



**American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.**

**BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES  
MINUTES: June 12-14, 2014**

**Green Lake Conference Center  
W2511 State Road 23  
Green Lake, WI 54941**

**“American Baptists Serving as the Hands and Feet of Christ”**

**Thursday, June 12, 2014; 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Brayton Case, Kern Lodge**

**BGM 148      CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME & ORIENTATION TO OUR TIME TOGETHER**

ABC President Don Ng called the meeting of the Board of General Ministries to order. He welcomed BGM directors and ABCUSA staff, and he expressed appreciation to Kay Farley and Jonathan Malone who agreed to serve as tellers, and to Nancy O’Neill and Andy Arndt who will be ministering through their gifts of music during this meeting.

Gary Van Abel, Director of Group Relationships, Green Lake Conference Center brought greetings on behalf of President Ben Mott and Green Lake staff.

**BGM 149      DEVOTIONS**

Judy Fackenthal, ABC Vice President and BGM Chaplain, lit the Christ candle in honor of “God who has created all light, Christ who is the giver of life and the Spirit who is the fire and passion of life.”

Chaplain Fackenthal noted that the rhythm of life is God-given to keep us centered and focused. It is this rhythm that nurtures our soul and keeps us connected to God to do His holy work. She led Board and staff in contemplative worship through a Lectio Divina (Sacred Reading) of John 1:1-9, as a way of

praying through the Word of God to deepen one's relationship with God through listening, reflection, questioning, intimate prayer, and resting in the Lord.

## **BGM 150      ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President Ng recognized the following new BGM directors: Ashley Whitaker, Manuel Luquin, and Jose Manuel Magana. He shared regrets received from Richard Hansen, Alan Rudnick, and Wesley Sun. (Elmore Warren was not in attendance at this meeting; we did not receive word from him.) Resignations have been received from BGM directors: Koreen Villers (At Large Director from WV), Mo Khan (General Director) and Hopeton Scott (a member of the Committee on Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations).

## **BGM 151      CONSENT AGENDA**

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

**VOTED:** To approve the Proposed June 12-14, 2014 BGM Agenda

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

**VOTED:** To approve the minutes of the November 14-16, 2013 BGM meeting (held in King of Prussia, PA)

## **BGM 152      ACTIONS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

President Ng reported the actions taken by the Executive Committee at its March 2014 meeting held in San Francisco, CA. The March minutes were transmitted to BGM for review prior to this meeting. Legal counsel David Knipel, who met with the Executive Committee by conference call during the March meeting, addressed the actions taken by the Executive Committee pertaining to 501(c)(3) group exemption status, and provided an update on the tax reassessment issues currently being faced by 588 Associates, L.P.

## **BGM 153      ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES**

A motion was made by Dianne Steelman, seconded by Manuel Luquin and it was

**VOTED:** To elect Andy Arndt, Ruth Clark, Ernest Jones, Dennis Johnson, Duh Kam and Alan Rudnick to the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations. (June Totten was elected to this committee at the November 2013 BGM meeting.)

A motion was made by Bill Frederickson, seconded by June Totten and it was

**VOTED:** To elect Robin Crouch, Beryl Hornberger, Danny Jack, Charity Matic, and Don Ng to the BGM Finance Committee. (Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer serves as Chair.)

## **BGM 154      REVIEW OF BGM AGENDA**

The Executive Committee reviewed the proposed agenda and President Ng introduced the “big issues” (issues that face the ABC family and the larger Christian world today) and “parking lot issues” (necessary routine items) of the day. He noted that two big issues to be addressed this afternoon will be: Focus Session on ACT on UM and Report of the General Secretary’s Search.

## **BGM 155      ACT ON UM**

### Adaptive Challenge Team on United Mission

Vice President Judy Fackenthal described the process by which the Adaptive Challenge Team on United Mission (ACT on UM) came into being. Resulting from a joint meeting of the Finance Committee and the MRD Response Group in November 2013, it was further developed at a meeting in Florida of ABC officers, Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development Leo Thorne and consultant Alan Roxburgh in January 2014.

UM was originally designed as a corporate denominational “hub-spoke” model, a model which is not effective in today’s world. Current models need to be designed to work as a shifting, more localized “distributive” model.

The ACT on UM group was formed as part of the *Transformed by the Spirit* denomination-wide initiative to identify possible solutions to problems deeply rooted in ABC history and culture that go beyond technical changes, and which point to adaptive changes. Members of the team include: Rev. Kevin Doi, Rev. Judy Fackenthal, Dr. Jeff Haggray, Rev. Miriam Mendez, Rev. Christine Roush, Rev. Alan Rudnick and Rev. Ashley Whitaker. The team is staffed by Associate General Secretary Dr. Leo Thorne and coached by Missional Church Network Executive Mr. Alan Roxburgh. ACT on UM met for an initial GoToMeeting on April 30 and for a face-to-face meeting in Chicago in June.

Following Judy’s presentation, Ashley Whitaker shared insight about how the ACT group began to “own” the notion that the corporate denomination model is no longer working. Leo Thorne provided a history of the UM journey. Jeff Woods used a group activity to demonstrate models of ways people network together and why some of these models no longer work.

The board divided into four table groups, each focusing on one of the following areas: 1) Identity, 2) Leadership, 3) Reconciliation/Hope/Trust and 4) Structure/Culture. The assignment for each table group

was to ponder questions relative to their respective area and to come up with a means to the end of the corporate model's success. Notes from the table groups were collected and will be shared with the ACT on UM team as it continues to wrestle in depth with these areas over the next several months and as it prepares to report to BGM at its November 2014 meeting.

## **BGM 156      GENERAL SECRETARY SEARCH**

President Ng, chair of the General Secretary's Search Committee, shared an update on the work of the committee. Members of the committee include: Camille Brown, Sam Chetti, Ruth Clark, Johnson Eapen, Bill Frederickson, Aidsand Wright-Riggins, Elisai Echevarria, Dianne Steelman, Andy Arndt, John Williams, James McJunkin, Jr., Kenneth Kho and Marilyn K. Tyson (who assists with staffing the committee).

The Search Committee met face-to-face in March 2014, and again in April 2014. Its third meeting was held on June 11 on the Green Lake grounds. A draft of a profile for the position of General Secretary was posted on the BGM Executive Committee's document page prior to this meeting for review. President Ng distributed a revised draft of that profile during this plenary session and the board met in small groups for discussion and to provide feedback. A member of the Search Committee was available at each table to respond to questions, as needed.

Following BGM's adoption of the job description, it will be sent to the National Leadership Council (NLC) for review. The final document will be publicly posted on the ABCUSA website on July 1, 2014, and also distributed to the larger ABC family, accompanied by a cover letter and a request for resumes. The application process will be open until October 31, 2014. Although the full committee will be presented with the names of all applicants, three members of the Team—Ruth Clark, Dianne Steelman and President Ng—will provide initial review of all applications to determine (by November 5) which do not meet qualifications. The Search Committee will meet again on November 11, 2014.

To allow additional time for a thorough review, it was determined that BGM will take action on this document on Friday afternoon, June 13. BGM Chaplain Judy Fackenthal led in prayer for God's wisdom and direction as the Search Committee continues its work.

## **BGM 157      ELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARIAN**

A motion was made by Bill Frederickson and it was by consent

**AGREED:** To elect Dennis Johnson as BGM parliamentarian

## **BGM 158      RECESS - EVENING VESPERS**

President Ng shared appreciation to staff for their work to bring details for these meetings together. He reviewed BGM's schedule for Friday, June 13 and recessed the meeting for dinner in the Bauer Dining Room, followed by Evening Vespers.

**EVENING VESPERS; 7:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.; Vesper Circle**

BGM directors and ABCUSA staff met near the lake for a time of contemplative worship and communion, led by BGM Chaplain Judy Fackenthal, with Andy Arndt ministering in music.

**Friday, June 13, 2014; 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Brayton Case**

**BGM 159 ACTION GROUP BREAK-OUT SESSIONS**

The current BGM "Response Groups" were reconfigured into "Action Groups" to better signify the important role board members have in decision-making and as a means of facilitating flexibility, positioning the board to interact in a more direct way with issues emerging from the Biennial Mission Summit and Mission Table.

The BGM met in the following Action Groups:

*(The list of members of Action Groups below specify full membership; not all were able to be present for this break-out session.)*

***Finance Committee*** *(Led by Paul Higgins; Alan Musoke, staff)*

*Robin Crouch, Beryl Hornberger, Danny Jack, Charity Matic, Don Ng, James Wolfe*

***Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations*** *(Led by June Totten; Roy Medley, staff)*

*Andy Arndt, Ruth Clark, Dennis Johnson, Ernest Jones, Duh Kam, Alan Rudnick*

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

*Julia Bebeau, Shirley Fair, Ken Kho, Kelly Legg, Vivan Martindale, Dean Parker, Dianne Steelman, Wesley Sun*

***Communicating ABC Identity*** *(Led by Tasha Wilson; Leo Thorne, staff)*

*Perla Belo, Felipe Candelaria, Bill Frederickson, Jonathan Malone, Elmore Warren, Ashley Whitaker*

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

*Elisai Echevarria, Judy Fackenthal, Kay Farley, Richard Hansen, Manuel Luquin, Manuel Magana, Nancy O'Neill*

Following Action Group sessions, from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m., BGM enjoyed a buffet lunch together in the Bauer Dining Room. The BGM Executive Committee met for a working lunch in the Tower Dining Room.

**BGM 160 CALL TO ORDER**

Following lunch, at 2:00 p.m., ABC Vice President Judy Fackenthal called the meeting of the BGM to order.

**BGM 161 BURMA**

**CBCUSA/KBCUSA – SIGNING OF COVENANT**

President Ng recalled the historic missionary work of Ann and Adoniram Judson in Burma and the importance of the Judson name to our Burma brothers and sisters. Referring to the current situation in Burma and to the influx of refugees from Burma to the U.S., he spoke of the “coming home” of the Judson family.

On September 25-26, 2013 leaders of the Chin Baptist Convention USA, the Karen Baptist Convention USA and ABC officers met in Chicago to discuss the possibility of CBCUSA and KBCUSA establishing, as independent organizations, a special relationship with ABC. Several options were considered, and the resulting conversation from this meeting was taken back to the boards of the Chin and Karen Baptist conventions for further discussion. Following this meeting, each organization requested AMO status. This status will allow each organization to maintain its distinctiveness and yet be fully integrated into ABC life.

Following discussion, and at the recommendation of the BGM Executive Committee it was

**VOTED:** To approve the Chin Baptist Convention USA and to approve the Karen Baptist Convention USA as Associated Ministry Organizations (AMOs) with ABCUSA.

Subsequent to this vote, there was a formal signing of a covenant with each organization. Rev. Dr. Don Ng, in his role as President of the Board of General Ministries, signed both covenants. Rev. Dr. C. Duh Kam, executive minister of Chin Baptist Churches USA, signed the CBCUSA/ABCUSA covenant and Rev. Dr. Saw Ler Htoo, general secretary of KBCUSA, signed the KBCUSA/ABCUSA covenant.

The Board of General Ministries, staff and guests concluded this celebration by singing together, “The Church’s One Foundation.”

During this time it was also reported that a discernment/envisioning session (“Coalition Initiative for the Burma Diaspora Community in the U.S.”) was hosted by President Ng at the Mission Center on April 30-May 5, 2014. Participants at this event included 30 persons representing 7 Burmese groups. Rev. Florence Li and Rev. Dr. Saw Ler Htoo from the American Baptist Home Mission Societies and Burma Refugees Task Force members assisted in the coordination and logistics of the gathering. The event provided community sharing and facilitated exploration of church and community issues. It resulted in the identification of 3-4 priorities for future work together, as well facilitating a meeting of Burmese women with ABWM to share frankly about domestic violence.

General Secretary Roy Medley noted that as the community of Baptists in the U.S. from Burma grows, its organization has also become more complex as different associations and fellowships continue to form internally. Addressing Rev. Dr. Ler Htoo and Rev. Dr. Duh Kam, he encouraged each to join with other Baptist leaders of the diaspora community in America to discern “whether it is good in the eyes of God to create a fellowship body for cooperation in mission and ministry among these several associations and fellowships.”

### **Renaming of Burmese Refugee Taskforce**

The Burmese Refugee Taskforce was established in the spring of 2007 and continues as a joint effort of ABCUSA, ABHMS, IM, ABWM and local church pastoral leaders to work in a concerted effort with immigration issues and concerns. Recognizing that the work of the Taskforce will be ongoing for many years, General Secretary Medley recommended that the Taskforce be renamed Burma Refugee Commission as a sign of ABC's ongoing commitment to relationship.

Following discussion, it was by consensus

**AGREED:** To change the name from Burma Refugee Taskforce to Burma Refugee Commission.

### **Myanmar Travelers**

In November 2013 the BGM held a commissioning celebration for Ruth Clark, Roy Medley, Don Ng, Jim Ratliff and other Baptist leaders who would be traveling to Myanmar in December 2013, representing the ABC family at the 200<sup>th</sup> year celebration of Myanmar Baptist Mission (begun in 1813 by Ann and Adoniram Judson).

ABC Past President Ruth Clark reported on this historic visit, describing the experience of entering Myanmar as "stepping on holy ground." The celebration included 18 language groups, with most of these groups making humbling sacrifices to be together. Although over 30,000 people registered for the event, the actual attendance neared 50,000. Thousands met together for Bible study. There were also individual cultural presentations with festive dress and powerful preaching. Following her report, Dr. Clark expressed ABC's deep gratitude for the rejuvenation that Burmese brothers and sisters have, here in the U.S., brought to American Baptist churches across the country.

### **Human Rights Issues in Burma**

General Secretary Medley reported that while in Burma for the anniversary celebration, the group was able to meet with over 1,000 internally displaced Chins who had come to the celebration. They heard first-hand reports of military attacks upon the Chin villages, of their displacement, as well as very moving accounts of their concern for their children during this time of upheaval. The General Secretary also remained in Burma following the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration to travel to the Chin Hills with Rev. Dennis Ngun Thwang Mang (General Secretary of the Chin Baptist Convention), Professor Edmund Za Bik, and pastor Chum Awi from the U.S. This visit marked the first American Baptist official to visit the Chin Hills in 50 years.

The General Secretary was also part of a small group, along with Rev. Dr. Saw Ler Htoo, Rev. Stan Murray and BWA General Secretary Neville Callam, which met with Minister U Aung Min, who was appointed by the president of Myanmar to head the Myanmar Peace Center. While the group pressed the human rights and religious liberty concerns, they also pledged willingness to assist in the peace process.

It was also reported that there are two legislative issues pertaining to Burma, soon coming before the US House of Representatives, which have potential for great harm to Baptist Christians and to others in Burma: one relates to U.S. financial support for the Burmese military and the second regards a proposed law on religious conversion.

Financial support for the Burmese military: When in Burma in December 2013 for the Judson celebration the ABC delegation heard first-hand testimony from the Kachin about the ongoing atrocities against them by the military. Current legislation in the form of Senate Bill 1885 and House of Representative Bill 4377 has been written to prevent aid from going to the Burma military until they have shown progress in areas of human rights.

Proposed law on religious conversion: A religious conversion law is currently being introduced into the legislative process in Burma, a law which would severely restrict the rights of Christians and other minority religions to share their faith with Buddhists. The bill carries jail terms and other punitive measures for those who do so and clearly contravenes the guarantee of religious liberty in the Burmese constitution.

Rev. Dr. Duh Kam (Executive Secretary, CBCUSA), and Rev. Dr. Saw Ler Htoo (General Secretary, KBCUSA) spoke about the legislative issues and asked for support and prayer. Dr. Medley explained that by BGM addressing these human rights and religious liberty issues, it will empower him and other ABC representatives to continue advocacy with the State Department. He also mentioned that at its meeting in November, BGM will be drafting a letter to President Obama regarding his upcoming visit to Myanmar.

Following discussion it was

**VOTED:** At the recommendation of the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee, that the Board of General Ministries endorse the intent of Senate Bill 1885 and House of Representative Bill 4377 to require advances in human rights and religious liberty by the government of Myanmar as a condition of security assistance and we urge our congregations to support such legislation.

And it was

**VOTED:** At the recommendation of the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee, that the Board of General Ministries expresses to both the government of Myanmar and the US government our strongest concerns over the restrictions of religious liberty contained in the proposed religious conversion law. Its restrictions against the right to freely choose a religion violates internationally recognized fundamental human rights.

The ABCUSA website will carry a report of these votes, along with a contextual paragraph written by General Secretary Roy Medley to provide background. It was also suggested that BGM directors request their respective regions to carry this report in region newsletters.

BGM directors and staff gathered around Saw Ler Htoo and Duh Kam, laid hands on them and joined in prayer together.



## **BGM 162      BGM FINANCE COMMITTEE**

At its November meeting, BGM elected the following directors as members of the BGM Finance Committee: Robin Crouch, Beryl Hornberger, Charity Matic, Wesley Roberts and James Thomason. Following the November meeting, James Thomason resigned from BGM; Wesley Roberts was designated as leader of the Renewing Congregations Action Group, thus removing him from membership; Danny Jack and Don Ng were placed on the Finance Committee as part of the change from Response Groups to Action Groups.

ABCUSA Standing Rule 11.5 specifies that the BGM Finance Committee be composed of the Budget Review Officer and 5 other directors elected by BGM. Upon the resignation of President Don Ng as a member of the BGM Finance Committee, a motion was made by Paul Higgins, seconded by Dianne Steelman, and it was

**VOTED:** To elect James Wolfe to the BGM Finance Committee.

## **BGM 163      UM DESIGNATIONS**

Alan Musoke provided a review of UM issues, noting that for the first time, as of September 2013, UM designations to IM exceeded the UM distribution to IM as outlined in the Common Budget Covenant. In October, on behalf of the board of IM, Rev. Hopeton Scott (IM's president) sent a letter to General Secretary Medley sharing their board's concern about donor intent being honored and reporting its vote to propose, as an interim measure: "That a request be made to the ABC Mission Initiative Fund for a grant that is at least equal to the 2013 undistributed UM designations to IM." IM doesn't, however, qualify for a Mission Initiative grant. The IM board in turn shared its long-term hope that changes be made to the covenant to take into account these abnormalities.

As a temporary measure, a letter was drafted over General Secretary Roy Medley's name to be sent to churches informing them of the situation and requesting clarity as to whether they would want to shift their funds to either UM Basics, which will support all of ABC ministry, or to Specifics, which will go 100% to IM.

A proposal to eliminate the UM designations category came to the National Leadership Council (NLC) in April from a subcommittee (Common Budget Covenant Review Committee) charged with reviewing issues of the covenant. The NLC agreed that UM designations be removed as a mission giving category, that there only be a Specifics category where people can give to an entity. NLC will submit the change to covenanting partners for vote, with the hope of receiving the required 90% vote of approval.

Budget Review Officer Paul Higgins explained that there is a plethora of ways to give. The issue that we are currently struggling with comes from UM designations. This change has two goals: to be faithful to donor intent and to devise a simplified process for people completing UM forms. He also noted that if this

passes, notification of the change and a newly revised form will be sent to ABC churches in January 2015.

Following discussion it was

**VOTED:** At the recommendation of the BGM Executive Committee, and as a covenanting partner of the Common Budget Covenant, to eliminate the UM designations from the Budget Covenant (deleting the words ‘and Designated’ from ‘I. Plan Design, A. Basic Components, b’ and to delete the Designated Giving definition from the Appendix)

#### **BGM 164      GENERAL SECRETARY’S JOB DESCRIPTION**

The profile for the General Secretary position was transmitted to BGM directors on behalf of the General Secretary’s Search Committee prior to this meeting for review and an updated copy distributed at Thursday’s plenary session, allowing significant time for discussion. A motion was made by Dianne Steelman, seconded by Eli Escheverria and it was

**VOTED:** To accept the Position Profile for the General Secretary for American Baptist Churches USA with necessary corrections.

#### **BGM 165      RAINBOW ACRES**

General Secretary Roy Medley received from Gary Wagner, President & CEO of Rainbow Acres, a letter in March 2014 stating that Rainbow Acres would like to come into covenant relationship with ABCUSA by becoming an Associated Ministry Organization. Paul Higgins, ABC Budget Review Officer, who also serves as Vice President of Finance for Rainbow Acres, shared a brief history of this organization which has provided for 40 years a ranch-style Christian residential community for adults with developmental disabilities. Located in Camp Verde, AZ, the organization began through the efforts of an ABC pastor, Dr. Ralph Showers. Although Rainbow Acres is accredited through the United Methodists, it has stronger ties to ABC; it currently has no formal connection with other organizations. The past chair and the current chair of its board, and its secretary, are all American Baptists. There is strong support for the work/ministry of Rainbow Acres in the west but residents and board members come from across the U.S. Some of its strongest supporters are located in Iowa, Arizona and Nebraska. Paul noted that ABCUSA’s Standing Rules state the need to file application for AMO status with BGM, and Mr. Wagner’s letter serves as that application. He also said that Rainbow Acres’ desire is to eventually be able to assist ABC regions to do work in the area of disabilities, as well as continuing its current work.

Following discussion, it was

**VOTED:** On recommendation of the BGM Executive Committee, to invite Rainbow Acres to become an Associated Ministry Organization of ABCUSA.  
(Paul Higgins recused himself from the vote.)

General Secretary Roy Medley will communicate BGM's action to Gary Wagner and will invite him to be present at BGM's November meeting for an official signing of the covenant.

#### **BGM 166      WOMEN'S CAUCUS**

Julia Bebeau made an announcement, inviting all women to meet together during the dinner hour to hear an update on the American Baptist Women's Caucus.

#### **BGM 167      NABF: FUTURE BAPTISTS CONVOCATION**

Ernest Jones and Dean Parker attended, as ABC representatives, the North American Baptist Fellowship's "Future Baptists Convocation" at Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church of Philadelphia on March 6-7. They shared an oral report of this event with BGM directors, as well as a written report, which was transmitted prior to the meeting. The NABF is a voluntary organization of Baptist Conventions in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. The convocation was a diverse and intergenerational gathering of 88 participants who explored the direction Baptists might take missionally over the next 50 years as they also worked to identify collaborative missional opportunities. Presenters and speakers--which included Dr. George Bullock, NABF General Secretary and Dr. David Goatley, Lott Carey Foreign Mission Convention--provided information that aided small group discussions and offered best practices exemplars of collaborative efforts. Small group discussion focused on 12 issues, pre-selected by convocation participants through two online surveys. Over the next 18 months, the NABF will engage participants in continuous working groups of interest to reach goals for a Collaborative Missional Movement. Another event is planned in 2015 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

#### **BGM 168      REPORTS FROM DIRECTORS**

In accordance with ABCUSA Standing Rule 14.4, Bill Frederickson serves as BGM Director to the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board and Vivan Martindale serves as BGM Director to International Ministries, ABC. Both shared an oral report about the work of those respective organizations.

#### **BGM 169      BAPTIST IDENTITY ACTION GROUP**

Leo Thorne, Associate General Secretary for MRD, premiered a short video, "Inspired, Transformed...American Baptist Churches", which will be featured between June 2014 and the June 2015 Biennial Mission Summit. He described the video as not an identity piece, but an 8-minute presentation of inspirational leaders and a celebration of who we are as American Baptists, a people of mission, on the cutting edge of ministry. The video, and a packet of information introducing the video, was presented to each BGM director.

Bridget Holmstrom, Assistant Director of Communications/Web Manager, reported that the informational packets will be sent to the NLC and to the *Transformed by the Spirit* Journey Team this week. She encouraged BGM directors to be key communicators for this marketing plan. In mid-summer the first mailing, including posters, will be sent to churches. The DVD (film of inspirational leaders) will be sent to churches at a later date. A website, [www.abc-usa.org/inspired](http://www.abc-usa.org/inspired), has been set up to feature this film and includes a few video clips. Additional resources will also be available for churches in November.

A suggestion was made to send a copy of this video to area ministers.

## **BGM 170 CLOSING, DINNER, FUN AND FELLOWSHIP**

President Ng reminded BGM and staff to return to Brayton Case following dinner, at 7:30 p.m. for a time of fun, fellowship and snacks. The Beloved Community Action Group led in an oral reading of Philippians 4:13, and Camille Brown closed the meeting with a blessing, reminding BGM that we are all members of the beloved community.

Vice President Judy Fackenthal recessed the meeting of the BGM until Saturday morning, June 14.

## **Saturday, June 14, 2014; 9:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.; Brayton Case (Kern Lodge)**

## **BGM 171 CALL TO ORDER/WORSHIP**

President Ng called the meeting to order and made announcements regarding departure.

Chaplain Judy Fackenthal led in worship, charging all to remember God the Creator in our lives, Christ our Savior who loves our lives, and the Spirit who brings fire for our lives. BGM shared together by reading and meditating on Psalm 62:1-12.

Time was also taken for remembrance of American Baptists leaders who have gone on to be with the Lord—Rev. Dr. Veronica (Ronny) Lanier, former ABC missionary and beloved friend of ABC; Dr. Richard Ice, American Baptist Homes of the West, who also once served as Vice President of the ABC; and Dr. Glen Stassen, professor at Fuller Seminary. It was also announced that the grandmother of BGM director Tasha Wilson passed away early this morning. Chaplain Fackenthal led in prayer for Tasha and her family and for other requests.

## **BGM 172 STANDING RULES**

At its November meeting, BGM voted to elect Julia Bebeau, Kay Farley, and Alan Rudnick to the Standing Rules Committee and voted to recognize the appointment of Alan Rudnick as Chair of the Standing Rules Committee. At this meeting a motion was made and it was by consensus

**AGREED:** To elect Bill Frederickson as a member of the Standing Rules Committee

## **BGM 173      REPORT OF THE BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Budget Review Officer Paul Higgins reported on the Year-to-Date financials ending April 30, 2014, which show a net loss of \$61,000. Net revenue is down \$9,000 from the previous year, due primarily to the decrease in revenue related to Biennial expenses, although the revenues and expenses in this department will be reversed through a prepaid account at the end of the year. Women in Ministry has experienced a net loss of \$19,000 and the Development Office a net loss of \$79,000, although increases in revenues are expected to offset this loss as contributions are realized.

### **ABCUSA Audit for 2013**

Paul addressed the questions: “Why is an audit needed?” and “What are the auditors looking for?” This is ABCUSA’s second year with the audit firm Tait Weller Certified Public Accountants. On May 29, 2014 the Finance committee met with the auditors by phone for an hour to review financial documents.

ABCUSA received a clean audit opinion indicating that “the financial statements referred to present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of ABCUSA as of December 31, 2013, and 2012, and its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.”

The Finance Committee is reviewing investment policies, researching endowment funding and looking at possible discrepancies between the Standing Rules and the Common Budget Covenant.

### **Guidelines for Caucus Funding**

At the request of the Credentials and Caucus Committee (CCC), the BGM Finance Committee is reviewing the Guidelines for Caucus Funding with the goal of advising CCC on how this document might be revised to more ably assist in the process of caucus reporting.

## **BGM 174      MISSION CENTER PROPERTY**

Alan Musoke, Associate General Secretary for Finance, Treasurer/CFO, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the history of purchase of the American Baptist Mission Center, the largest of ABC’s assets. This presentation began with the agreement of purchase of the parcel of land on which the Mission Center was built in May 28, 1959 and extended to the sale of the Mission Center internally to the National Boards in March 2009 and a report of leasehold on the adjacent property. The full report is attached to the official minutes filed in the General Secretary’s office.

The ownership interests in 588 Associates are: ABCUSA, 35%; ABHMS, 35%; MMBB, 25% and ABFMS (IM), 5%. David Knipel, ABCUSA Legal Counsel, explained the responsibilities that denote this limited partnership and presented a document, “Unanimous Written Consent of the Members of 588

Associates, G.P., LLC”, which will need to be signed by an officer of each of the four partnering organizations noted above following approval by each organization’s Executive Committee.

Paul Higgins presented a proposed resolution from the 588 Real Estate Council. Upon motion by Paul Higgins, and second by Kay Farley it was

**VOTED:**

WHEREAS, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. (“ABCUSA”) is a limited partner of 588 Associates, L.P., a Pennsylvania limited partnership (the “Partnership”), and a Member of 588 Associates G.P., LLC, the general partner (“General Partner”) of the Partnership; and

WHEREAS, ABCUSA holds an approximately 35% interest in the Partnership and a 35% interest in the General Partner; and

WHEREAS, the Partnership owns certain property located at 588 and 590 North Gulph Road, King of Prussia (Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County), PA 19406 (the “Property”), which the Partnership now desires to market and sell; and

WHEREAS, ABCUSA desires to join with the other Members of the General Partner in arranging for the disposition of the Property;

NOW THEREFORE; BE IT and IT HEREBY IS:

RESOLVED, that appropriate officers of ABCUSA are authorized and directed to sign a Unanimous Consent of Members of the General Partner substantially in the form presented to this Board, with any changes consistent with the intent and purposes of this resolution that the Executive Committee of this Board (“Executive Committee”) and counsel for ABCUSA may approve; provided that (1) the 588 Real Estate Council has had an opportunity to review and provide its opinion and advice with respect to the terms and conditions of a proposed sale or other disposition of the Property (including participation in a joint venture or similar transactional structure with other parties to hold and develop the Property) to the Members of the General Partner, and (2) the Executive Committee has approved, on behalf of ABCUSA as a Member of the General Partner, the purchaser or other parties, price and other terms and conditions of the recommended disposition.

RESOLVED, subject to approval by the Executive Committee, any officer of ABCUSA is authorized to do and perform all such further acts and things, to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of the ABCUSA, and where necessary or appropriate, to file with the appropriate governmental authorities, all such other agreements, certificates, consents, corporate papers and other documents, and to make all such payments and take all other action that such officer and counsel for ABCUSA 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 resolution are approved, ratified and confirmed.

## **BGM 175      ACTION GROUP REPORTS**

The full Board of General Ministries received oral reports from the following Action Groups:

### Renewing Congregations – Wesley Roberts

Concern was shared regarding the decline of local congregations. It is the responsibility of BGM to discover why this decline is occurring and to be part of the restoration process. A survey is being written to send to regions and this Action Group will share a report on the results of the survey at BGM's November meeting.

### Communicating Baptist Identity – Jonathan Malone

ABCUSA's website needs to be updated to include available resources on what it means to be American Baptist. There also needs to be a push for resources/information to be printed in Spanish, in Burmese and other languages for those who are not primarily English speakers.

### Committee on Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations – Ruth Clark

Many of the Baptist-Muslim opportunities that presented themselves this year were unforeseen and yet very welcomed opportunities. Decisions are now being made regarding next steps in Baptist-Muslim dialogue, with the hope of forming a younger group of leaders to become involved. Much of the recent focus has been on the General Secretary's visit with other faith leaders to the Sudanese ambassador on behalf of Mariam Ibrihim, on the BWA meeting in Ismir, Turkey and on the conflicts in the Middle East.

## **BGM 176      RECESS/RECONVENE: REPORT OF CREDENTIALS & CAUCUS**

President Ng recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries. Wesley Roberts, chair, convened the Credentials and Caucus Committee. He presented the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches, highlighting the data related to the number of new churches and the number of churches which have disbanded, merged and have been dismissed. Wesley also expressed the committee's desire to include in future reports information on the number of baptisms in local congregations.

Following a time of discussion and upon recommendation of the Credentials and Caucus Committee, it was

**VOTED:** To recognize the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches (document 205.1:6/14) dated November 5, 2013 to June 3, 2014.

Kenneth Kho, president of the Intercaucus, shared a report with the Executive Committee. He noted that it was with the provision of an initial \$50,000 in funding from BGM that the American Baptist caucuses (Asian, Black, Haitian, Hispanic, Indian, Portuguese-speaking) come together to celebrate ethnic distinctiveness. Following a vote by the BGM in November 2013, the Women's Caucus became the seventh official caucus of the denomination. Kenneth's responsibility, as president of the Intercaucus, is to facilitate connections through meetings and conference calls. He reported that the Intercaucus met on

June 2-3, 2014 at the Mission Center in Valley Forge, and as part of this meeting facilitated a time of dialogue with the National Executive Council (NEC). This meeting enabled rich conversation related to recounting connections and expectations and sharing of issues and concerns.

Kenneth also shared recent activities of individual caucuses.

## **BGM 177      2015 BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT**

Susan Gillies, chair of the 2015 Mission Summit Biennial Planning Team (MSBPT), reported on the work of the planning committee. This committee is accountable to BGM and, Susan reminded board directors that this is BGM's party! She noted that gathering people of faith together helps determine how they live out and preach their faith.

This Biennial continues to experiment with multi-region hosting. The planning committee is working on two rounds of Mission Table sessions. Front-line missionary interviews will take place on Friday evening of the Summit. Biennial speakers will include ABC President Don Ng and General Secretary Roy Medley and others from the ABC family who will bring transforming messages, touch hearts and motivate people. There will also be a Sunday afternoon smorgasbord of workshops available.

Susan emphasized that BGM directors need to take responsibility for encouraging someone between the ages of 16 and 21 to attend. There will be two special late-night events for this age bracket. Susan will be the on-stage "host" for the main Biennial programs and worship and the Rev. Dr. Harry Riggs, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lincoln NE, will serve as co-host. Church registration is currently active; individual registration will be available as of February 1.

### 2017 Biennial Site

Annie Marcucci, Director of Travel and Conference Planning, reported the following regarding site visits for the 2017 Biennial: Seattle would incur significant cost for rental space, hotels and shuttles; Tacoma would require our having 3 venues as meeting space, one being ½ block away from the others; Portland's convention center would be a natural fit for ABC and, for a small fee of \$2.50 upon arrival in the city, one is provided with a free shuttle pass during the length of their stay. The city has built a second identical convention center across street from the original and have joined the two together. Following a time for questions, it was by consensus

**AGREED:** At the recommendation of the BGM EC to approve Portland, OR as the site of the 2017 Biennial Mission Summit

Annie will be comparing sites in the east and in the south for the 2019 Biennial. BGM directors from these areas of the country were encouraged to check with their respective Executive Ministers as to whether they might entertain the idea of regional hosting.

## **BGM 178      TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT**



Jeff Woods shared an update regarding the *Transformed by the Spirit* initiative using the analogy of planting a garden. Seeds have been planted and watered, with the expectation of growth and development and plans are in process for the next growing season to ensure that “the garden” will move forward in new and strengthened ways. He noted that in Phase 1 Adaptive Challenge Teams that met face to face usually worked best and such meetings are being encouraged for the future. As part of Phase 2, the roles of coaches continue to be defined and the workbook improved. New groups will be formed around common interests/topics and the role of the region in fostering resources will be enhanced.

From its inception *Transformed by the Spirit* has had the goal of engaging congregations in the discernment process to discover new ways to facilitate vital mission in their communities and neighborhoods. In Phase 2, an eighteen-month Beta project has been established with 5 regions—ABC of the Central Pacific Coast, the Great Rivers Region, ABC of Connecticut, ABC of Maine, ABC of the Rocky Mountains—joining in the experiment to determine how congregations might become effective agents of God’s mission in their neighborhoods.

Judy Allbee has been named regional executive liaison; Jeff Savage, pastoral liaison and Al Fletcher, head of congregational teams. A communication team will also be emerging to work with Leo Thorne and Bridget Holmstrom, and Jeff Woods will be working with the planning teams regarding table conversations.

## **BGM 179      PRESIDENT/GENERAL SECRETARY REPORTS**

President Don Ng and General Secretary Roy Medley shared reports of their work and travel on behalf of ABC since the November 2013 meetings. Their full written reports were distributed and are attached to the set of minutes filed in the General Secretary’s office.

## **BGM 180      REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT**

Ken Marsenburg, who recently completed one full year as ABCUSA’s Director of Development, shared a summary of development highlights from June 3, 2013 to May 31, 2014.

The initial funding goal for *Transformed by the Spirit* was \$800,000; as of May 31, 2014, \$825,236 had been raised. A new challenge goal of \$1,200,000 has been set and 69% of that new goal realized. The ABCUSA prospect lists continue to be expanded with an emphasis on increasing major donors. The Development Advisory Team (DAT) has worked hard to strategically recruit ABCUSA clergy and laity to assist with telling ABCUSA’s story and opening doors for potential visits/solicitations. Special fundraising projects have been identified and the Office of Development has been working to create interest in funding these projects.

Ken’s full written report was distributed to the Board and is attached to the minutes filed in the office of the General Secretary.

**BGM 181      WORSHIP**

Chaplain Judy Fackenthal led in closing worship. Noting that June 15 is Trinity Sunday, when we honor our creator God as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, she led the directors and staff in singing “Holy, Holy, Holy”, as all were invited to share offerings by bringing pledge cards to the table where the Christ candle was placed. A cash offering of \$950 was received, with a pledge balance of \$3,420.

Submitted by



Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley  
General Secretary

ARM/cb

Documents attached:

*Coordinated Schedule*

*BGM Roster*

*Proposed Agenda: June 12-14, 2014*

*Worship Programs*

*Minutes: BGM, November 14-16, 2013*

*Minutes: BGM EC, March 13-15, 2014*

*Dates/Venues: BGM and BGM Executive Committee*

*ABC President's Report*

*Report of the General Secretary*

*Reports from ABCUSA/OGS and Associated Ministry Organizations*

*Response Group Notes from November 2013*

*Act on United Mission*

*Updated Profile for the General Secretary's Search*

*Common Budget Covenant and Common Budget Covenant Operating Guidelines*

*Covenant Between ABCUSA and ABC Associated Ministry Organizations*

*Burma Refugee Taskforce*

*Burma: Joint Letter from Ethnic Nationalities Civil Society Organizations Regarding Foreign Military Engagement with the Burmese Military*

*Burma Military Bills: S Bill 1885; HR Bill 4377*

*Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches Nov. 5, 2013-June 3, 2014*

*International Ministries UM Distribution – 2013 & Effect of Eliminating UM Designations*

*ABCUSA Audit December 31, 2013 and 2012*

*Financial Notes YTD April 30, 2014*

*ABCUSA Resolutions of the Board of General Ministries*

*Unanimous Written Consent of the Members of 588 Associates, G.P., LLC*  
*588 Associations, LP Process for Evaluation of Unsolicited Proposals to Purchase the Mission Center*  
*Report of NABF- Future Baptist Convocation, March 6-7, 2013*  
*Rainbow Acres- Letter from Gary W. Wagner, President & CEO*  
*Report of BGM Director to MMBB Bill Frederickson*  
*Report on Transformed by the Spirit*  
*Inspired, Transformed....American Baptist Churches Packet (brochure, letter, DVD, Poster)*