



BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES

November 12-14, 2015

MINUTES

Meeting Site: Doubletree by Hilton
301 West DeKalb Pike
King of Prussia, PA 19406
610-337-1200

Officers: Don Ng, President
Judy Fackenthal, Vice President/BGM Chaplain
Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer
Ruth Clark, Past President
A. Roy Medley, General Secretary

Parliamentarian: Dennis Johnson

Thursday, November 12, 2:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.; Jefferson B & Paine Rooms

BGM 246 WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

ABC president Don Ng welcomed BGM directors and ABCUSA staff, and called the meeting to order. He expressed appreciation to Joyce Blandon and Vivan Martindale for agreeing to serve as tellers and to Nancy O'Neill and Ruth Clark for providing music during the meetings. He also formally introduced Mr. Josue Gómez-Menendez, vice-president elect, and welcomed Rev. Joan Friesen, executive minister of ABC of Indianapolis, who was present at this meeting.

President Ng recognized new directors attending their first meeting: Janice Bell, ABC of New York State (At-Large Director, class of 2017) and Bonnie Higgins, ABC of Maine (At-Large Director, class of 2016).

Regrets were received from Danny Jack, Growing Healthy Churches; Marijane Kiley, West Virginia Baptist Convention; Tom Roberts, ABC of Michigan; Elmore Warren, ABC of the South; and Tasha Wilson, ABC of the Rochester/Genesee Region.

BGM 247 OPENING WORSHIP/LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

Judy Fackenthal, BGM Chaplain, lit the Christ Candle as a sign that “Christ is with us at all times, and Christ is with us now.” She led in a time of meditation from Isaiah 43:19 (“I am about to do a new thing...do you not perceive it?”) and from Genesis 24 (account of Rebekah during a time of transition), which Camille Brown read audibly. Referencing William Bridges’ book, Transitions, she noted that we need to let go before change can happen, ending with the question for reflection: How do we know when it is time to let go?

BGM 248 CONSENT AGENDA

The consent agenda allows the Board of General Ministries to take action on several agenda items with one vote. These are items that can usually be handled without questions, although directors are invited to ask questions prior to a vote being taken.

The following correction to the June 2015 minutes was noted: Page 16 under BGM 245, “David Gregg, MMBB” should read “David Gregg, ABHMS.”

A motion was made, seconded by Dean Parker and it was

VOTED: To approve the Consent Agenda: The November 12-14, 2015 Proposed Agenda and the minutes of BGM’s June 23-24, 2015 meeting (held in Overland Park, KS), as revised.

BGM 249 ABCUSA STANDING RULES

The BGM Executive Committee, at its meeting on September 12, 2015 voted to recommend to the Board of General Ministries the proposed addition to Standing Rule 15.5.3 as noted below. Notice was given to the BGM 30 days prior to this meeting and the proposed change was brought to the BGM for action at this meeting.

***Proposed Draft Amendment to Standing Rule 15.5.3
(Proposed addition indicated by underlining.)***

In the event of the extended absence of the General Secretary, whether by disability, sabbatical, voluntary or involuntary termination of service, or otherwise, the Board of General Ministries shall have the authority and responsibility to name an Interim General Secretary to serve at the pleasure of the Board of General Ministries. If, due to time constraints or otherwise, the Board does not initially name an Interim General Secretary, then the Executive Committee shall have the authority and responsibility to name an Acting General Secretary to serve for a period not to exceed 90 days. Thereafter, the Board of General Ministries shall have the authority and responsibility either to extend the term of the Acting General Secretary or to name an Interim General Secretary to serve at the pleasure of the Board of General Ministries.

A motion was made by Jim Wolfe, seconded by Kay Farley and it was

VOTED: To approve the amendment to Standing Rule 15.5.3, as noted above.

BGM 250 EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Ng recessed the BGM plenary session to meet in Executive Session. During this time BGM took action related to naming an Interim General Secretary. Minutes from this session were placed in a sealed envelope and attached to the official minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

BGM 251 RECONVENE

President Ng reconvened the meeting of the full BGM. He announced that the Board of General Ministries, in Executive Session, approved Susan E. Gillies as Interim General Secretary, beginning December 1, 2015 and extending until the naming of a new General Secretary.

A video greeting from Susan was shared with the BGM.

BGM 252 PRESIDENT'S NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS: 2016-2017

Election of General Director

A motion was made, seconded, and it was

VOTED: To elect the following General Director: Raimundo Barreto (class of 2018) to the Board of General Ministries

President's Nominations

President-Elect Judy Fackenthal presented to BGM for action her 2016-2017 Presidential Nominations.

A motion was made by Beryl Hornberger, seconded by Dianne Steelman and it was

VOTED: To elect the President-Elect's Nominations for the 2016-2017 biennium as listed below:

For service on the BGM Executive Committee:

Felipe Calendaria
Tasha Wilson
(*one vacancy*)

For service as BGM Parliamentarian:

Dennis Johnson

For service on the World Relief Committee:

Shirley Fair
Manuel Magana

For service on the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations:

June Totten
Andy Arndt
Ashley Whitaker
Jim Wolfe

As Chair of the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations:

June Totten

For service on the Standing Rules Committee:

Tom Roberts
Wesley Sun
Kay Farley

Presidential Appointments

President-Elect Fackenthal also presented to BGM for action her 2016-2017 Presidential Appointments.

A motion made by Julia Bebeau, seconded by Kay Farley and it was:

VOTED: To receive the following appointments of President-elect Judy Fackenthal for the 2016-2017 biennium:

For service on the ABCUSA Nominating Committee:

Robin Crouch - clergy
Kelly Legg - clergy
Wesley Roberts – clergy
Charity Matic – laity
Shirley Fair – laity
(one vacancy)

For service on the BGM Finance Committee:

Beryl Hornberger
Danny Jack
Robin Crouch
Charity Matic
Dianne Steelman

For service on the Biennial Mission Summit Planning Team:

Philip James (Vice Chair)
Stephanie Commandest
Andy Arndt

As Chair of the Credentials and Caucus Committee:

Josue Gómez-Menendez

As Chair of the Standing Rules Committee:

Tom Roberts

As Chair of the World Relief Committee:

Shirley Fair

As BGM Chaplain:

Kay Farley

BGM 253 US COMMISSION ON BURMESE REFUGEES

A motion was made by Dianne Steelman, seconded by Bill Frederickson and it was

VOTED: To approve Rev. Biak Mang, General Secretary of the Falam speaking Chin churches in the U.S. as a member of the ABC Commission on Burmese Refugees.

A motion was made by Dianne Steelman, seconded by Bill Frederickson and it was

VOTED: To approve Rev. Joan Friesen, executive minister of ABC of Greater Indianapolis, as a member of the Commission on Burmese Refugees to serve for one year.

BGM 254 REPORT FROM THE WORLD RELIEF OFFICER

Lisa Rothenberger, World Relief Officer, shared an oral report, including a PowerPoint presentation with information regarding the purpose, functions and composition of the World Relief Committee. She highlighted several projects which World Relief supports, and spoke at length about her trip in October to see firsthand the situation in Beirut, Lebanon. She reported that ¼ of all people living in Lebanon today are Syrian, a small country trying to absorb 25% more population, the equivalent of the US absorbing 80 million people over the past 4 years. Lisa reported that Lebanese Society for Education and Social Development (LSESD)'s response includes addressing the issues of winterization, education and trauma support. She also shared the story of Pastor Jihad Haddad and True Vine Baptist Church in Zahle, Lebanon and other very personal accounts of God working among the refugees, stories of relief and revival.

BGM 255 RECESS OF BGM/ CONVENING OF THE ABHS CORPORATE MEETING

The Board of General Ministries recessed and reconvened as the corporate members of the American Baptist Historical Society. Shirley Fair, a member of the ABHS Board, standing in for ABHS president Garth Brokaw, who was attending his daughter's wedding, and ABHS Executive Director Deborah Van Broekhoven reported on the work of the Historical Society. Minutes will be distributed following this meeting and a copy attached to the official minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

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

BGM 256 ACTION GROUPS

President Ng urged BGM directors to thoroughly review staff reports posted on the document page prior to the meeting, as well as the June Action Group notes. He recessed the meeting of the full Board of General Ministries. From 4:15 p.m.-6:00 p.m., the BGM convened in the following Action Groups to focus its work in various areas. (The list of names of members of Action Groups below specify full membership although 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, Marijane Kiley, Alan Newton

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

Julia Bebeau, Janice Bell, Stephanie Commandest, Shirley Fair, Kenneth Kho, Kelly Legg,

Vivan Martindale, Dean Parker, Dianne Steelman, Wesley Sun

***Communicating ABC Identity** (Led by Jonathan Malone at this meeting, but normally led by Tasha Wilson; Leo Thorne, Bridget Lipin, staff)*

Felipe Candelaria, Bill Frederickson, Bonnie Higgins, Jonathan Malone, Elmore Warren, Ashley Whitaker

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

Joyce Blandon, Cecilia Dachtler, Judy Fackenthal, Kay Farley, Manuel Luquin, Manuel Magana, Nancy O'Neill, Tom Roberts

BGM DINNER: 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

The Board of General Ministries, their spouses and staff enjoyed dinner together at 6:00 p.m. in the John Hancock Room of the Doubletree by Hilton.

BGM PHOTO SESSION

Immediately following dinner, Bridget Lipin, assistant director of communications/web manager, photographed BGM directors, members of the Executive Committee and ABCUSA staff who were present at the meeting. This was done as a means of intentionally working to preserve historic records.

Thursday, November 12, 7:30pm; Jefferson B & Paine Rooms

**BGM 257 RECONVENE
REPORT ON BAPTIST WORLD CONGRESS, DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA**

President Ng reconvened the meeting.

The BGM received a celebratory report of Baptist World Congress, held July 22-26, 2015 at the International Convention Center in Durban, South Africa. This report was provided interactively with General Secretary Roy Medley, who attended BWA Congress, interviewing Ruth Clark, Pat Hernandez, and June Totten, who also represented ABC at this international Baptist event.

BGM 258 CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS

President Ng invited the Board of General Ministries to share in a time of concerns and celebrations. Included was a request for prayer for the family of Rev. Steven Case, retired pastor of First Baptist Church of Mansfield, PA, and former member of BGM and the General Board. Rev. Case died on October 8 in Washington, D.C. from complications related to injuries resulting from a fall as he left his hotel for a board meeting of the Baptist Joint Committee.

BGM 259 CELEBRATIONS AND RECOGNITIONS

Retiring Board Directors

The following BGM directors were recognized for their generous gifts of time, talents and Christian love in service over the years to the board and to the American Baptist family:

Julia Bebeau –8 years

Ernest Jones–6 years

Ruth Clark–10 years

President Ng shared written personal words of gratitude to each and presented certificates of appreciation. Vice President Judy Fackenthal presented them with a copy of the book *Baptist Roots: A Reader in the Theology of a Christian People* by Freeman, McClendon and Da Silva.

ABC Officers

The Board of General Ministries honored ABC Officers for their gifts of leadership and commitment over the past biennium. General Secretary Roy Medley led in a litany of celebration and in prayer and a closing hymn.

Don Ng, President - 2014-2015*

Ruth Clark, President, Past President – 2012-2015**

Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer – 2014 –Present

Judy Fackenthal, Vice President, BGM Chaplain – 2014-2015

BGM presented to retiring president Don Ng an acrylic plaque, embedded with an ABC pewter medallion and inscribed with, “The Rev. Dr. Don Ng, ABC President, 2014-2015.”

**Retiring president Don Ng served for 2 years as GB/BGM Representative (2010-2011), 2 years as BGM Vice President (2012-2013) and 2 years as BGM President (as noted above).*

***Retiring past president Ruth Clark served for 6 years as GB/BGM Representative (2006-2009, 2010-2011), 2 years as BGM President (2012-2013) and 2 years of BGM Past President (as noted above).*

Following this time of recognition and celebration, President Ng recessed the Board of General Ministries, to be reconvened on Friday morning.

BGM 260

VESPERS

BGM Chaplain Judy Fackenthal led in evening prayer and meditation through a Call to Worship, the singing of hymns, and Scripture reading from Philippians 3:12-14, recognizing times of transition. She ended the vesper service with a powerful personal story of transition related to how God used a mentally challenged, homeless man, a member of her congregation, to minister to the congregation of Garfield Park Baptist Church and to the community.

Friday, November 13, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Jefferson B & Paine Rooms

BGM 261

CALL TO ORDER/DEVOTION

Vice President Judy Fackenthal called the meeting to order and lit the Christ Candle as a remembrance of Christ's presence with us.

BGM 262

YTD FINANCIALS/UM DISTRIBUTION/2016 ABCUSA BUDGET

YTD Financials

Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer, reviewed the Year-to-Date Financials through September 2015. His PowerPoint presentation, which also includes a report on UM Distribution and the ABCUSA 2016 Proposed Budget, is attached to the minutes of this meeting filed in the General Secretary's office.

UM Distribution

General Secretary Medley recounted the history of the passing of the new Budget Covenant and the resulting 50% decline in UM funding realized by ABCUSA and, as a result of that decline, the reduction of staff. At the same time new streams of revenue began to be realized by other boards and resources were also opened up for regions through region offerings. ABCUSA is the only organization truly restricted by UM and donor giving. He spoke about ABCUSA adding a new Director of Development, Ken Marsenburg, to assist in developing donors and an endowment.

He noted that ABC has discussed being in this critical stage for the last five years. As a result of these discussions BGM has named an Adaptive Challenge Team on United Mission to work on reshaping UM. Medley spoke of the importance of seeing the overall picture and realities that have reshaped the picture. There are common programs and systems which continue to serve us all: AB Churches Information Systems (ABCIS), the computer system that cares for all of our family; American Baptist Professional Systems (ABPS), Mission Resource Development, which helps fund the work of UM; *ABCUSA Connections* Magazine; the Orientation to American Baptist Life (OTABL) for graduating seminarians and new pastors; the Representative Process which includes the work of BGM in creating taskforces to work on immigration, to assist refugees from Burma, to hold Regional Executive Ministers (REMC) meetings, and to bring together the presidents of the four partner organizations.

Paul Higgins spoke about the reality of ABCUSA being squeezed out due to systemic issues. ABCUSA is charged as the administrative arm and it is difficult to receive targeted giving for such services. Although as a service through other programming, ABCUSA continues to contribute to the whole.

Discussion included an action to approve UM distribution. Upon motion by Budget Review Officer Paul Higgins, and on recommendation of the Executive Committee, it was by consensus

AGREED: To approve the proposed UM distribution, as presented, for 2016.

ABCUSA Budget for 2016

The ABCUSA Budget, coming from the BGM Finance Committee, was presented to the Board of General Ministries for vote.

Upon motion by Budget Review Officer Paul Higgins, on recommendation of the BGM Executive Committee, it was

VOTED: To adopt the proposed 2016 ABCUSA Budget, the ABCUSA Representative Process Budget for 2016, and the ABCUSA Mission Resource Development Budget for 2016, as presented.

BGM 263 UNITED MISSION PILOT PROJECT

Bridget Lipin, ABCUSA assistant director of communications/web manager and staff to the Communicating ABCUSA Identity Action Group, provided an update on the UM Mission pilot project, including presenting the new video “UM is the Vehicle,” which shares the story of UM, how it works and how local churches/individuals can participate. Prior to this meeting, BGM directors received a mailing which included an informational brochure and a copy of the new video on DVD to share with their respective regions/churches.

At its March 2015 meeting, the Executive Committee determined several next steps related to United Mission, one step being the formation of a small work group tasked with bringing clear focus to UM. Work group participants include: Don Ng, ABC President; Steve Bils, executive minister of ABC/Central Pacific Coast; Marie Onwubuariri, executive minister of ABC/Wisconsin; Tom Wiles, executive minister of Rhode Island; Ashley Whitaker, member of ACT on UM and pastor; Nancy Adkins, lay person and marketing professional; Tasha Wilson, chair of the Communicating ABC Identity Action Group; and ABCUSA Mission Resource Development staff Leo Thorne and Bridget Lipin.

The initial meeting of the work group was held on May 19, 2015 in Chicago, at which time the group prepared a proposal for hiring a consultant. After interviewing three firms, Jennifer Shaheen from Technology Therapy, Smithfield, RI was hired. The consulting firm was tasked with taking pertinent facts about the history of UM and assisting in the design of a campaign to be used with Pilot groups. At its July meeting, the work group considered several themes, finally deciding upon a retro emphasis. Funds were requested, and approved, from the Mission Initiative Fund (MIF). August, September and October were spent in collaboration between the working group and Technology Therapy, resulting in the creation of a website.

Three regions have been chosen as Pilot groups (ABC of Wisconsin, ABC of Central Pacific Coast and ABC of Rhode Island) for a UM pilot project. The campaign was initiated in early September 2015 and will continue through December 2015. Evaluations will take place in January to review feedback and to determine what learnings are identified before engaging other regions. Resources have been designed and will be made available through the ABCUSA website. Bridget ended by sharing some positive feedback from pastors who are involved in the region pilot projects.

President Ng noted that the goal is to engage every local church, encouraging each to include a line in their budgets for UM. The hope is to have the piloted regions share testimonials of increased UM giving within their regions. He also reminded BGM directors that it is their job to promote United Mission in their respective regions.

Vice president Judy Fackenthal thanked Tasha Wilson and Bridget Lipin for their hard and dedicated work.

BGM 264 REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley delivered his final report, in his role as General Secretary, to the Board of General Ministries.

In his report he noted that, “Today ABCUSA is a respected voice nationally and internationally on issues of religious liberty, human rights, and peace-building through interfaith dialogue...ABCUSA is an incubator for new ministries and renewal efforts...a respected ecumenical partner providing leadership in both Baptist and ecumenical settings as we work for Christian unity and missional engagement.” He also noted that, “The future of ABCUSA as the face of our denomination lies in our commitment to innovate as we respond to the ongoing work of the Spirit in bringing to full fruition the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God.” He urged the board to continue to explore new ways of serving ABC churches and the world as “heralds of Christ’s coming kingdom,” noting that *Transformed by the Spirit* and *Rhythms of the Spirit* provide these steps forward in calling and assisting ABC churches to face the adaptive challenges for the church today.

The General Secretary listed notable accomplishments of Board and Staff during the last 14 years. He encouraged continuation of experiments in congregational life that focus on commitment, on growing in Christ and on service to others, particularly the poor and marginalized, and on caring for God’s creation. He also emphasized the importance of enabling Christ’s work through congregations, not just staff. He expressed his longing for more people to know God’s love, for ABC churches to be renewed for service through Christ’s Spirit, and for peace with justice, “the essence of God’s shalom.”

The General Secretary ended his report with words he shared with Pope Francis when he served as BWA’s fraternal delegate to the 14th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in October in Rome.

In words of farewell he stated, “I will miss you so very much; you have become friends. There is a certain amount of regret and sorrow that comes with this transition but when I look at my family I am grateful for renewed time with them. I extend my thank you to you, Board of General Ministries, and for the recent Biennial celebration. My heart overflows through your generosity.”

BGM 265**BGM OFFERING**

Following his report, General Secretary Medley recalled the 2013 Biennial Mission Summit, which celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Judsons. One of ABC's featured speakers was Dr. Yam Kho Pau, General Secretary of the Myanmar Baptist Churches. Roy reported that recently Dr. Pau's wife was diagnosed with cancer and the family faces financial challenges related to treatment. In Myanmar there is no medical insurance plan, which places a huge burden upon Dr. Pau's family. He reported that the Executive Committee voted at its meeting on November 12 that the BGM offering will be collected to assist with the Mrs. Pau's medical expenses. This offering will be given with deep gratitude to Dr. Pau for his ministry to the people of Burma and with equal gratitude for the special relationship Baptists in Burma have with the ABC family. Dr. Medley encouraged directors to be generous, noting that ABCUSA will add to the offering to insure a gift of \$5,000.

BGM 266**GENERAL SECRETARY EMERITUS**

Speaking of the General Secretary, President Ng stated, "We have seen and witnessed a heart for ministry...speaking on behalf of the Board of General Ministries, we were touched by your attentiveness to the work of BGM and by your attention to support for staff colleagues." He also noted that, "God is not finished with Roy Medley" and reported that the General Secretary has been asked to continue his work with the Baptist World Alliance and to also continue to represent ABC in interfaith circles.

On behalf of the BGM Executive Committee, President Ng presented, and Dr. Wesley Roberts read audibly, a resolution seeking BGM approval to confer upon General Secretary Roy Medley the title of General Secretary Emeritus.

President Ng noted that since this resolution is coming to BGM as a recommendation from the Executive Committee, there is no need for a second, but that it is his "joy and humble honor" to present this motion.

It was by consensus

AGREED: To approve the following resolution conferring upon The Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley the title of General Secretary Emeritus.

***Resolution to Confer the Recognition
of
General Secretary Emeritus
to the
Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley on November 13, 2015***

Conferring the Recognition:

Recognizing your denominational leadership of the American Baptist Churches USA for the past 14 years since January 2002, we bestow upon you the honor of being known to the American Baptist family and to all others in Christian and interfaith communities as General Secretary Emeritus of the American Baptist Churches USA.

We remember with deep regard your faithful commitment to bring people with different faith convictions to the table for reconciliation, evident in the Baptist/Muslim dialogues; your prophetic courage to represent the oppressed people, particularly in Burma, in the halls of national governments; your loving compassion to travel and meet people around the world to embody being the hands and feet of Christ; your lifelong commitment to the National Council of Churches of Christ and to the Baptist World Alliance that such world-wide Baptist communion has appointed you as their representative at the 14th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October 2015.

In conferring this honor, the Board of General Ministries of ABCUSA joins with you in continued appreciation for the Office of the General Secretary. And though you will no longer actively serve as General Secretary, your commitment to peace and justice around the world helps us to regard you and the Office of the General Secretary you held in our midst with great respect and honor.

In conferring this honor, we pledge ourselves to continued concern for your health and well-being. We hold you in our prayers and cherish the contributions you have made and will continue to make as our first “General Secretary Emeritus!”

For reference:

BGM Understanding on Granting General Secretary Emeritus/a Status

The word, “Emeritus/a” has to do with being retired from active service while retaining one’s title as an honor. The retaining of the title is offered because of merit earned during the time of active service. The honor is never an automatic one but rather recognition of exceptional service over a long period of time, usually a minimum of 10 years.

The title of General Secretary Emeritus/a is an honorary one rather than a functional one and therefore there are no specific roles and responsibilities unless determined by the presiding General Secretary and/or the Board of General Ministries, ABCUSA. The website and printed communication pieces will include the name of the General Secretary Emeritus/a and stationery and business cards will be provided. The BGM may allocate travel funds for the General Secretary Emeritus/a to represent the denomination for specific purposes.

The presiding General Secretary may initiate active participation of the General Secretary Emeritus/a at special celebrations in the life of the denomination. The General Secretary Emeritus/a will firmly refer well-intended invitations for denominational work to the presiding General Secretary. The General Secretary Emeritus/a and BGM are to hold in regard the health and vitality of the General Secretary’s office by treating the presiding General Secretary as the head of the denomination.

The Board of General Ministries and staff shared a standing ovation for ABCUSA’s new General Secretary Emeritus.

President Ng recessed the Board of General Ministries. The Board enjoyed lunch together in the Three01 Restaurant of the Doubletree by Hilton.

BGM 267

RECONVENE/588 BUILDING UPDATE

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

588 Real Estate Council

Past President Ruth Clark reported on the October 21-22, 2015 meeting of the 588 Real Estate Council. At that meeting, CSG Consultants presented the results of the Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) process, however, since none of the offers met the goals of 588 Associates, the Real Estate Council determined not to go forward with disposition of property, but instead to continue to explore other options.

Tax Issues

Alan Musoke reported that ABCUSA's legal counsel has heard from counsel for the Upper Merion School District regarding the potential settlement of 588's tax appeal. The School District's position is that the tax-exempt percentage of the Mission Center is based upon the square footage actually used by the exempt party(ies) compared with the total square footage (not compared with the occupied space only) and that the 41.26% tax-exempt percentage is likely to be the percentage that will be agreed upon for any settlement.

At the Executive Committee's meeting on November 12, Alan presented a proposal that 588 Associates would be willing to accept a 58.74% obligation for the 2015 (yet unpaid) tax bill (the amount due if the property is 41.26% tax-exempt) as the mechanism to recover a portion of the 2013 and 2014 overpayments that have been protested if all other conditions proposed by 588 are accepted. By consenting to a lesser part of the building being tax exempt, 588 understands that it would be able going forward to pay the taxes without reassessment of space for non-exempt status year after year. And agreeing to this proposal would prevent further legal fees for both sides.

The authority to make these decisions has been delegated to staff of the respective 588 members and partners with approval from their respective boards.

Following a time for questions and discussion, it was, by consensus

AGREED: At the recommendation of the BGM Executive Committee and the BGM Finance Committee, to affirm the current direction of the proposed action by empowering Alan Musoke to act on behalf of ABCUSA as a member of 588 Associates G.P., LLC.

BGM 268

BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT/MISSION TABLE

BGM directors shared feedback about the June 2015 Biennial Mission Summit. President Ng noted that planning for the 2017 Biennial Mission Summit has begun and that more information will be shared with BGM at its June 2016 meeting.

Jeff Woods, associate general secretary for Regional Ministries and Congregational Development, shared a detailed summary of the Mission Summit Conversation Evaluation (copy attached to these minutes) and reported on the 2015 Mission Table, held November 9-11.

Although there were fewer participants at this year's Mission Summit Conversations, 90% of the respondents indicated that this event met or exceeded their expectations and included many benefits, one of the highest rated being the opportunity to network with new people. There were, however, more facilitators at the 2015 Biennial and a formal evaluation was conducted. From the evaluation, it appears as though there is equal desire to see three types of conversation offered: 1) A continuation of ongoing conversations, 2) The introduction of new topics, and 3) Broad conversational topics, which would facilitate related subgroup conversations.

The Mission Table met November 9-11, with the task of narrowing the 21 Mission Summit Conversation topics to the following 7 priorities, and producing case statements for each: 1) Next Generation of Leaders, 2) Violence, 3) Discipleship, 4) Poverty, 5) Gospel in a Rapidly Changing Society, 6) Women in Ministry, and 7) Alternative Models for Pastoral Ministry (changed at the Mission Table to "Innovative Models for Pastoral Ministry.")

The hope is that of the 7 priorities, every ABC organization (program boards, AMOs, regions, local congregations, etc.) will embrace at least one. President-elect Judy Fackenthal noted that the Executive Committee will also consider the 7 priorities in regard to the work of BGM Action Groups.

BGM 269 UPDATES

Burmese Taskforce

General Secretary Roy Medley reported that the Burmese Taskforce is still actively engaging in resettlement issues. The U.S. hopes to resettle an additional 20,000 people from Burma, although the government of Myanmar has put an end to registering for resettlement those who remain in the camps.

He also reported that he and Rev. Saw Ler Htoo, General Secretary of the Karen Baptist Churches USA, met with the Kachin American Baptist Association and the Kachin Baptist Churches USA on October 31 in Washington DC. Following that meeting, and in spite of the fact that both Kachin organizations voted a year ago to become Associated Ministry Organizations to ABCUSA, each will be going back to their respective board to review the AMO covenant to assure full understanding before proceeding further. It is anticipated that requests from both organizations for AMO status will be coming to BGM for action in the near future, possibly in June. Each group would like to have Judy Fackenthal present at their meetings to sign the covenants as well as their being with BGM for signing. It is also anticipated that BGM will receive interest from other organizations of Burma as well.

Immigration Taskforce

The Immigration Taskforce was formed in January 2015 and facilitated a workshop on immigration issues at the Biennial Mission Summit last June. Rev. Dr. Warren Stewart, a member of the taskforce, is chairperson of an immigration coalition, The National Immigration Forum, that works in DC on immigration policy and he continues to feed information from that coalition to the Taskforce to guide its work. The coalition continues to monitor the presidential election process, putting pressure on candidates related to the often negative rhetoric used in reference to immigration. ABC's Immigration Taskforce will assist in that work. An Immigration resource, "Pastoral, Prophetic, Practical, and Personal," which

includes four sessions grounded in Scripture including questions, activities and personal stories, is now available on ABCUSA's website in English and Spanish.

Taskforce on Racism and Race-Related Violence

Following the June 2015 Biennial Mission Summit General Secretary Roy Medley appointed a committee of 12 people, some pastors and some laypersons, to serve as the Taskforce for Race and Race-based Violence. An observer from the National Baptists met with them for their first meeting and will, hopefully, continue to do so. This group is tasked with the work of determining how American Baptists might live into the concept of the beloved community by more effectively confronting the scourge of race-based violence in our lives and communities.

Synod of Bishops on the Family in Rome

In October, General Secretary Medley represented the BWA as a fraternal delegate to the second synod held in Rome by the Roman Catholic Church on issues of the family and evangelization. Roy reported that, although during plenary sessions only bishops of the synod could speak, fraternal delegates had full voice during small group times, speaking to very specific issues or to overall concerns of the family. Recognizing a clear divide, as in so many religious communities, on such issues of gender roles, divorce and homosexuality, Roy asked for prayers for our sisters and brothers as they struggle to live out the redemptive love of Christ.

BGM 270

RECESS /COMMUNION

BGM Chaplain Judy Fackenthal led in worship through communion and prayer. President Ng recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries for a break prior to dinner.

BGM DINNER CELEBRATING THE MINISTRY OF GENERAL SECRETARY A. ROY MEDLEY 5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Jefferson B & Paine Rooms

The Board of General Ministries, staff, and special guests, including the Medley family and heads of other major denominations/interfaith organizations, gathered for a dinner and special program in honor of soon-retiring General Secretary A. Roy Medley. At the completion of his role as General Secretary, The Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley will have served a total of 14 years (January 2002-December 2015).

In the words of ABC President Don Ng, General Secretary Medley “served a lifetime commitment to ministry of the church as “a local church pastor, an advocate for meeting the human needs in local neighborhoods, a regional executive who supported pastors and local churches, a denominational leader who proclaimed good news, and a prophet in ecumenical and interfaith settings where he has broken down walls of suspicion and hostility in the name of peace.” President Ng read a special tribute to the General Secretary, “Roy Medley, American Baptist Peacemaker.” A copy of that tribute is attached to the minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

A gift from BGM of a mounted ABC pewter medallion with the words, “General Secretary A. Roy Medley 2002-2015, Baptist Leader for Peace and Justice” was presented to Dr. Medley. BGM and other

American Baptist leaders also contributed a monetary gift for travel with his family. Joy Shih Ng presented a personal gift, a specially-designed miniature (bobble head) replica of Dr. Medley in his colorful robe and stole.

President Ng also announced that the Board of General Ministries, in afternoon plenary, conferred on Dr. Medley the title of General Secretary Emeritus, presenting him with an enlarged General Secretary Emeritus business card.

Saturday, November 14, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; Jefferson B & Paine Rooms

(Note: General Secretary Medley was not able to attend the Saturday BGM plenary due to participating in the installation of the Rev. Cheryl Dudley, new executive minister of ABC of Metro New York.)

BGM 271 CALL TO ORDER/SHARING OF CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS

President Don Ng called the meeting to order.

Chaplain Judy Fackenthal led in a time of sharing prayer concerns and celebrations. Included in this time was prayer for General Secretary Roy Medley as he transitions into retirement, for Interim General Secretary Susan Gillies as she prepares for her new role, and for BGM director Tasha Wilson, as she and her husband await the much-anticipated birth of a daughter. Special prayer was requested for Rev. Dr. Trinette McCray, former ABC president and beloved American Baptist colleague who is managing cancer treatments. Also Board directors and staff prayed for the families of victims in the series of recent terrorist attacks that took the lives of 130 people in Paris, France.

BGM 272 ACTION GROUPS

The following BGM directors brought reports on behalf of the Action Groups on which they served during the Thursday and Friday sessions:

Wesley Roberts: Renewing Congregations
Jonathan Malone: Communicating ABC Identity
Camille Brown: Becoming a Beloved Community
Ruth Clark: Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations
Paul Higgins: Finance Committee

Notes from Action Group sessions will be posted on the BGM document page of the ABCUSA website.

BGM 273 TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT/RHYTHMS OF THE SPIRIT

Jeff Woods presented both a written and an oral report of *Transformed by the Spirit* (TbyS), explaining that TbyS is built on a 4-cyclical process, with one of the principal parts of the process being observation. He shared information related to an evaluation of TbyS resources and discussed further engagement of those resources. He also reported on new TbyS learning communities being formed.

Judy Fackenthal presented an oral report of Rhythms of the Spirit, which offers a venue for a 3-day spiritual retreat for personal reflection, allowing participants to settle into “the quiet of the Holy Spirit” which opens an expansive space to welcome God’s voice into their lives. A Rhythms of the Spirit retreat was held in Exeter, Rhode Island on August 3-7, 2015 and again in Green Lake, WI on October 26-29, 2015. Funding is available for one more year, making this an especially important time for leadership to contemplate the future of Rhythms of the Spirit. The dates of July 9-13 have been held at the Green Lake Conference Center in 2016, with a possible second retreat to be held in connection with a pastors’ retreat.

Rhythms of the Spirit also offers a pilgrimage to the Taizé Community in France. Rev. Brad Berglund, director of Spiritual Formation, led a pilgrimage in May 2015; this year’s pilgrimage is scheduled for June 2-14, 2016. Although geared toward young American Baptists (16-29), the pilgrimage is open to all. The cost of attendance will be supplemented to encourage participation and participants will be involved in a work project as part of the event.

BGM 274 MINISTERS CONFERENCE/ORIENTATION TO AMERICAN BAPTIST LIFE

Judy Fackenthal and Don Ng have been in contact with Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, executive director of the Ministers Council, and Rev. Doug Harris, president of the Ministers Council, to explore next steps related to the Virginia Palmer Grant funding for the 2016 ABC Ministers Conference, to be held August 22-26. The theme for this conference will be “Holistic Maintenance of the Ministry” and it will be held in the mid-Atlantic area (state yet to be determined).

The Orientation to American Baptist Life Conference is usually held in January in Florida, however due to budgetary restrictions, OTABL will be held in tandem with the 2017 Biennial Mission Summit in Portland, OR. The work on this conference began last weekend in the LA area.

BGM 275 CREDENTIALS & CAUCUS COMMITTEE

Wesley Roberts, chair of the Credentials and Caucus Committee, presented the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches. He noted continued concern for the decreasing number of congregations, noting that at its meeting on November 13, the Executive Committee decided that a committee of representatives from ABCUSA and ABHMS be formed to address this issue.

Following a time for questions, a motion was made by Dianne Steelman, seconded and it was

VOTED: To recognize the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches
(document 1205.1:11/15) dated June 8, 2015-November 4, 2015.

BGM 276 INTERCAUCUS

Kenneth Kho, president of the Intercaucus, reported on the various meetings of ABC caucuses, thanking BGM for its continued support. Rev. Kho's full PowerPoint report is attached to the minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

BGM 277 REPORTS FROM BGM DIRECTORS TO OTHER BOARDS

BGM directors heard reports from those serving as representatives to other boards: Bill Frederickson for MMBB; Jim Wolfe for ABHMS; and Vivan Martindale for IM. This process was established with the writing and adoption of the new Bylaws in 2011.

BGM 278 REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

President Don Ng shared with the Board of General Ministries his last report as president of ABC by focusing on "3 I's": Integrity, Integration, and ABC Identity. He exclaimed that American Baptists must portray a closer resemblance to the family of God, must work together to accomplish more, and to celebrate other faiths although still realizing ABC's distinctiveness. ABC must recognize its identity in order to bear better witness in Christ.

BGM directors shared appreciation for President Ng and his leadership by a round of applause as he turned the remaining meeting over to President-elect Judy Fackenthal. A full written report was also submitted to BGM directors prior to these meetings and is filed with the official minutes in the General Secretary's office.

BGM 279 FUTURE MEETING DATES

President-elect Judy Fackenthal reviewed the following dates and venues for upcoming meetings of the BGM Executive Committee and the Board of General Ministries:

March 9-12, 2016- Executive Committee, Rainbow Acres, Campe Verde, AZ

June 15, 2016- Executive Committee (beginning at 5:00 p.m.) through June 16, 2016 (ending at 1:30 p.m.), Green Lake, WI

June 16, 2016- BGM (beginning at 2:00 p.m.) through June 19, 2016 (ending at 12:00 p.m.), Green Lake, WI

The June meeting will include a retreat focusing on the beloved community as it relates to the process of the General Secretary Search. Other future meeting dates are referenced in the September Executive Committee minutes.

BGM 280**CLOSING WORSHIP AND ADJOURNMENT**

Using the example of the transitioning that takes place as fresh pumpkins are cut and made into pies, resulting in a beautiful and delicious slice of pie, Chaplain Fackenthal compared ABC's transitioning in leadership. Vice President-elect Jósue Gomez-Menendez read from Luke 19:1-9, the story of Zacchaeus. Judy noted that what Zacchaeus was had to end as the power of transition through Christ began to reshape his life. She spoke about ABC being on the cusp of transitions as well and although transition can often be a very messy process, she proclaimed that our God is faithful and is among us in the process of this denominational transition, bringing beauty to his work. She encouraged all to pray for the ABC family and to ask our churches to do the same as we all recognize this "new thing" and are transformed anew.

BGM sang together, "Great is our Faithfulness" and Kay Farley led in a closing prayer. President Don Ng adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by,



Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley
General Secretary

ARM/cb

Documents attached:

Integrated Schedule (1008:11/15)

BGM Agenda (1102:11/15)

Worship Program

BGM Minutes-June 23-24, 2015 (1101:11/15)

BGM Executive Committee Minutes -September 10-12, 2015 (1002:11/15)

ABCUSA Standing Rule 15.5.3

President-Elect's Nominations & Appointments

Mission Summit Conversations Evaluation, July 2015

Report from ABCUSA and AMO Staff (1202:11/15)

AB Historical Society Nominations

Program: Celebration of Retiring BGM Directors

Program: A Celebration of ABC Officers

Program: Vespers Service

ABCUSA 2016 Proposed Budget

ABCUSA Financial Report as of September 2015

Report of the General Secretary (1202:11/15)

Resolution Conferring the Title of General Secretary Emeritus on Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley

588 Building Update

Reports of the June Action Groups from June 2015

-Communicating AB Churches Identity

-Renewing Congregations

-Becoming a Beloved Community

-Committee on Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations

-Finance Committee

Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches & New Church Plants, June 8, 2015 to Nov. 4, 2015(1205.1:11/15)

Program: Celebration of the Ministry of General Secretary Roy Medley

Roy Medley—American Baptist Peacemaker, words written and presented by ABC President Don Ng

Transformed by the Spirit Updates, November 2015

Report of the ABC President (1201:11/15)

ABHS Nominations

Minutes of the ABHS Corporate Meeting

Report of Intercaucus President, Rev. Kenneth Kho