



**BGM Executive Committee  
June 23, 2015**

**MINUTES**

**Meeting Site:** Sheraton Overland Park Hotel  
6100 College Blvd.  
Overland Park, KS 66211  
913-234-2100

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

**Committee:** Camille Brown, Cleveland  
Wesley Roberts, Massachusetts  
Tasha Wilson, Rochester/Genesee

**Parliamentarian:** Dennis Johnson

**Staff:** Alan Musoke, Treasurer and CFO  
Cathy Brubaker, Assistant to the General Secretary (Recorder)

**Tuesday, June 23, 2015; 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.; Linden Rm.**

**BGM EC 292                      CALL TO ORDER**

President Don Ng called the meeting to order with prayer. He recounted his day on Sunday, June 21, at First Chinese Baptist Church, San Francisco, where he preached his last sermon as senior pastor after having served for the past 22 years. He then invited the Executive Committee to share their Sunday experiences as well.

**BGM EC 293                      WORSHIP/LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE**

Judy Fackenthal lit the Christ Candle as a sign of God's presence in these meetings. She led the executive committee in an opening prayer and in a reading of the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch from Acts

8:26-39. Members of the executive committee shared together about who served in the role of “a Philip” in their own spiritual journeys. Judy led the executive committee in prayer, including prayer for ABCUSA staff Stephanie Yetman who was involved in a car accident and for the family and friends of those whose lives were taken by the recent shooting at Mother Emmanuel AME church in Charleston, SC.

## **BGM EC 294                      REVIEW OF AGENDA**

The Executive Committee reviewed the agenda, considering Big Issues and Parking Lot Issues in anticipation of how to proceed with the business of the day.

## **BGM EC 295                      COMMUNICATING ABC IDENTITY**

Tasha Wilson, chair of the Communicating ABC Identity Action Group, reported that the new ABCUSA identity piece, *Connecting: Communicating ABC Identity*, has been designed with the goal of emphasizing connectivity between ABC-USA and the local church and with the goal of serving as a resource to inform, involve and inspire congregations for ministry.

*Connecting* will be included in Biennial Mission Summit packets and it will be sent in July to region offices and to ABC congregations. She reported positive feedback from those with whom it has been shared. Tasha and Bridget (Holmstrom) Lipin, ABCUSA assistant director of communication/web manager, will also be presenting the newly printed piece to BGM at its upcoming meeting.

In order to effectively share the information, BGM directors will be receiving a flash drive loaded with *Connecting* and other resources, including a PowerPoint Presentation, a master for bulletin inserts or a one-slide screen projection for churches that do not use bulletins. This will facilitate easier access to the materials, allowing directors to make presentations to their churches/regions.

## **BGM EC 296                      TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT/RHYTHMS OF THE SPIRIT**

### Transformed by the Spirit

General Secretary Roy Medley noted that ABC is now in its third biennium of the *Transformed by the Spirit* initiative. Mission Network consultant Alan Roxburgh’s contract concludes at the end of June 2015, and much of his work will be transitioning to Jeff Woods. *Transformed by the Spirit* discussions continue with polling the denomination around key issues and refining and bringing these discussions into Mission Summit Conversations at the Biennial. This will in turn feed into the Mission Table, which meets on November 9-11, 2015.

There will be a major focus on *Transformed by the Spirit* (*TbyS*) on Saturday evening at the Biennial, with the goal of launching new resources. Several months ago, through the *TbyS* initiative and via the website, ABCUSA invited American Baptists from across the country to share ministry stories of how they have adapted to challenges. Both written and video entries from individuals and congregations were welcomed. Readers could tag stories by clicking on “like”, with highest ranking stories receiving grants at the Biennial. These stories will also be shared and celebrated at the *TbyS* booth in the Hall of Ministries and at the Saturday evening gathering.

Work continues on budget drafts for the coming year. The conclusion of Alan Roxburgh's contract will permit some funding to be diverted into other areas of the initiative. An emphasis on spiritual life continues as a priority with this initiative. In accordance with that, this Biennial will provide Biennial workshops that will include an opportunity for individuals to meet with a spiritual director, as well as a time for spiritual directors to gather and network. ABC continues to discern how we might best support this new area of ministry.

### Rhythms of the Spirit

Judy Fackenthal provided an update on Rhythms of the Spirit, which, as part of the *Transformed by the Spirit* initiative, continues to challenge American Baptists to work on a contemplative life. Although the program has had a somewhat slow start, it has experienced enthusiasm from participants and there is great anticipation about how the implementation of spiritual directors might nurture this ministry. Brad Berglund provided the National Leadership Council (NLC) with a mini Rhythms of the Spirit retreat at its April 2015 meeting. The next conference ("Nurturing a Transformed Life") will be held on August 3-7, 2015 in Exeter, RI. The second pilgrimage to the Taize community was held on May 2-June 2, 2015 in Burgundy, France. A third pilgrimage is scheduled in the Spring of 2016. These groups tend to include a wide variety of age groups, from college age to seniors in their 80's.

## **BGM EC 297                      UNITED MISSION ADAPTIVE TEAM (UM AD TEAM) UPDATE**

When the Executive Committee met in March 2015, discussion related to the Adaptive Challenge Team on United Mission (ACT on UM) ended with the identification of and agreement about several next steps. One step was the formation of a small work group (comprised of members of BGM, ACT on UM, 3-4 region executives who are committed to UM, and staff members of ABCUSA) tasked with bringing focus to a clear approach to UM using a marketing firm and developing a campaign to increase giving to UM, with an eye toward the other 4 offerings and with regard to the current and changing giving realities in ABC.

Tasha Wilson, chair of the ABC Identity Action Group, and a participant of the small work group that met in Chicago on May 19, 2015, reported on that meeting. Other participants of the working group included: 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; and ABCUSA Mission Resource Development staff Leo Thorne and Bridget Lipin.

The working group prepared a proposal and interviewed three firms before hiring Jennifer Shaheen from Technology Therapy, Smithfield, RI. This firm has been asked to take what is pertinent about the history of United Mission and to assist in designing a campaign which will begin in early September 2015 and continue through December 2016. Jennifer will be on site in Overland Park as a way of providing exposure and she will be roaming around with a camera asking the question, "What does it mean to be American Baptist?"

Three regions (ABC/WI, CPC, and RI) have been chosen as Beta groups for a UM pilot project in the fall of 2015 involving a handful of churches, with hoped-for results in the spring of 2016 that provide learnings to assist in engaging the denomination as a whole with a more powerful campaign. Tasha also expressed the group's hope that the ABCUSA Finance Committee might affirm this as a worthy cause, permitting additional funding with the goal of reaping increased contributions from UM.

**BGM EC 298**

**BUILDING ISSUES – JUNE 2015 UPDATE  
TRANSFER OF PROPERTY FROM 588 ASSOCIATES, L.P**

Building Update

Alan Musoke, ABCUSA Treasurer/CFO, presented an oral update, as well as a written report, on Mission Center building issues. His full written report, which is attached to the minutes filed in the office of the General Secretary, included information related to: a survey of ABC Mission Center staff which will be used to inform the location and design of the new ABC office space; the Real Estate Council's first quarter conference call on April 14; results of a property tax appeal meeting with 588 Associates L.P. attorneys held on April 29; a May meeting of 588 Associates officers with the ABC Communications Council to solicit their expertise in drafting a series of internal and external communications regarding the disposition of the building process, as well as a long-term communication strategy related to the disposition of the building; the June 2 release by CSG Consulting LTD (588 Associates' consultants) of the Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI), the first of a two-step process of choosing a developer for the Mission Center property; and a June 12 staff celebration and information session to review survey results and provide an update on the disposition strategy.

Alan also reported that ABHMS plans, by the end of March 2016, to outsource its Judson Press disbursement function, which will impact our staffing pattern.

Transfer of Mission Center/Graphic Arts Property

Following a brief break, ABCUSA Legal Counsel David Knipel, Esq. joined the Executive Committee for a discussion related to 588 Associates L.P.

David Knipel reviewed the background of the proposed transfer of the Mission Center/Graphic Arts property now owned by 588 Associates, L.P. to its current limited partners (ABCUSA, the Home Mission Societies, MMBB and International Ministries), to be held by them after the transfer as tenants in common. He explained that the transfer was being proposed in connection with property tax exemption settlement negotiations currently underway between the partnership and local taxing authorities to clarify that the property was both legally and equitably owned by 501(c)(3) organizations who were public charities under Pennsylvania law. He noted that the BGM had previously approved resolutions authorizing appropriate ABCUSA officers to sign a Unanimous Consent of Members of 588 Associates, G.P., LLC (as the General Partner of the partnership) to authorize the partnership to undertake the transfer and related restructuring. He pointed out that the Executive Committee was now being asked to recommend to the BGM that it authorize ABCUSA to acquire a 35% share of the property as a tenant in common, and to execute and deliver related documents previously posted on the ABCUSA website for the BGM's review. The Committee discussed the proposed resolutions and requested that when the draft forms of documents to be approved were in final form, they be brought back to the Executive Committee for final approval.

After discussion, the Committee

**VOTED: To approve that the attached resolutions be forwarded to the BGM for adoption:**

**WHEREAS, the Corporation is a limited partner in the Pennsylvania limited partnership known as 588 Associates, L.P. (the "Partnership"), and a Member of 588 Associates, G.P., LLC, the general partner of the Partnership; and**

**WHEREAS, through its general partner, the Partnership has determined to dissolve and to transfer the real estate and other assets described in the Special Warranty Deed and Assignment and Assumption of Leases to its limited partners (including the Corporation) as tenants in common pursuant to a Tenants in Common Agreement, all as presented to this Board;**

**NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby:**

**RESOLVED, that the forms of Special Warranty Deed, Assignment and Assumption of Leases and Tenants in Common Agreement submitted to this Board are approved, and with any changes the Executive Committee of this Board, any officer of the Corporation and counsel for the Corporation may approve; and it is further**

**RESOLVED, subject to approval by the Executive Committee, any officer of the Corporation is authorized to do and perform all such further acts and things, to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of the Corporation, and where necessary or appropriate, to execute and file with the appropriate governmental authorities, all such other agreements, certificates, consents, corporate papers and other documents (including without limitation warranty deeds, bills of sale, other instruments of transfer and conveyance, powers of attorney, assumption agreements, option agreements, and lease agreements), and to make all such payments and take all other action that such officer and counsel for the Corporation deem necessary or desirable to carry out the intent and purposes of the foregoing resolution; and any or all of the transactions contemplated thereby; and any actions of such officers taken consistent with the intent and purposes of the foregoing resolutions are approved, ratified and confirmed.**

## **BGM EC 299                      UM DISTRIBUTION**

Budget Review Officer Paul Higgins explained that the ABCUSA Finance Committee is composed of members of the BGM Finance Committee plus one representative from both ABHMS and IM. It is the ABCUSA Finance Committee that recommends distribution of the national portion of UM; regions receive 65% and the remaining 35% is distributed among the national organizations. He noted that previously it had been a “rubber stamp issue,” however we are now experiencing less funding, with some organizations receiving declining amounts expected to soon reach zero.”

Core functions of ABCUSA (the Office of the General Secretary) must be funded, but at the same time, UM is promoted as a way to fund the “whole family,” a fact which is progressively false. Paul posed the question that was asked at the ABCUSA Finance Committee meeting, “What are BGM’s priorities related to this distribution?” and he asked for feedback/direction in order to bring a response back to the ABCUSA Finance Committee.

It was decided that one way to deal with this issue would be to review how funds are currently divided and used. There was also discussion about whether it might be possible to have UM focus solely on ABCUSA and Regions.

Paul will communicate to the treasurers of the other boards that the BGM Executive Committee will continue working on this issue and provide an answer by its September meeting, in time for other boards to set their budgets.

It was clarified that covenanting partners include regional and national boards, which relate through their executives: 33 regions, ABHMS, IM, MMBB, and ABCUSA.

**BGM EC 300                      APPROVAL OF MARCH 2015 MINUTES**

A motion was made by Judy Fackenthal, seconded by Camille Brown and it was

**VOTED:            To approve the March 10-13, 2015 BGM Executive Committee minutes  
(meeting held in San Diego, CA).**

**BGM EC 301                      RECESS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/  
CONVENE CREDENTIAL & CAUCUS COMMITTEE**

President Ng recessed the meeting of the BGM Executive Committee and Wesley Roberts (Chair) convened the meeting of the Credentials & Caucus Committee.

The Executive Committee reviewed the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches. Concerns were expressed regarding the causes for disbanding of some churches (in particular, one with a large membership). Concern was also shared related to how accurate this report can be due to such a small percentage of churches reporting, approximately a 50% response rate.

Following discussion, at the recommendation of the Credentials and Caucus Committee, it was

**VOTED:    To receive the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches (1205.1:6/15)  
dated November 5, 2014 to June 8, 2015 and to forward it to the Board of General  
Ministries.**

**BGM EC 302                      MARCH 2016/JUNE 2016 MEETING DATES**

**March 2016**

The Executive Committee decided to hold the March 2016 dates as originally determined--March 8-12, with the Executive Committee meeting on Mar. 8-9 and an Executive Committee Retreat on Mar. 10-12 (with the possibility of an additional 10 persons invited as guests). Names of guests to be invited will be confirmed at the September 2015 meeting. (Should Wesley Roberts continue to serve on the executive committee for the 2016-2017 biennium, he will not be able to attend the March 2016 meeting due to other responsibilities related to hosting the Society of the Study of Black Religion during that time.)

**June 2016**

The Executive Committee agreed to extend the originally-confirmed dates being held for the June 2016 BGM meeting in order to facilitate a retreat-style gathering. Instead of meeting on June 22-25 (Wed.-Sat.), the Executive Committee discussed holding June 19 as a travel day, with the Executive meeting beginning on Monday, June 20, in the morning and BGM following, ending on Saturday, June 25.

**BGM EC 303                      ECUMENICAL RELATIONS**

June Totten, chair of the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations, was invited by the Executive Committee to present an overview of ABC involvement in ecumenical work. In response, she provided both a written and oral report of American Baptist representation from 2010-2015.

BWA has a number of commissions and committees and ABC has visibility due to the work of AB representatives, some of whom participate under their own budgets. The CCUIR has intentionally tried to commission younger American Baptists to serve and in some cases has provided additional funding in order to facilitate that. General Secretary Roy Medley continues to serve as chair of the NCC Governing Board. Some representatives serve due to their current position/role. ABC used to have its past president serve on BWA and current president on NCC, but due to the NCC reorganization, both now serve on BWA. Ruth Clark represents ABC as part of the U.S. Lausanne Committee and the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). Wesley Brown represents ABC on Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP).

President Ng asked members of the Executive Committee who wish to receive e-newsletters from any of these ecumenical organizations, to let June know so she can have their names added to mailing lists. He also encouraged those who might be interested in getting involved, to speak with June as well, noting that this is a good way of staying current and of exercising Christian citizenship.

## **BGM EC 304                      ADJOURNMENT/EXECUTIVE SESSION**

President Ng adjourned the meeting of the Executive Committee.

David Knipel (ABCUSA legal counsel), Johnson Eapen (HR director) and Marilyn Tyson (staff to the General Secretary's Search Committee) joined the Executive Committee for a working lunch and discussion pertaining to the General Secretary's Search.

Also, the HR/Compensation Committee convened as the HR Committee to discuss Cost of Living Increases.

Minutes from this session are sealed in a confidential envelope and filed with the official minutes in the office of the General Secretary.

### **Next meeting of the BGM Executive Committee:**

*September 10-12, 2015 in Charleston, WV.*

*Arrive on Wednesday, September 9. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 10 and end on Saturday morning, September 12 prior to lunch.*

Submitted by,

Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley  
General Secretary

ARM/cb

### **Documents attached:**

*Agenda (1102:6/15)*

*BGM EC Roster*

*Connecting: Communicating ABC Identity*

*588 Associates L.P. Documents (Proposed Resolutions of ABCUSA BGM; Special Warranty Deed; Assignment and Assumption; Tenants in Common Agreement)*  
*ABCUSA Financial Statements and Report of Independent Certified Public Accountants; December 31, 2014 and 2013 YTD Financials Through April 30, 2015*  
*Building Issues – Update 2015*  
*Minutes of the Executive Committee, March 10-13, 2015 (San Diego)*  
*Report of Changed Relationships (11/5/14-6/8/15)*  
*ABCUSA Ecumenical Relationships 2010-2015*  
*Confidential- 2016 Salary Grid Adjustment & COLA*  
*Report of Endorsements and Statements (2014) by the General Secretary Based on Policy Statements & Resolutions*  
*Minutes of the Executive Session of the BGM Executive Committee (sealed envelope)*