared with BGM a video focusing on the life-changing role of Rainbow Acres in the lives of three of its residents.

BGM 193 REPORTS OF BGM DIRECTORS TO OTHER BOARDS

MMBB

Bill Frederickson reported that the agenda for the recent MMBB Board of Directors meeting included two major items: 1) Actuarial table miscalculation. Due to an error of MMBB's previous actuarial firm, \$27 million had to be transferred from another fund to make the adjustment required to correct the inaccurate

actuarial tables. The correction was made and the pension fund is now fully funded, 2) Setting of annuity payout value for 2015.

IM

Vivan Martindale reported that IM is journeying through a time of discernment using an Appreciative Inquiry process, which they are calling “Responding to the Call.” Surveys have been distributed in an attempt to gain feedback from various levels (region, church, pastoral, other organizations, etc.) in the attempt to redefine its ministry and mission.

ABHMS

Jim Wolfe has not yet attended an ABHMS board of directors meeting due to previous scheduling difficulties but did participate in an ABHMS conference call on October 15, and will attend his first meeting of the board next week. Jim reported that ABHMS executive director, Aidsand Wright-Riggins, will be retiring on October 30, 2015. ABHMS will celebrate Dr. Wright-Riggins’ ministry and tenure during the ABHMS “Space for Grace” conference to be held November 3-7, 2015 in Los Angeles, CA.

BGM 194

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY UPDATE ON TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT

The General Secretary began his report by sharing appreciation for ABCUSA staff and for David Knipel, legal counsel.

With the transitions soon taking place (his own retirement, that of Dr. Wright-Riggins as well as several executive ministers), he noted that it is important to recognize a shift of one’s role and stated that he sees his own role presently as one of blessing. He emphasized that the honoring of his 14 years of ministry as ABC’s General Secretary would best be accomplished by taking seriously the task of addressing adaptive challenges and by thinking, exploring and engaging in the process. He expressed a blessing on the Adaptive Challenge Team on UM and their report and on the Board of General Ministries for carrying a strategy forward.

Recognizing that we are in the midst of great change in our culture and in our world, the General Secretary proclaimed that the church will endure and that its ministry and worth is as great now as it ever was. We still have the call to go into the world with the message of reconciliation. God is still redeeming and God’s new reign is present now and in the future. God’s call is lived out and reaches to us through the life of the local congregation.

In anticipation of his upcoming January/February trip to Burma, Roy reported that he recently sent a letter to President Obama in regard to ABC’s concern for religious liberty and rights in that country. He reported that the Baptist-Muslim dialogue continues to take root and to flourish in unanticipated ways. He also encouraged BGM to be in prayer for the Church of the Brethren group in Nigeria whose headquarters have been taken over by local militants. It is important to continue work which promotes living together for the common good.

Lastly, he spoke about the 2013 Mission Table conversations, held in Overland Park, KS, noting that it was these conversations that continue to transform ABC life and ministry. This conversation process has been utilized by the American Indian Caucus and by the Asian Caucus and continues to be used by several regions to engage inter-generationally. Roy invited Jeff Woods, Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries, to provide an update on *Transformed by the Spirit* and the Mission Summit Conversations.

Jeff reported that *Transformed by the Spirit* offers three pathways toward finding “the new thing that God is doing”: 1) Adaptive Challenge Teams. 22 regions currently have active ACTs as well as AB Women’s

Ministries and the Ministers Council, all addressing different issues. 2) Beta Project. “Joining God in the neighborhood” by looking for activity of what God is already doing and partnering with others in the community to serve. Fifteen congregations are participating in 5 regions. 3) Multicultural Pathway. Using Beta materials with ethnically diverse congregations. 4 regions are exploring this option.

Jeff also explained that we are building an infrastructure to support these pathways, including: 1) new part-time staff, 2) the development of a public interactive database to support the sharing of information from the groups pursuing the pathways, and 3) enhanced coach and facilitator training.

Jeff shared a PowerPoint, “Shifting from a Centralized Program to a Distributed Model,” and a handout, “Next Steps in *Transformed by the Spirit*.” Printed copies of both documents are attached to the minutes filed in the General Secretary’s office.

BGM 195 CHILD CARE POLICY

Child Care Policy

A long established goal of the denomination and its governing board had been to have greater representation of young adults on the Board. The denomination needs to develop younger leaders who can continue to provide leadership for the succeeding generations of American Baptists. This goal has been pursued through the vigorous efforts of the American Baptist Churches Nominating Committee as well as by the establishment of the Young Adult Caucus.

Younger directors often have unique needs that must be met in order for them to accept the call to serve on the National Board. One such need is the provision of child care while directors are in board meetings. A first step in addressing this need was taken in 1993 when the General Board Executive Committee adopted a child care policy for Representatives with a child under two years of age. In February 2000 a child care survey was distributed to the General Board and as a result of this survey, the General Board Executive Committee expanded upon its 1993 child care policy to include financial assistance (when needed) for the care of children and youth, aged fourteen and under, while parents or guardians attended General Board and its related meetings.

In September 2014, at the request of the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee, a small taskforce (Paul Higgins, Tasha Wilson, Richard Hanson and Ashley Whitaker) was formed to review the current Child Care Policy for updates needed. This taskforce reported on its work, making suggested changes as well as recognizing that child care responsibilities are not limited to younger directors. Many grandparents today serve as the primary caregivers and/or guardians of minors.

Following the taskforce’s report and a time of discussion, it was by consensus

AGREED: At the recommendation of the BGM Executive Committee to approve the revised BGM Child Care policy, as presented, to read:

For directors who are parents, guardians, or significant caregivers of a minor(s), there are three available options that a director may choose from:

1. A director can access up to a \$500 stipend to cover any at-home child care-related costs that may occur from parent/guardian/caregiver being at the meeting.

- a. The director will need to complete the Child Care Reimbursement form and submit the completed form along with receipt(s) or other proof of payment to the Associate General Secretary/Treasurer.
2. A director may bring the minor(s) to the meeting along with one other adult to provide supervision.
 - a. ABC USA will cover the cost of the single room for the director, minor(s) and caregiver during the meeting.
 - b. Cost of meals during the meeting will be covered.
 - i. When appropriate, the minor(s) and caregiver will be invited to join the board for those specific meals.
 - ii. Other arrangements can be made with the Office of Conference and Travel Planning if the minor(s) and caregiver are not going to be in attendance at specific meals.
 - c. Assistance with transportation costs (*i.e.* airfare) for minor(s) and caregiver to attend meeting will be made available up to \$500 per family. The director is responsible for any cost over this amount.
 - d. The director will need to complete the Room Reservation Form (or complete online registration) for the meeting. Only requests submitted in the proper format by the stated deadline will be honored.
3. If neither of the above options will work for the director due to unique circumstances, they may talk to staff of the Office of Conference and Travel Planning to discuss alternate options to assist with participation in the meeting.

Note: Prior to the vote, Legal Counsel David Knipel, Esq. advised that, due to New York State conflict of interest policy, BGM directors who think they might take advantage of the policy during their term of office, must not be present for the vote.

BGM 196 CREDENTIALS AND CAUCUS REPORT

Report of Changed Relationships

Wesley Roberts, chair of the Credentials and Caucus Committee, presented the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches. Following a time of discussion and upon recommendation of the Credentials and Caucus Committee, it was

VOTED: To recognize the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches (document 205.1:11/14) dated June 3, 2014 to November 5, 2014.

Guidelines for Caucus Funding

The current Guidelines for Caucus Funding were adopted in 1998. At the request of the Credentials and Caucus Committee, the BGM Finance Committee reviewed the document for needed updates.

Following a time of discussion and upon recommendation of the Credentials and Caucus Committee, it was

VOTED: To approve the Guidelines for Caucus Funding, as revised to read:

1. Definition. A Caucus, within American Baptist Churches, USA, is any group of persons joined with one another in recognition of a common cause and shared characteristic, which meets criteria (See Rule 14.4.2), and is recognized by the

General Board on recommendation of the Credentials and Caucus Committee.

2. Funding. Any Caucus may request funding by application to the Credentials and Caucus Committee in such form as the Committee may prescribe. After review of the application, the Committee will make a recommendation to the General Board Executive Committee.
3. The purpose of caucus funding is to aid in the development of a caucus organization. Grants are for administrative purposes only and may not be used for programming.
4. Following recognition by the General Board (SR 14.4.3), any Caucus seeking funding for administrative purposes shall make application to the Credentials & Caucus Committee of the ABC, stating the purpose of the Caucus and the proposed plans for operation.
5. Each caucus receiving funding from the Office of the General Secretary during a calendar year shall submit an annual report to the Credentials and Caucus Committee and to the Finance Committee by May 15. This report should outline the activities of the preceding year, along with a line item financial report showing the use of funds and the balance on hand.
6. Each caucus seeking continuing funding for administrative purposes shall submit a request to the Credentials and Caucus Committee by May 15 each year for the approval of funding for the upcoming calendar year. The request will include a line item budget of all proposed expenditures, differentiating between program and administration.
7. During its June meeting, the Credentials and Caucus Committee shall review caucus requests for administrative funding and make a decision for the following calendar year.
8. Grants for caucus administrative funding will be for one calendar year. Approximately 25% of the funds will be paid from the Office of the Treasurer each calendar quarter (January, April, July, and October) and sent to an account in the name of the caucus or be maintained by the ABCUSA's treasurer's office.
9. Requests to carryover funds from one calendar year to another must be submitted to The Credentials and Caucus Committee for their approval.

Intercaucus Report

Kenneth Kho, Intercaucus president, reported the passing of Mrs. Geraldine Jones, wife of Rev. Dr. G. Daniel Jones, president of the Black Caucus. He also reported that Amaury Tanon-Santos has resigned as vice president of the Intercaucus due to his accepting a pastoral role with another denomination.

Kenneth shared with the Executive Committee a PowerPoint presentation which outlined caucus activities and updates since 2014. (A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.) He expressed thanks to ABCUSA for support and to BGM for caucus funding stating that, "our caucuses are in a better position to do their work in advocacy and in developing leaders and helping steer our

churches to continue exploring partnerships and pursuing creative endeavors with ABC regions, national bodies, AMOs and other ministry organizations.

BGM 197 RECESS/LUNCH

Vice President Fackenthal recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries. The Board enjoyed a buffet lunch in Stirling's Restaurant, followed by a short break. The BGM Executive committee met for a working lunch together in the Berwyn Room.

BGM 198 ACTION GROUPS

From 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m., the BGM convened in the following Action Groups to focus its work in various areas. The list of members of Action Groups below specify full membership; not all were able to be present.

***Finance Committee** (Led by Paul Higgins; Alan Musoke, staff)*

Robin Crouch, Beryl Hornberger, Danny Jack, Charity Matic, James Wolfe

***Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations** (Led by June Totten; Roy Medley, staff)*

Andy Arndt, Ruth Clark, Dennis Johnson, Ernest Jones, Duh Kam, Alan Rudnick

***Becoming a Beloved Community** (Led by Camille Brown; Pat Hernandez, staff)*

Julia Bebeau, Shirley Fair, Ken Kho, Kelly Legg, Vivan Martindale, Dean Parker, Dianne Steelman, Wesley Sun

***Communicating ABC Identity** (Led by Tasha Wilson; Leo Thorne, staff)*

Perla Belo, Felipe Candelaria, Bill Frederickson, Jonathan Malone, Elmore Warren, Ashley Whitaker

***Renewing Congregations** (Led by Wesley Roberts; Jeff Woods, staff)*

Judy Fackenthal, Kay Farley, Richard Hansen, Manuel Luquin, Manuel Magana, Nancy O'Neill

**BGM 199 BGM DINNER: JIM WINKLER, GUEST SPEAKER
FUN & FELLOWSHIP**

Dinner was served from 5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. in Independence South. BGM's guest for the evening, Mr. Jim Winkler, General Secretary/President, National Council of Churches of Christ, addressed the Board.

Following dinner, at 7:30 p.m., there was a time of Fun & Fellowship in the Valley Forge Amphitheater. BGM directors and staff were invited to share gifts and talents.

Saturday, November 15, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.; BGM 3rd Plenary; Independence North

BGM 200 RECONVENING/ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Ng reconvened the meeting of the Board of General Ministries and shared several announcements.

BGM 201 LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE/PRAYER

Chaplain Judy Fackenthal led the Board in reading in unison, as she lit the Christ Candle: We join hearts and minds together seeking the mind of Christ, the wisdom of the Spirit and the everlasting mercy of God. We light the light, once more for our time together. Our intentions and hopes are for courage, for unity, for grace to listen and to lead. She also facilitated Dwelling in the Word, using Scriptural passages from Exodus 14 and 15, the journey of Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea and into the wilderness.

BGM 202 REPORT OF THE ABC PRESIDENT
ACTIONS OF BGM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report of the ABC President

President Ng was the speaker for four ABC regional meetings this fall: ABC of New Jersey; ABC of the Great Rivers Region; Evergreen Baptist Association; and the Philadelphia Baptist Association. For these regional meetings he prepared four messages that reflect where his heart is in discerning God's call for American Baptists. Don also attended the World Relief Committee meeting in September, the 588 Associates Real Estate Council meeting on October 22-23, and the 2015 Biennial Mission Summit planning meeting in Overland Park, KS on October 27-28.

Actions of the BGM Executive Committee

President Ng reported actions taken by the BGM Executive Committee during its November 12-14 meeting. One decision was to extend the length of the Executive Committee's March 2015 meeting by one day to provide additional time to meet ABC missionaries, to focus on issues of undocumented minors, and to meet with retired ministers and region staff in the area.

Another action involved the Emerging Theologians Taskforce. This taskforce was formed in 2007 to fulfill the charge given by General Secretary Roy Medley: to place theological reflection at the heart of ABC's denominational life; to establish a stronger public theological voice from American Baptist perspectives; to provide opportunities for self-identified American Baptist theologians and emerging theologians, pastor-theologians, and theological educators to network and collaborate together; and to re-establish stronger connections between the denomination and its seminaries and colleges. The Taskforce has fulfilled these goals in several ways, including the planning and implementing of two pre-biennial conferences (in San Juan, PR in 2011 and in Overland Park, KS in 2013). A third conference is being planned in Overland Park for 2015 with the theme "Beloved Community: The Church and Theological Education in a Time of Adaptive Change."

General Secretary Roy Medley noted that the work of this taskforce has become a venue for the importance of theologian conversations in the life of the local church and in the denomination. He reported that when the Emerging Theologians Taskforce met on September 22-23, 2014 in Valley Forge, part of their discussion led to considering the question, "How do we make sure the work we are doing becomes part of ABC life?" That discussion resulted in the conclusion that the work of the taskforce needs be more fully embedded into the life of ABC, ensuring both a more formal status which would ensure connection to the BGM and status in denominational life. As a result of this conversation a written petition by the taskforce for recognition as a commission of the denomination was presented to the BGM Executive Committee and was brought to BGM at this meeting.

Following discussion and at the recommendation of the Executive Committee, it was

VOTED: That the Emerging Theologians Taskforce become a Commission of the denomination, with its membership (as noted below) being the current members of the existing Emerging Theologians Taskforce, with the General Secretary also serving as a member.

Membership: Rev. Adam Bond, PhD (Samuel DeWitt Procter School of Theology at Virginia Union University); Rev. Donald Brash, PhD (Palmer Theological Seminary); Rev. Amy Chilton-Thompson (Fuller Seminary, PhD candidate); Jennifer W. Davidson, PhD (American Baptist Seminary of the West at the Graduate Theological Union); Rev. Roy Medley (General Secretary, ABCUSA); Rev. Stephen Butler Murray, PhD (President, Ecumenical Theological Seminary); Rev. Chakravarthy Zadda, PhD (Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago).

BGM 203 UPDATE ON GENERAL SECRETARY SEARCH

President Ng shared an update on the work of the General Secretary's Search Committee. October 31, 2014 was the deadline for applications. A total of intent 27 nominations were received, with 16 nominees agreeing to be candidates; of this 16, 2 are White females, 5 White males, 5 African-American males, 3 African-American females and 1 Hispanic female. The Search Committee requested additional information from 9 of the 16 applications received, including 1 White female, 2 White males, 4 African-American males, 3 African-American females.

Persons will be contacted for face-to-face interviews this Spring, with the hope of presenting a candidate in June for BGM's approval. President Ng asked that BGM keep the Search Committee and applicants in prayer.

BGM 204 FINANCIALS/2015 ABCUSA BUDGET

YTD Financials

Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer reviewed the year-to-date financials for the year ended September 30, 2014. Overall the financials show a net loss of \$132,000 primarily due to the denominational Emphasis, which had a loss of \$75,000, the Development Office which had a loss of \$182,000 (but which should show an increase in revenues as budgeted contributions are realized) and Mission Resource Development which had a loss of \$40,000 (any losses at year end will be offset with reserves). However, net revenue compared to 2013 is up \$89,000, primarily due to Transition Ministries. This department's revenue increased \$144,000 in 2014. The \$89,000 increase was determined by removing the Biennial from the revenue for this year and last year. This is required since there is no Biennial this year. Any activity in the Biennial department is for the 2015 Biennial. The revenue and expense in this department will be reversed out through a prepaid account at year end.

UM Trends: Giving Analysis

All offerings, with the exception of targeted giving and regional offerings, have declined significantly over the past four years. At the same time, targeted giving during that period has increased by 31% and region offerings by 47%. The majority of funds realized through targeted giving are distributed to IM missionaries through their Missionary Partner Teams (MPTs).

It was noted that the new Mission Receipts form will be sent to ABC churches in the first quarter for testing and that this new form will provide greater clarity to the process..

Proposed UM distribution for 2015 recommendation

It was moved, seconded and

VOTED: On the recommendation of the ABCUSA Finance Committee to approve the proposed UM distribution for 2015, and that the ABCUSA Finance Committee convene a group to review allocations in more detail prior to the development of the distribution and budgets for 2016.

2015 ABCUSA Budget

The Budget proposal, transmitted to BGM directors prior to the meeting for review, was reviewed by the BGM Finance Committee, the ABCUSA Finance Committee, and the treasurers. A copy of the full budget is attached to the minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

Following discussion, and by recommendation of the BGM Executive Committee it was

VOTED: To approve the 2015 ABCUSA Budget as presented.

BGM 205 REPORT FROM ACTION GROUPS

BGM Action Groups were invited to report as needed, recognizing that action of the full board might at times be required in order for an Action Group to move forward with its work. Written reports will be posted on the BGM document page for review following the meeting.

The following actions were taken during the reporting session:

Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations

Upon recommendation of the Committee on Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations, the Board of General Ministries

VOTED: To approve the following nominations to the BWA Council:
A. Roy Medley
Reid Trulson
Aidsand Wright-Riggins
Don Ng
Judy Fackenthal.

VOTED: To approve the following nominations to BWA Commissions:
Kent Berghuis, Doctrine & Christian Unity
Jennifer Davidson, Worship and Spirituality
Marvin McMickle, Theological Education
Stephen Murray, Christian Ethics
Jeff Johnson, Evangelism
Curtis Ramsey-Lucas, Religious Freedom

Upon the recommendation of the Committee on Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations, the Board of General Ministries also

VOTED: To adopt the following resolution:

The extremist Sunni sect, Jama'a Sunna Li-da'wa waad Jihad, commonly known as Boko Haram, abducted over 270 girls in the dead of night on April 14, 2014 in Chibok, Nigeria, an event denounced and decried the world over. As devastatingly egregious as these abductions are, Boko Haram, locked in a years-long insurgency against the Nigerian government, continues to destroy and destabilize the lives of Nigerians.

On October 29, 2014, the jihadist group took possession of the Church of the Brethren headquarters near the town of Mubi near the Cameroon border. The Church of the Brethren is Nigeria's largest Christian denomination and an affiliate to the Church of the Brethren USA. With deliberate intentionality, Boko Haram targets the vulnerable - women, children, teachers, schools, various ethnic groups, and in their terror campaign against all things Western, Christians of all ilks and ages; all in effort to establish their vision of an Islamist state.

As Boko Haram's hostilities against the people of northeastern Nigeria intensify, we, the Board of General Ministries, feel compelled to add the weight of our denominational voice to that of other people of goodwill who denounce Boko Haram and call for the reunion of the girls of Chibok, who are largely members of the Church of the Brethren of Nigeria, with their families and for the cessation of violence against children, women, the defenseless, including other Muslims, and Christians.

Further, we believe the actions of Boko Haram do not represent or align with the values and tenets of Islam as we understand them from our Muslim sisters and brothers with whom we live and work.

Lastly, we encourage all appropriate U.S government officials, in the strongest possible terms, to diligently advocate for the rescue and reunion of the girls of Chibok with their families and the cessation of hostilities against the Church of the Brethren and the people of northeastern Nigeria.

President Ng recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries

BGM 206 ABHS ANNUAL CORPORATE MEETING

Garth Brokaw, president of the American Baptist Historical Society, called the corporate meeting of ABHS to order. Minutes of this meeting are attached to the official BGM minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

President Ng reconvened the meeting of the Board of General Ministries.

BGM 207 WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE

Shirley Fair, Chair of the World Relief Committee, reported that the committee met in October, due to not being able to determine a date in November around the meeting of the BGM. President Ng attended this meeting to better understand the functions of World Relief work. During this meeting, the committee made a

site visit to Esperanza, a Hispanic faith-based ministry in Philadelphia, founded in 1987 by Rev. Luis Cortes, and a past recipient of World Relief grants.

The committee, asked to select the recipient for the international side of the Virginia and Gordon Palmer, Jr. Trust, selected 11 projects for a total of \$199,973, ranging in amounts from \$5,000 to \$50,173. World Relief grants for the year totaled \$494,030.

The committee approved a \$120,000 emergency response request for the West Africa Ebola outbreak: \$50,000 for food aid in Liberia; \$6,550 to enable the shipment of one container of food to Liberia or Sierra Leone; \$10,000 for food and medicine aid in Sierra Leone; and \$20,000 for an Ebola prevention animation video.) Shirley also reported that, thanks to General Secretary Roy Medley, she was invited to listen in on a conference call last week with the Centers on Disease Control (CDC) and White House representatives. She shared information about that call with the Executive Committee. Shirley's full written report is attached to the minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

BGM 208 RHYTHMS OF THE SPIRIT

Bridget Holmstrom shared a brief glimpse through a PowerPoint presentation into the community of Taize through her experience of attending the Taize gathering in France. 1400 young adults gathered in community focusing on prayer and solidarity. She noted that in past gatherings there have been as many as 5,000 in this community from around the world. The day usually consisted of attending Bible study, meeting in small working groups and times for silence and reflection.

Judy Fackenthal explained that there are 3 prongs to *Rhythms of the Spirit*: 1) Taize 2) Rhythms of the Spirit conferences and 3) extending network of spiritual advisors. The next Rhythms of the Spirit conference will be held on October 26-29, 2015 at Camp Canonicus in Rhode Island.

BGM 209 BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT

Leo Thorne provided an update, including a PowerPoint presentation, on planning for the 2015 Biennial Mission Summit. Speakers will include Rev. Dr. Amy Butler, senior minister of Riverside Church in NYC (Friday evening); Rev. Dr. Roy Medley, ABC general secretary (Saturday evening) and Rev. Dr. Aidsand Wright-Riggins III, executive director of ABHMS (Sunday morning); and Rev. Dr. Don Ng, ABC president (Sunday evening). The Mission Summit will again feature Mission Summit Conversations. There will also be an opportunity for young preachers to be highlighted during a Festival of Young Preachers.

General Secretary Medley reported that ABCUSA will again host the Theologians Conference pre-biennial event. This year the conference will most likely be held at the Convention Center. For members of BGM, ABCUSA will cover the expense of staying in Overland Park on Thursday night before the Biennial begins. When the BGM Executive Committee meets in March, the Committee will focus on what other details ABCUSA can offer to BGM directors for Thursday. There was a suggestion that this might be a combined decision that the presidents/vice presidents make for their respective board directors when they meet together in January.

In October, the General Secretary met with three ABC pastors in Boston (Tom Carr, Ian Mevorach and Chuck Redfern) who share a passion for eco-justice. At that meeting the ABC Creation Justice Network was launched. It is hoped that there might be time on Sunday afternoon at the Biennial Mission Summit to gather those in ABC life who share this passion and wish to work together on this issue. One of the pastors will

represent ABC on the Creation Care Network board which links many denominations for joint action on legislation related to eco-justice.

BGM 210 RECOGNITION OF RETIRING DIRECTOR

Retiring BGM Director Perla Bela (6 years of service), was recognized for her generous gifts of time, talents and Christian love to the board and to the American Baptist family. She was presented with a Bible; a certificate of appreciation will be sent to her following the meeting. Perla responded with a word of thanks to the board and shared gratitude for the opportunity to serve.

BGM 211 ADJOURNMENT

A Buffet Lunch was served in the Stirling's Restaurant.

At the invitation of President Don Ng, former staff of the Board of Educational Ministries gathered for a luncheon in the Wayne Room of the Crowne Plaza. President Ng shared ABC updates with the group.

The next meeting of the Board of General Ministries will be held on June 22-24, 2015 in Overland Park, KS. The Theologians Conference will be held on June 25, 2015, with Biennial Mission Summit following on June 26-28, 2015.

Submitted by



Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley
General Secretary

ARM/cb

Documents attached

Integrated Schedule

BGM Proposed Agenda: November 13-15, 2014

BGM Roster

BGM Action Groups

Worship Programs

BGM Minutes: June 12-14, 2014 (1001:6/14)

BGM EC Minutes: September 11-13, 2014 (1002:9/14)

Notes from the ABCUSA Officers Meeting, Orlando, FL, January 6, 2014

Adaptive Challenge Team

United Mission Adaptive Challenge Statements

Three-Pronged Strategy for BGM Consideration

ABCUSA/Rainbow Acres Signed AMO Covenant

Report of BGM Director James Wolfe - MMBB

Report of the General Secretary

ABCUSA & AMO Staff Reports

PowerPoint: TbyS- “Shifting from a Centralized Program to a Distributed Model”, Jeff Woods

ABCUSA Child Care Policy (revised 11/14/14)

PowerPoint: Intercaucus Report, Kenneth Kho

Guidelines for Caucus Funding (revised 11/14/14)

Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches (1205.1:11/14) dated 6/3/14-11/5/14

Reports of Action Groups: June 2014 meeting

Report of the ABC President

YTD Financials through September 2014

2015 ABCUSA Budget

2012-2017/18 Projected UM Allocation

Minutes: ABHS Corporate Meeting, November 15, 2014

Report of the World Relief Committee, Shirley Fair

ABCUSA Development Report, Ken Marsenburg

Petition to Convert Emerging Theologians Taskforce to Commission