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NOTES: Comments made today are in bold. Also, strike throughs show major edits.



NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

Goals

1. To orient new board members to the workings of the BGM.
2. To provide new board members with a forum to pose questions early in their board tenure.
3. To create camaraderie with and among new board members.
4. To encourage new board members to “buy in to” the optimism and forward direction of the board.
5. To create a significant level of engagement with new board members, from the very beginning of their tenure.
6. To provide an opportunity for new board members to articulate their gifts and to note how they wish to become involved with the BGM.
7. To set expectations for engagement on the BGM.
8. To familiarize new board members with policies, protocols, procedures, forms, alphabet soup and other structures, enabling them to function well.

Comments about Goals

- **There are two different types of goals noted above, both are important but, their difference requires attention. One type of goal focuses on the practical exchange of data/information and one focuses on the building of relationships.**
- **The order of the orientation might begin with the data/information and keep the very important relationship building to the second portion. This would allow the training to end with an upbeat, energized engagement.**

NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION PRESENTATION AND HANDBOOK Board of General Ministries¹

- I. History of the Office of General Secretary
- II. Mission, Vision and Values Presentation
- III. Board Responsibilities/Role of the Board
 - a. General information about the role of not for profit boards.
 - i. E.g., oversight of Fiduciary issues, mission, vision, strategy and evaluation of CEO.
 - ii. **Are BGM Members major funders or fund raisers?**
 - 1. It was noted that the BG should be a 100% giving board.**
 - 2. However, we are unlikely to be the major funders.**
 - 3. We can use our voices to carry the message of UM and other fund raising activities. We should see ourselves as extensions of any fund-raising effort.**
 - 4. BGM is the representative voice of the denomination. We are in the process of learning to use that voice for the common good.**
 - b. Expectations of BGM Members
 - i. Signed Covenant of Commitment (to be developed)²
 - ii. Coordination with the partner bodies whom they represent. (including reporting back)
 - 1. Who Do BGM Members represent**
 - a. There was a great deal of discussion about the difference in a board that meets twice a year and focuses on the perfunctory business (i.e., listening to reports and other business as usual) and a board that that sees its role as carrying the story, raising funds, advocating for the position of the BGM, serve as the voice of the President and the GS.**
 - b. To get to the board described in the latter fashion, board members would have to see themselves as representatives of the BGM**

¹ Pertinent information will be gathered into a binder and presented as part of a workshop scheduled before a regular board meeting. The binder will be made available online, also. In this way, all board members will have access. The training session will be required of new board members, with returning members encouraged to attend. If a new board member cannot make the training session and online module will be created and completion of the module will be required.

² In order to formalize the role and expectations of BGM board members, a formal covenant of engagement should be created. Upon review and signature, all board members would be well aware of their responsibilities.

and not their region or ministries. Board members would have to commit to a 365 day a year job, not 3 days, twice a year.

c. This also has implications for the ways in which board members are nominated and selected.

iii. Attendance

iv. Engagement on Committees

IV. Structure of the BGM

a. Membership

b. Terms of office

c. Meeting Schedule

V. Alphabet Soup

a. Explanation of Terms

VI. Organizational Chart of the ABCUSA family

a. Organizational chart

b. Written descriptions of our partners and their ministries/ functions.

VII. Staff

a. Chart

b. Bio

c. Essential Responsibilities

d. Contact list

VIII. Programs and Services of OGS

a. Program descriptions

b. Whom we serve

c. Calendar of annual activities

IX. Fiscal Review

a. Where does the money come from?

b. Where does it go?

c. Presentation of Budget

i. Primer on how to read it

ii. Schedule for development of budget

X. Fund Management (Fund Raising)

a. Program

b. Results

c. Goals

XI. Frequently Asked Questions

XII. Minutes from the Previous year

XIII. Legal Documents

- a. Covenant of Relationships
- b. By laws

XIV. Policies and Procedures

- a. How meetings are run
- b. How expense forms are turned in
- c. Any other important policies
- d. Register for meetings

XV. Other Necessary Forms

XVI. Board Member Relationship Building

- a. Bios
- b. Statement, *what does it mean to be American Baptist?*
- c. Gather areas of interest, expertise, determine where new board members wish to serve.
 - i. **The building of relationships is enhanced as they move through a process of inclusion, control and affection. We cannot get to affection, the space where we build relationships, without the first two steps.**
 - ii. **Relationship building between new board members and their role on the BGM might be facilitated by an active and engaged mentor program. Mentor would attend the training with new board member and follow up over the first year.**
 - iii. **This is among the most important things we can do at the June meeting, begin to build these positive relationships.**
 - iv. **Strong relationships among and between the BGM and with the new GS will set up on positive footing.**
 - v. **As we anticipate the onboarding of a new GS, it might be wise to use the June BGM meeting to focus on relationship building for all members, along with the GS.**

PRACTICAL MATTERS

1. Who owns this process, BGM or staff?

a. BGM

- i. **There are several options including the Nominating Committee, Beloved Community or a new committee.**
- ii. **The argument for the Nominating Committee is that they would be the body to**
 - 1. **choose and train new board members and then (thought this will come up later in this document) conduct exit interviews.**

2. **Remember Jeff Woods has some expertise to put some parts of this binder together.**
3. **Looping back to Regional and other National Boards to share what is learned in exit interviews would be helpful.**



BOARD MEMBER EXIT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Goals

- To engage retiring board members to thank them for their service and to gather valuable information about their board experience, such as
 - Positive and challenging experiences.
 - Ways the functioning of the board might be improved.
 - Ways to strengthen relationships among board members and throughout the denomination.
 - How to deepen the faith of board members.
 - How to equip board members to be on-going champions of the denomination through the use of their gifts, skills and voice.

What is most important is that we gather information to help the BGM improve the relationships within, and functions of, the board.

As noted in the previous section, this function might be handled well by the Nominating Committee

Process

1. ~~A new committee will be formed, staffed by current board members. This committee will be called the Exit Interview Committee.~~ Members of the committee will receive training in conducting exit interviews and conduct an exit interview with each retiring board member. These interviews will be completed within three months of the completion of the retiring member's board engagement.
2. Information will be gathered in a standard manner, using an instrument to be designed. Data will not be associated with a specific board member.
3. Data will be submitted to the OGS in a manner to be determined.
4. A final report will be shared by the Exit Interview Committee as deemed appropriate.

NEW BOARD MEMBER EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did you choose to serve on the BGM?
2. What were your expectations of the BGM?

- 262 ○ Were your expectations met? Why or why not?
- 263 3. As you review your time on the board
- 264 ○ What about the functioning of the BGM worked well?
- 265 ○ What would you say did not work well?
- 266 4. Were there “ah ha” moments for you during your time on the board?
- 267 Were there lessons you learned that you will take with you?
- 268
- 269 **5. What additional learning opportunities do you wish had been**
- 270 **made available for you during your board tenure (e.g., topics,**
- 271 **speakers, research trends, etc.)?**
- 272
- 273 **6. What would have enabled you to be a better board member?**
- 274
- 275 **7. What suggestions would you make to improve the work of the**
- 276 **BGM?**
- 277 ○ **What would you change about the functioning of the board?**
- 278 ○ **What would you ask remain the same about the functioning**
- 279 **of the board?**
- 280
- 281 **8. How might we structure the board such that board members have**
- 282 **a greater opportunity to learn from one another, as well as about**
- 283 **the denomination?**
- 284
- 285 9. Were there ways the board might have functioned that would help
- 286 deepen your faith as you served?
- 287
- 288 10. As you recall your time on the Board, please
- 289 ○ Tell me about a time when you were proud to be a BGM board
- 290 member and why.
- 291 ○ Tell me about a time when it was difficult to be a BGM board
- 292 member and why.
- 293
- 294 11. Now that your board tenure has ended, what are the ways you desire
- 295 to serve the denomination?
- 296
- 297 12. What advice would you offer a new board member?
- 298
- 299 13. Would you recommend this experience to another ABC colleague?
- 300 Why or why not?
- 301
- 302 14. Are there other comments that you would like to share for the good of
- 303 the order?
- 304

305 **The bold questions, noted above, were thought to be the most important.**

306 **It was also noted that the questions should be given to the interviewee**

307 **beforehand and the conversation should not be a march/slog through the**

308 **questions but, more conversational in style.**

309

Also, because the current retiring board members have undergone many transitions, it might be wise to have Executive Committee members conduct this first round of interviews, both as an experiment and to have ears ready to listen to the complex responses of members who are soon to retire.



BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NEW GS

The board of General Ministries believes that in order to build a good relationship with the new GS, we ~~must~~: will focus on

- Receiving the new GS with optimism and hope.
- Being patient
- Entering into a covenant with the GS to support, pray for and share wisdom about the direction of the OGS.
- ~~• Being clear about our expectations of the GS.~~
- ~~Create and follow through on an annual evaluation process.~~ Creating a process by which the GS and Executive Committee may have an informal check in at the end of the year, with a formal evaluation in years 3 or 4.
- Create listening sessions such that the GS has sufficient time to spend with the many parts of our denominational family, allowing time for fellowship and the ability to hear the hearts and hopes of each group (**we highlighted REMC, NEC, NLC and BGM**)/.
- ~~• Create a list of expectations from the BGM to the GS for the first 180 days (or another agreed upon period of time). Share 3 or 4 top priorities with the GS for the first year.~~
- Make clear to the GS the importance of availability and transparency.
- **Spend significant time in this (March) meeting and in June creating a way to orient the GS. We do not have much experience in this and need to focus on our orientation plan, sooner, rather than later.**
- **Getting to know the GS (people did not know Roy well).**
- **Understanding the job is too big (we don't know if Jesus could do it) and some things will not be done or be shared with other staff.**



ACHIEVING THE WELFARE OF THE WHOLE AS HARMONIZER

As the harmonizer, the ~~Office of the~~ General Secretary will work to achieve the welfare of the whole by maintaining a ~~singular~~ focus on the development, growth and vital well being of the denominational family. The GS will seek, in every way possible, to guide the family in balancing the many, and sometimes competing, goals that rise out of our vision to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In order to accomplish this, the Office of the General Secretary must engage denominational partners to:

- Agree on our essential goals and common mission.
- Work together to maximize resources; human, financial and spiritual.
- Embrace our diversity, while seeing our many members as vital parts to a strong, unified and vital body.
- Believe we can do better together, what we cannot do alone.

As the “harmonizer” the OGS must:

- **Offer respect to the various stakeholders. This is a precursor to the GS gaining the respect of the partners.**
- ~~Gain the respect of the various stakeholders/constituents/family members.~~
- ~~Be granted authority by the partners.~~
- **Seek to be respected and regarded as the one who can a resource, guiding parts of the body toward be a synergistic whole.**
- Be seen as fair and maintain equal relationships with all parts.
- Listen to the needs and desires of the constituent parts of the denominational family.
- Interpret the stories told from within, and by, the constituent parts of the family and weave together an authentic narrative that may be told by all.
- Help maintain the perspective of the whole with, between, and among all constituents.
- Help create decision making processes that seek intersections between and among the needs and desires of all, recognizing the need for balance, humility, compromise and a trajectory toward the greater good.
- Create an authentic buy in to the ancient proverb, *if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.*



WHAT IS THE OGS' PROPHETIC ROLE³

Questions/Concerns

- What do we mean by being prophetic?
 - **We thought it a worthwhile activity to explore what it means to be a prophet. In the text they are often outside the structure and their truth telling often gets them killed.**
 - **What do we want for the BGM's prophetic role? Is it to the body of BGM or to the world?**
- What if being prophetic further divides us?
- How can the GS be prophetic and not find themselves at variance with ABHMS' prophetic role?
 - **It was noted that the head of ABHMS is deeply respectful to the office of OGS. When the prophetic voice of the ABHMS may clash with the work of the family, conversation is had. This makes for a strong relationship.**
 - **As the representative body of the family, it is often more difficult for the OGS to take a prophetic role. This has to be examined**
- **It is important the GS engage the American Baptist family in finding harmony in their different views on how God's word is lived**
- **Can the GS be gentle and humble in this role, while understanding that he/she is one of multiple national executives, none with more authority or power than the others.⁴**
- It is not universally held that ABHMS must be our only prophetic voice. The head of our communion must take the lead, when appropriate, to have a voice for our family.
- Can the OGS be the "internal prophet", while the head of ABHMS functions as the "external prophet"?

The ABC-USA website states, "The chief executive officer of American Baptist Churches USA, the General Secretary, exercises executive and prophetic initiatives required to achieve an effective mission outreach for the denomination." **This language was appreciated for its power and simplicity. It signaled that the voice of the OGS is not based on the thinking of (just) the GS but, on the thinking of the broader constituency.**

³ It is important for the GS to be prophetic *too* us (within the family) before he or she can be prophetic *for us*.

⁴ These two highlighted items were thought to be essential in any consideration of the GS's prophetic role.

Given this, the Office of the General Secretary's prophetic role is to:

WHAT

- Listen actively and faithfully to God's calling and to discern what **God** wants the GS to say as the GS leads the ABCUSA family into God's plan for them and for the world.
- Speak to the life issues encountered in today's global and national culture.
- Care enough to confront injustice and unrighteousness.

HOW

- Discern God's compassion for all.
- Speak the truth in love.

FOR WHOM

- Be a representative voice for the collective whole of ABCUSA.
- To model prophetic leadership for our churches to follow.