

**American Baptist Churches USA  
Board of General Ministries  
Joint Meeting – Finance and Mission Resource  
Development Response Groups  
Friday, November 15 – 10:30am to 12:00pm  
Valley Forge, Pennsylvania**

**Meeting Notes**

*Attendees:*

Frank Christine  
Robin Crouch  
Paul Higgins  
Beryl Hornberger  
Dennis Johnson  
Vivan Martindale  
Charity Matic  
James Ratliff  
Wesley Roberts  
Alan Rudnick  
Elmore Warren

*Staff Members:*

Bridget Holmstrom  
Alan Musoke  
Leo Thorne



1. Opening Meditation was given by Robin Crouch.
2. United Mission
  - Update from Finance on IM letter
    - The current concern from IM is that we will not be honoring donor intent.
    - Generally, regions takes 65% and send the rest to Alan's office, who will send the \$ out to be allocated in the correct amounts to the correct organizations. Some churches want the money to be designated as United Mission.
    - Through September, \$198,000 is designated to IM, but they have received \$10,942 less so far this year. We need to review the Budget Covenant.
    - No problem occurs, until the amount exceeds the ratios that are set for International Ministries.
    - We are at a point where Finance is stuck – we are supposed to follow the common budget covenant, but if we do that we will be violating the donor intent.
    - We need to look at Specific and Designated giving for United Mission. If UM goes to specifics, then that will have ramifications toward United Mission in the future.
    - When there was more money coming in to UM, this was not an issue. As the money coming in decreases, it becomes more of an issue.

- Do we need to redo the giving form? Can we make this form clearer for our churches, or add a note about UM Specifics?
  - If the donors know that their intent is being met, they will give. If the donor finds out that for whatever reason, be it formulary, be it whatever, that there money isn't going where they want it to go, giving will go down.
  - One option is to contact the donor, explain the problem, and get their blessing (or not). Keeping communication with the donor is key, and being clear with them.
- Short-term Action Steps/Action Log
  - We outlined the Action steps that are being taken by MRD, the response groups, etc.
- Talking Points
  - The talking points were also put together by MRD, and when you receive this draft, remember that these are suggestions.
  - There was a suggestion that Board members be trained about a common core language about United Mission. BGM members should be trained in this language, so that they can communicate the same message moving forward about United Mission.
- If we had to report three things about what this combined meeting has suggested, what would they be?
  - Need for training and promotion about United Mission. Education and reeducation about how it is structured, what is the need, where do the UM dollars go? Remind churches that 65% is returned to the regions, and the remaining 35% is allocated to all the other ABC entities. We need to tell the regions and others why we should give to UM.
    - Stories, faces, names – donors want to know what is the impact? What are the stories? Also, what are the outcome measurements?
    - Including impact should be part of the training.
  - The adaptive challenge process that we said would happen has begun. This will include everyone (partners, regions, etc.).
    - Medley, Clark, Ng and Thorne, along with consultant Alan Roxburgh, began the conversation of how we go about this process.
      - The group discussed when the regions, partners should be included. What is the process?
      - Updating the budget covenant is a daunting task. Keep it simple – engage in the adaptive challenge, which may includes changing the budget covenant.
  - Third? Experiment – BGM members to fill out the United Mission form.
- The BGM is the only fully representative part of our ministry where there are representatives from across the denomination. This needs to be communicated to our respective regions. That is a key piece to go back to all our boards.
- We need to speak the same language – Do we still want to be saying “United Mission” two, or four, years from now?
- Is there going to be a creative way of sharing information to our 5,200+ churches that will tell about United Mission/this type of giving?
- We need to make some clarification about the terms of Designated and Specifics. What do they mean? We need to be clear, and work seriously at an administrative level in

order to make what we are saying concrete enough and motivating enough to be able to change what is going on.

- The majority of our churches are losing rather than gaining members. If you are looking at the state of churches right now, many churches don't have enough members to support a full-time minister.
  - We have a shrinking amount of dollars – how do we get more people in our pews? Do we need to look at evangelism, getting people in our pews, growing and reaching out to others?
    - Transformed by the Spirit is helping with this piece, but at the same time we need to focus on the adaptive challenge and budget covenant. Both should be addressed simultaneously.
    - Are we hoping a miracle will take place, or are we looking at the denomination as a whole?
  - Perhaps part of the training of the BGM should be for BGM members to fill out the form.
  - The common budget review committee – what is this? Should we be working with them? Should they be here?
    - This committee includes heads of finance for MRD
  - There was a suggestion that BGM members fill out the new form at the June meeting.
    - If you don't know how to fill out this form and send your money where you want it to go, this is a problem. How do we fix it?
  - The NLC was contacted about updating the form, and gave feedback on changes, thoughts, etc. Some did not want to update the form.
  - Strategy – have a region test the form, get feedback, then run this by the Review committee.
3. Director of Development Resource Update
- Ken Marsenburg gave an update on the Department of Development
    - Marsenburg outlined the goals for the Department of Development and highlighted his fundraising goals for 2014.
4. Other Matters
- ABCUSA Identity – Ministry Graphic was made available for review in its final form.
  - Alan Rudnick, Vivan Martindale and Robin Crouch will present the report of the MRD Response Group and the MRD joint Response Group meeting with the Finance Response Group to the board.
  - Dennis and Robin will work together on a more in depth exercise/report regarding the giving form, to be given at the June 2014 board meeting.

Submitted by Bridget Holmstrom  
November 25, 2013