



**BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES
KING OF PRUSSIA, PA
NOVEMBER 9-11, 2018
MINUTES**

Meeting Site: Crowne Plaza
260 Mall Boulevard
King of Prussia, PA 19406
Ph: 610-265-7500

Officers: Josué Gómez-Menéndez, President
Dean Parker, Vice President
Judy Fackenthal, Past President
Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer
Jeff Woods, Acting General Secretary

Parliamentarian: Dennis Johnson **BGM Chaplain:** Zina Jacque

Friday, November 9, 2018. 2:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.; Plenary; Independence North

BGM 423 CALL TO ORDER

American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) President Josué Gómez-Menéndez welcomed all of the BGM directors and staff and then called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. in the Independence North meeting room of the Crowne Plaza. He expressed appreciation to Manuel Luquin and Joyce Blandon for agreeing to serve as tellers and to Nancy O'Neill for sharing her gift of music during the meetings. Josué continued with regrets from BGM directors not able to attend and shared announcements.

BGM 424 WORSHIP

BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence. Zina led a devotion based on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

BGM 425 ABCUSA FOCUS STATEMENT

The ABCUSA Focus statement was shared in unison.

American Baptist Churches are missional congregations that nurture devoted disciples of Jesus Christ who live their lives in mission and ministry for the healing of the world through the love of God.

BGM 426 CONSENT AGENDA

Zina Jacque made a motion to approve the General Consent Agenda: Written Reports posted prior to the meeting and the Proposed Agenda and Minutes of the BGM's June 13-15, 2018 meeting held in Green Lake, WI.

No objections, motion approved.

BGM 427 NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CIVIL DISCOURSE (NICD) WORKSHOP

The board originally endorsed a working partnership with the National Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD) in November 2017, and the Beloved Community Action Group invited the Executive Director of NICD, Dr. Carolyn Lukensmeyer, to facilitate a workshop at the board meeting.

Lukensmeyer highlighted resources on the NICD Website, www.revivecivility.org. The board looked at the question, "How do you reach out to someone with different views?" Lukensmeyer encouraged American Baptists to sign the "Civility Pledge" and consider holding a "Revive Civility Conversation." Please see Appendix 1 regarding the pledge and conversation.

BGM 428 RECESS OF MEETING FOR BGM ACTION GROUPS

From 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., the BGM convened in the following Action Groups to focus its work in various areas.

BGM Directors Exit Interviews - Duportail 406 and various hotel seating areas

BGM Finance Committee – DeKalb 206

Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations – Von Steuben 306

Becoming a Beloved Community – Plenary Room

Communicating ABC Identity – Radnor

DINNER

At 6:00 p.m., BGM directors, spouses/families (Darby Atchison, Malachi Blandon and family of Nunez-Sanchez) and staff gathered in Independence South to enjoy dinner and fellowship together. The NICD workshop continued with discussion around the tables.

Saturday, November 10, 2018. 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.; Plenary; Independence North

At 7:00 a.m., the BGM directors and staff enjoyed breakfast in Stirling's Restaurant of the Crowne Plaza. At 7:30 a.m. the BGM Finance Committee met for a breakfast meeting in the Devon Room. Also at 7:30 a.m. CCCUIR met for a breakfast meeting in the Radnor Room.

BGM 429 RECONVENING/WORSHIP

ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Independence North Room. BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence and led the board in prayer.

BGM 430 RECESS BGM/CONVENE AMERICAN BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ABCUSA Vice President Dean Parker recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries. Rev. Garth Brokaw, President of the American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS), called the annual corporate meeting of ABHS to order. ABHS Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Priscilla Eppinger shared how ABHS continues to utilize technology effectively to manage and increase access to various collections through the work of Archivist Jill Sweetapple and Digital Archivist Jenny Manasco. ABHS continues to work on helping to tell our Baptist stories through those who do research in the Reading Room and by increasing the number of posting history facts to Facebook. ABHS has been working with the staff in Valley Forge as they prepare to move offices and transfer records to Atlanta. ABHS is intentionally working with the ABWIM 40th Anniversary planning team to be able to share the stories of AB Women in Ministry. At the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit in Virginia Beach, ABHS will be hosting a breakfast and workshop called, “Making Sure ‘Born-Digital’ is ‘Born-Again’: The Salvation of Your Church’s Story.”

The annual corporate meeting of ABHS was adjourned and the BGM meeting was reconvened.

BGM 431 RECONVENE BGM/C-TAC REPORT

Rev. Garth Brokaw is the ABCUSA representative for the Coalition for the Transformation of Advanced Illness Care (C-TAC). Garth shared the four possible roles that local churches and the denomination can play in the transformation of care at the end of life. First, promote resources and encourage congregations to initiate opportunities to discuss and learn about “Illness Planning” and end of life care. Second, Initiate programs that assure all the teens graduate high school, that all of them have the opportunity to go into higher education whether college, trade school, or medical training so that there are those trained in caring for those who are ill and in need of long term care. Third, the church needs to learn how to be spiritual navigators for those who are moving through the end of life. Fourth, the faith community can serve as caregivers and community watch-care to provide relief to caregivers and for those to be the eyes and ears to know where needs exist.

BGM 432 BGM EXECUTIVE SESSION (INDEPENDENCE NORTH ROOM)

Josué Gómez-Menéndez recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries for an Executive Session. If any action was taken during this time that action will be recorded and sealed in an envelope attached to the official set of minutes filed in the General Secretary’s office.

BGM 433 REPORT OF THE ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY

Acting General Secretary Jeff Woods gave a health update on General Secretary Lee Spitzer and asked everyone to continue to pray for Lee during his time of healing. Jeff thanked the Staff for all the work they are continuing to do. Jeff Woods shared that it has been an honor to serve as Acting General Secretary this fall as Dr. Lee Spitzer recovers from his recent heart surgery. As Acting General Secretary Jeff continues to emphasize Lee's five priorities. In addition to these priorities, three organizational values were also resurrected from a previous OGS retreat for emphasis with the staff: treating one another with dignity and respect; communicating openly and honestly; and taking responsibility for doing the right thing. The staff is spending time together in meals and activities to get to know one another better and to practice these three values.

A donor gave funds to call an intern to work in the Office of the General Secretary. After reviewing several candidates and interviews, the committee is now ready to make an offer to a candidate. Please be in prayer for the acceptance of the call and for the new candidate. ABCUSA Leadership Staff are working on assigning meaningful duties for the intern. Jeff thanked Ken Marsenburg for his hard work on making this happen.

Alan Musoke continues to work on the purchase of the new OGS building. At the Development Advisory Team (DAT) Meeting “naming opportunities” was proposed to name rooms in honor of Past ABCUSA Presidents.

Jeff thanked Annie Marcucci for her work on the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit with Phillip James. Annie Marcucci and Philip James finalized the speakers that Lee had worked on previously and the Bios can be found in the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit Report submitted by Annie Marcucci.

The focus scripture text for the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit is taken from 1 Chronicles 16:32, "Let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them!"

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) will host Friday evening, June 21 "From Sea to Sea" with plenary guest speaker Dr. Howard Stevenson to be confirmed. International Ministries (IM) will host Saturday evening, June 22 with plenary guest speaker Rev. Elijah Brown, Baptist World Alliance (BWA) General Secretary. There are plans to have a Sunday Sunrise Service on the beach on Sunday morning June 23 for those who can attend. American Baptist Women's Ministries will host "Sunday Morning Sunday School" with a lesson on "Navigating Choppy Seas" presented by plenary guest speaker Dr. Jolene Erlacher, followed by Sunday Morning Communion Worship Service "Worship by the Sea" which will be hosted by the Office of the General Secretary and MMBB with plenary guest preacher Rev. Ngwedla Paul Msiza, BWA President. The Biennial will close that evening with an American Baptist Churches of the South (ABC of the South) 50th Anniversary Celebration hosted by the Regional Executive Ministers Council (REMC) and ABC of the South. The theme will be "A Sea of Witnesses." The plenary guest preacher and individuals sharing testimonies will be selected by the ABC of the South Executive Minister and the General Secretary for the closing celebration.

Kevin Walden is working on the Orientation to American Baptist Life (OTABL). OTABL will meet on-line prior to the Biennial to have conversations with seminarians and new pastors in order that orientation would occur months before the Biennial. This is a different format than in past years to allow for them to attend the Biennial events with everyone. After the Biennial they will meet on line again to discuss what they experienced.

At the previous National Leadership Council (NLC) meeting Lee Spitzer began discussions to form a United Mission Task Force. This newly formed task force met recently and discussed the importance of rebuilding relationships with partners, regions, and churches. Through this discussion the United Mission Task Force came up with a narrative, “United in Christ, Together in Mission.”

Jeff shared that he had the honor to participate in a remembrance walk with ABHMS of leaving the ABC Mission Center and walking to the new building that will house ABHMS, ABEC, and ABWM. Jeff Haggray asked Jeff Woods to give a consecration prayer for the new building and Jeff Woods shared that he was happy to do that on the board’s behalf.

In addition to the duties of Acting General Secretary, Jeff has had a full year of Executive Minister searches. There will be at least ten Region Executive Ministers at the orientation in January.

Additional work is being done on the Core project. The 40th Anniversary of the American Baptist Women in Ministry celebration will take place June 16-19, 2020. Kevin Walden continues to work with

regions to bring Fresh Expressions as a resource. Marsha Scipio continues to work with the partnership with NICD.

BGM 434 588 PROPERTY UPDATE

The due diligence period of 90 days has begun and then we will have a contract with the buyer. Studies are being done by the buyer on the grounds and we should know by the end of December if the contract will be definite.

OGS owns 35% of the property and OGS gets 35% of the proceeds of the sale.

There are still two tenants remaining on the property. Agora will be relocating December 15 as their lease expires at end of year. Negotiations continue with Presser regarding relocation costs and date.

ABHMS, ABEC, and ABWM moved two weeks ago. ABF plans to relocate by the end of month.

BGM 435 1015 W. 9th AVENUE PROPERTY UPDATE

The current tenant in the property is expected to move out by December 14. Alan Musoke has been working with the architect in making the plans for the new building and to begin construction in the coming months. The current plan is to move by March 2019.

BGM 436 2019 BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT INCENTIVE TO BGM

As an incentive to encourage the BGM Directors to stay after the June board meeting and attend the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit, the Representative Process budget will cover the BGM Directors' costs for the ABHMS and the IM Biennial luncheons.

BGM 437 REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

President Josué Gómez-Menéndez reported that the Committee met yesterday afternoon and the At Large Directors for 2019 consist of 23 males and 21 females. Of those men and women, 23 are clergy and 21 are lay people.

Slate of ABCUSA Officers for the 2020-2021 Biennium

President Josué Gómez-Menéndez announced the following slate of ABCUSA Officers for the 2020-2021 Biennium to be forwarded to the 2019 Biennial delegates for vote at the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit in Virginia Beach, VA.

ABCUSA President: Karen Podsiadly
ABCUSA Vice President: James Wolfe
Budget Review Officer: Paul Higgins

For a listing of the nominated At Large Directors please see Appendix 2. There are still three open positions that will be decided on at the January 10, 2019 "Go to Meeting."

BGM 438 ELECTION OF BGM DIRECTORS

Election of BGM Director to the Board of MMBB

Noemi Nunez-Sanchez was recommended by the BGM Executive Committee to serve as BGM Director to the Board of MMBB.

No objections, approved.

Election of BGM Director to the Board of ABHMS

James Wolfe was recommended by the BGM Executive Committee to serve as BGM Director to the Board of ABHMS for the rest of the Biennium.

No objections, approved.

BGM 439 UNITED MISSION UPDATE (VIDEO)

A few years ago when Technology Therapy Group (TTG) was contracted to work with MRD on promotional materials for the "United Mission is the Vehicle" emphasis, a video was developed. This video contained well thought-out information but did not visually represent American Baptist Churches USA well. Bridget Lipin and Tina Turner began to work with TTG in the spring to update the video. American Baptist voices are being used, American Baptist pictures and video segments are included making this feel more personal. The five-minute video shown is in the final editing stage. Once finished, the video link will be sent to all Region Executive Ministers with a request that it be shared by them in an email to churches. A postcard will be mailed to all churches' finance committees with a request to view the video as a group and to show the video prior to a Sunday service.

BGM 440 RECOGNITION OF RETIRING BGM MEMBERS AND ADJOURNMENT

Retiring Board Directors were recognized. Andy Arndt, Felipe Candelaria, Bill Fredrickson, Danny Jack, Nancy O'Neill, Wesley Su-Ming Sun, and Elmore Warren were all presented with the book, *Baptist Roots: A Reader in the Theology of a Christian People* by Freeman, McClendon and DaSilva to each. Nancy O'Neill was recognized for sharing her gift of music during the meetings.

BGM 441 YEAR TO DATE FINANCIALS

Overall

Overall the year-to-date September financials show a net loss of (\$238K) primarily due to the Development Office and ABCUSA departments which had losses of (\$182K) and (\$73K) respectively.

Net revenue compared to last year is down (\$149K). Expenses as compared to last year are lower by \$169K. Net revenue and expenses are determined by subtracting the Biennial from this year and last year since there is no Biennial in 2018.

Development Office

The Development Office had a loss of (\$182K). Revenues realized by this department flow through other departments.

United Mission

Total UM is \$5,140,140. This is a decrease of (\$248,762) from the prior year. This represents a reduction of 4.62%. These figures include the "Love Gift." Without the "Love Gift," UM would be down by 4.54% for the year.

BGM 442 2019 BUDGET

On average United Mission (UM) has been declining annually by 5.63% over the last five years from 2013 to 2017. The 2019 UM shows a decline of 1.33%. This is a result of using budgeted amounts instead of the actual UM numbers.

The ABCUSA Finance Committee recommends the BGM adopt the 2019 distribution of the national portion of United Mission.

No objections, approved.

Based on the 2019 UM distribution recommended by the ABCUSA Finance Committee, UM provides approximately 33% of the ABCUSA budget. A 5% draw from the Building Proceeds Endowment provides another 18% of the budget. The budget for 2019 includes a salary increase of 2%, increases in medical costs of 15%, and includes \$65,000 to relocate to a new facility. There is an expected deficit for 2019 of \$97,000 due to one-time costs.

The BGM Finance Committee recommends the BGM adopt the 2019 Estimated Income and ABCUSA budget as presented.

No objections, approved.

BGM 443 DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY TEAM (DAT) UPDATE

Ken Marsenburg expressed the need for help from the board directors in getting corporate sponsorships for the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit. He reminded everyone of Lee's goal to surpass 2000 people registered to attend the Biennial. He also asked the board to fill out and return faith pledges.

BGM 444 REGION UPDATES

Paul Gibson Executive Minister of ABC of the Great Rivers Region thanked the board for including him at the board meetings.

Yvonne Carter Executive Minister of the Cleveland Baptist Association (CBA) expressed her gratitude for her being at the board meeting on behalf of the REMC.

BGM 445 REPORT OF ACTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Dean Parker, ABCUSA Vice President, reported the actions taken by the BGM Executive Committee at its September 13-15, 2018 meeting held in Burlington, VT. The committee met with local pastors and board directors while in Burlington, VT. During the meeting a letter was drafted to American Baptist Churches of Rochester/Genesee Region and to American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago.

BGM 446 RECESS OF MEETING FOR BUS TOUR TO NEW PROPERTY

A bus tour to the new property included driving past the American Baptist Churches Mission Center, past ABHMS' new building and past IM's new building and then stopping to tour OGS' new building.

DINNER

At 5:30 p.m., BGM directors, spouses/families (Darby Atchison, Malachi Blandon and family of Nunez-Sanchez) and staff gathered in Independence South to enjoy dinner and fellowship together. At 6:30 p.m. BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque led the board in a time of evening prayer and meditation during the vesper and communion service.

Sunday, November 11, 2018. 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.; Plenary; Independence North

At 7:00 a.m., the BGM directors and staff enjoyed breakfast in Stirling's Restaurant of the Crowne Plaza.

BGM 447 RECONVENING/WORSHIP

ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Independence North Room. Past President Judy Fackenthal lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence and led the board in prayer.

BGM 448 REPORT OF THE ABCUSA PRESIDENT

ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez reported that in September he received notice that the ABCUSA General Secretary Lee Spitzer would be having heart surgery. The BGM Executive Committee proceeded according to the Standing Rules in naming Jeff Woods as Acting General Secretary until Lee's condition allows him to return. Executive Director for ABHMS Jeffrey Haggray invited Josué to hold a discussion panel with ABC of Puerto Rico and bring greetings on behalf of the board at Space for Grace.

BGM 449 CREDENTIALS & CAUCUS COMMITTEE

José Manuel Magana, chair of the Credentials & Caucus Committee, reviewed the updates previously requested for the Changed Relationship Report.

Voice vote to accept the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches (1205.1:11/18) dated June 13, 2018 to November 8, 2018.

VOTED: Motion Approved

BGM 450 BGM OFFERING

Josué announced that the offering taken during the previous evening vespers service would be dedicated to First Baptist Church, Wakefield, MA which was destroyed by fire recently when the steeple was struck by lightning. The total collected came to \$1,098.00.

BGM 451 BURMA REFUGEE COMMISSION

Rev. Florence Li, American Baptist Home Mission Societies' national coordinator of Asian Ministries, and Leslie Turley, International Ministries area director for Southeast Asia and Japan, spoke and noted that representatives of the group had come to speak for the Burma Refugees. They shared that there have been 120 new American Baptist congregations in the last ten years, made up of people from Chin, Karen, Kachin and other ethnic groups of people from Burma. Burmese congregations make up the highest growth of new American Baptist congregations within the denomination.

Rollin Van Bik, President of Chin Baptist Churches USA, shared about a UNHCR Letter (Attached Document) released to the Chin Communities in Malaysia, the outcome of which will have great effect on the Chin community members living there. The letter states that there will be a process of individual cessation of refugee status for ethnic Chins from Myanmar who are assessed to not have a need for international protection. It closes noting that the cessation process for all ethnic Chin refugees will be completed by December 31, 2019, and the contents of the letter leave much uncertainty for Chin persons who are currently living in Malaysia, who left their homes due to instability and danger in Myanmar. It was also noted that instances of suicide within this Chin community are very high, as many have felt that there is no other option. He asked that American Baptists pray and advocate in any way that they can for the Chin people.

Rev. Saw Thomas, Karen Pastor at Philadelphia Burmese Baptist Church, shared about the Karen situation within refugee camps. Many Karen people have been forced to return back to Myanmar, despite the continuing instability of the country, due to a lack of resources in the refugee camps. Others, still, have lived in the camps for two to three decades. It is very difficult for those in the refugee camps to return to Myanmar. He asked that we remember the Karen people in prayer.

Gum San Nsang, President of Kachin Alliance, USA, shared about the imminent threat of danger as people are not able to flee to neighboring countries, but are rather internally displaced within their own territories. Conditions for Christians in villages in Burma include desecration of sanctuaries, stealing of offerings, ransacked villages, and heinous violent crimes in the church, including murder and rape. He again asked for prayer for those who are under this oppression.

The delegation closed by asking for continued further action and advocacy from American Baptist Churches USA. In addition to those who spoke, Rev. Hkawng Lum Laking, Pennsylvania Kachin Baptist Church, Associate General Secretary of Kachin KBCUSA, was also a member of the delegation in attendance.

BGM 452 ACTION GROUP AND EXIT INTERVIEWS REPORTS

Finance Committee Action Group:

Budget Review Officer Paul Higgins reported on the Finance Committee Action Group, stating that the committee voted to retain Tait Weller to perform the 2018 financial audit. The committee met with Dave Moore from ABHMS regarding ABCUSA's investments in the ABHMS Common Investment Fund. At the June meeting the committee considered a proposal to move our banking relationship to the Christian Community Credit Union (CCCU) and asked Alan Musoke to do further research. Based on the research and input from the Executive Committee, the committee voted not to change our banking relationship.

Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations:

June Totten reported on the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations (CCUIR) sharing that invitations for nominations for the Mowbray Ecumenical Award have been posted. A conference call will be held in early 2019 to review these applications. Elijah Brown has agreed to serve as the speaker for the CCUIR dinner in conjunction with the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit. Committee members were encouraged to attend the "Ecumenical Days" in Washington DC, April 5-8, 2019.

Beloved Community Action Group:

Camille Brown reported on the Beloved Community Action Group in which she thanked Marsha Scipio and the staff for organizing the presentation by Carolyn Lukensmeyer of NICD.

The Beloved Community Action Group proposed that the board approve ABCUSA to publicly endorse the NICD's "National Call for Reflection, Prayer, and Reconciliation." Through this effort we join other denominations across our country in prayer for a change in the national discourse in our nation.

VOICE VOTE: Motion Approved

Communicating ABC Identity Action Group:

Tasha Wilson reported on the Communicating ABC Identity Action Group as having discussed utilizing social media to celebrate the whole family by sharing their stories on Facebook. The Communicating ABC Identity Action Group challenged the board to go back to their churches and share the UM video and publicity material and then at the next board meeting bring back pictures or videos of their presenting it.

Exit Interviews:

Past President Judy Fackenthal shared that these are the first exit interviews with retiring board directors which utilized questions that were suggested by the board and the Communicating ABC Identity Action Group. Sharing the questions prior to the exit interviews may be more beneficial for future interviewees.

BGM 453 CLOSING WORSHIP AND ADJOURNMENT

Prayers were shared in various languages. ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez adjourned the meeting of the Board of General Ministries.

FUTURE BGM MEETINGS:

June 18-20, 2019 Virginia Beach, VA

June 20, 2019 Pre-Biennial events; June 21-23, 2019 Biennial Mission Summit

November 8-10, 2019 King of Prussia, PA

FUTURE BGM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

March 14-16, 2019 Orlando, FL

June 17-18, 2019 Virginia Beach, VA

September 12-14, 2019 Denver, CO

November 7-8, 2019 King of Prussia, PA

Submitted by,



Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods

Acting General Secretary

CJW/kj

Documents attached

BGM Integrated Schedule (1008:11/18)

BGM Proposed Agenda (1102:11/18)

BGM Minutes – June 2018 (1001:11/18)

BGM Executive Committee Minutes: September 2018 (1002:09/18)

BGM Executive Committee Minutes: June 2018 (1002:06/18)

Financials YTD through September 2018

BGM Item 5F Action Groups Assignments November 2018

Report of the Acting General Secretary

Reports from Directors to Other Boards: MMBB

Reports of ABCUSA OGS Staff and AMOs

ABC President's Report (1201:11/18)

Burma Refugee Commission Report

World Relief Committee Report

2019 Biennial Plenary Session Speaker Update

UNCHR Letter (Burma Refugee Commission)

2019 Budget Highlights

Professional Ministries Report

Update on Sale of Mission Center

1015 ABCUSA – OGS Robert A. Roblee Ministry Building New Front (South)

1015 ABCUSA OGS Robert A. Roblee Ministry Building North Side

Layout by 5 Star Plan

Proposed Floor Plan

Report of Changed Relationships June 13, 2018 to November 8, 2018 (1205.1:11/18)

Rhythms of the Spirit Report
OTABL Update
American Baptist Historical Society Report
Department of Development Skeletal Report
C-TAC Annual Summit Report

Take the Revive Civility Pledge

Are you tired of the personal attacks, hateful rhetoric and polarization that too often dominate our political discussions? If so, you are like most Americans, but you also probably don't know what to do about it. Almost everyone agrees that the 2016 political campaign elevated incivility to new and disturbing levels, and, if we don't take specific steps to counter that trend, the upcoming 2018 campaign will be as bad or worse.

The National Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD) believes that there is something we can do. If enough people decide to listen to each other, to talk and act differently, then we will get different results. For this reason, NICD has launched the Initiative to Revive Civility and invites you to be part of it. In order to join the Initiative, NICD asks you to affirm your intention to practice civility in your own life and also take specific steps to engage people of diverse political views in respectful conversations. Those who join the initiative will receive support for their efforts from NICD that includes information and suggestions about simple ways to promote civility and respect.

If you want to join the initiative and help in your community then sign the pledge below. You will be added to the list of those who want to work for civility and receive occasional updates and information about what you can do to make a difference.

The Pledge

To help revive civility and respect in my community, I will make a conscious effort to:

1. Seek out a variety of reliable news sources with different perspectives in order to learn more about the forces that divide - and also unite - our country.
2. Listen respectfully to people who have views different than my own, be mindful to avoid stereotyping and not use language that is insulting or derogatory.
3. Encourage and support efforts to bring people of different points of view together in our community to have civil and respectful conversations
4. Invite other people to join me in the Initiative to Revive Civility and get involved in helping to connect people across political divisions.

Hold a Revive Civility Conversation

The pervasive decline of civility in our society can be seen in the media, our government and our everyday lives. In Weber Shandwick's Civility in America survey, 75% of Americans report that incivility has risen to crisis levels. When we stop talking with each other, listening to each other and working together to find solutions to our society's problems, our democracy cannot survive. The open exchange of ideas between people of different views is one of the essential elements of a healthy, functioning democracy.

How can ordinary citizens combat incivility and affect change on a local and national level? It starts with listening to each other, and by agreeing to have conversations that follow a few basic guidelines that make it possible to really hear each other and learn from each other.

Individuals and communities will have different issues that can be explored with civility across differences, but imagine if through our collective desire for respect and civility, we rose together across our country to create the expectation that we want something different in our public discourse and our daily lives? Imagine if, after we got to know each other as people first, we as Americans reflected together on questions like this:

1. What are you most thankful for about America?
2. What are your thoughts and feelings about the deep divisions and incivility we see now in the country?
3. What can we do to revive civility and respect, and find more effective ways to work together on common problems?

Questions like these and others can be discussed in many different types of settings—both structured and informal. Some of the ways you can have a revive civility conversation are:

- **One on one with another person**—Take a few minutes to talk with a friend or a colleague or a neighbor. Arrange a time to have a conversation with someone who you think has different political views than you.
 - **In a small group**—Ask a group you are a member of (faith based, club, association, civic organizations, etc.) to have a conversation on civility at a regular meeting or invite a few people to get together to listen to each other talk informally.
 - **Hold a community conversation**—Get two or more organizations to come together and host a conversation that brings together people from several different segments of the community to listen across differences and talk about how to combat incivility.
- Suggestions and specific tools for conducting these different types of conversations can be found here: <http://www.revivecivility.org/resources>

APPENDIX 2

ABCUSA Nominating Committee Meeting

November 8, 2018

At-Large Directors (2020-2023):

Cleveland:	Thomas Gilmore
Rocky Mtn:	Bryan Roberts
Michigan	Nancy Lewis
Massachusetts	No names rec'd
Rochester/Genesee	Clifford Matthews

At-Large Directors (2021-2024):

Connecticut	Laura Austin
Dakotas	Lizette Hunt
Maine	Pam Morse
PA & DE	Christopher Hamilton
Central Pacific Coast	no names rec'd
Great Rivers Region	no names rec'd

At-Large Directors for 2nd term (Class 2024)

Rhode Island	Janice Fletcher
Nebraska	Mark Harvey
Philadelphia	Cedric Jones
Vermont/NH	Annie Svitavsky

General Directors for 2nd term

Raimundo Barreto
Zina Jacque
Thomas Ross

General Director for 1st term (Class 2023)

Marilyn Malone