

EXCERPTS FROM BGM MINUTES – NOVEMBER 2014 ADAPTIVE CHALLENGE TEAM ON UNITED MISSION

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

BGM 187 ACT ON UM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BGM 191 ACT on UM

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

Identity

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

Leadership

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

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

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

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

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

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