



**BGM Executive Committee
March 14-16, 2019
Orlando, Florida**

MINUTES

Meeting Location: DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando Airport
5555 Hazeltine National Drive
Orlando, FL 32812
Ph: (407) 856-0100

Officers: Josué Gómez-Menéndez, President
Dean Parker, Vice President
Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer
Judy Fackenthal, Past President
Lee Spitzer, General Secretary

Committee: Cedric Jones, PBA
Jose Manuel Magana, CPC
Annie Svitavsky, VNH

Chaplain: Zina Jacque, CHI

Parliamentarian: Dennis Johnson, WV

Staff: Alan Musoke, Associate General Secretary/Treasurer/CFO
Kathy Jachowski, Administrator

Thursday, March 14, 2019, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.: Discovery Room

BGMEC 595 DEVOTIONS

Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence and shared a devotion based on Psalm 27:14 using the story of the "Velveteen Rabbit" as an illustration about becoming real and becoming fully who God intends us to be.

BGM EC 596 CALL TO ORDER

ABC President Josué Gómez-Menéndez called the meeting to order.

BGM EC 597 CONSENT AGENDA

Cedric Jones made a motion and seconded by Annie Svitavsky to accept the agenda items dated March 14-16, 2019 and the minutes of the November 9-11, 2018 meeting of the Executive Committee, held in King of Prussia. PA.

Approved with no objections.

BGM EC 598 EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Committee met in Executive Session. Actions taken during this meeting will be placed in a sealed envelope and filed with the official minutes in the General Secretary's office.

BGM EC 599 GENERAL SECRETARY ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Appendix 1 is a copy of the letter to the ABCUSA family announcing ABCUSA General Secretary Lee Spitzer's retirement plans for December 31, 2019.

LUNCH

Lunch was served at 12:00 PM in the Atrium of the hotel.

BGM EC 600 588 PROPERTY UPDATE

The due diligence period extends to April 1, 2019 and closing is expected by December 2, 2019. OGS owns 35% of the property and OGS gets 35% of the proceeds of the sale.

Currently there is one external tenant in the Mission Center that is scheduled to relocate by September 2019 unless the tenant chooses to relocate sooner in June 2019. ABF is planning to relocate in May 2019.

BGM EC 601 1015 W. 9th AVENUE PROPERTY UPDATE

Closing took place at the end of December 2018 with the purchase price of \$1.3 million. Currently we are waiting approval from the condo management to get plans finalized for bids and construction. The renovation costs are expected to be \$1.3 million.

Renovations include keeping the existing floor plan. The wood trim outside the building will be replaced with stucco. A new entrance that will be handicap accessible will be added. A reception area at the entrance will be added. The existing conference room will be demolished and rebuilt. Bathrooms will be completely remodeled. Roof will be replaced. Sixteen new offices will be built. Gathering area for staff will be created.

The following recommendations were made:

1. Add sprinklers systems to the building during the renovation.
2. Add windows to the offices that do not have existing windows.
3. Tell IM that money from the Roblee Fund is being used for the new building and that interest that IM receives may be less.

Paul Higgins made a motion and seconded by Judy Fackenthal to authorize up to \$1.5 million from the Roblee Fund for the refurbishment of the 1015 W. 9th Avenue property.

Approved with no objections.

BGM EC 602 CORA AND JOHN SPARROWK PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The award recipient is selected for recommendation by the President, Past President, Vice-President and the General Secretary. The committee received eight nominations and is recommending Charles and Marie Mercer as the recipients of the Cora and John Sparrowk Award.

Cedric Jones made a motion and Annie Svitavsky seconded to accept the recommendation of Charles and Marie Mercer as the recipients of the Cora and John Sparrowk Award.

Approved with no objections.

Dinner 5:00 PM

New Orleans Mardi Gras themed buffet dinner was served at 5:00 PM in the Atrium of the hotel.

Friday, March 15, 2019, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.: Discovery Room

BGM EC 603 DEVOTIONS

Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence and shared a Devotion from the Old Testament Book of Numbers chapter 33.

BGM EC 604 2018 FINANCIALS

Overall

Overall the 2018 financials show a net loss of \$252,000.

The primary reasons for the 2018 operating loss are:

Actual UM revenue coming in lower than budgeted by \$105,000

Revenues realized by the Development Department for operations being lower by \$175,000.

Other factors contributing to the 2018 net loss:

Salaries and benefits increased by \$82,000 for the Acting General Secretary and also the OTCF Director.

Transition Ministries, and Women in Ministries incurring a total loss of \$83,000.

Net revenue compared to last year is down \$108,000. Expenses as compared to last year are lower by \$49,000. Net revenue and expense are determined by subtracting the Biennial from this year and last year since there was no Biennial in 2018.

Development Office

The Development Office had a loss of \$245,000. Revenues realized by this department flow through other departments. The Development Department realized \$64,950 towards the budget for operations.

Women in Ministry and Transition Ministries

WIM and TM had losses of \$35,000 and \$48,000 respectively.

United Mission

Total UM is \$7,244,723. This is a decrease of \$382,988 from the prior year. This represents a reduction of 5.02%. However, ABCUSA's actual UM allocation for 2018 declined by 16.85%. The actual UM allocated to ABCUSA was short by \$105,280 compared to budget.

Investments

2018 unrealized losses were \$3,004,331.

The following recommendations were made:

1. Discuss with Pat Hernandez the significant losses of Transition Ministries.
2. Schedule a retreat to discuss the best future for OGS and United Mission (UM).
3. Need a strategic plan before the next biennium.
4. Need to give the board the skills to make a presentation regarding UM at the region and churches.

BGM EC 605 UM PILOT PROJECT

The United Mission is the Vehicle campaign that was created by Technology Therapy Group (TTG) began with the development of the UMIstheVehicle.com website and resources in the last quarter of 2015. In 2016, the regions' executive ministers shared additional resources as they became available. The United Mission is the Vehicle campaign continued to be promoted in all regions in 2016. In the last quarter of 2016 and through 2018 the focus turned to promoting what ministries the region offices provide through the support of United Mission giving.

After reviewing and comparing the data from January 2015 through December 2018, there seems to be no consistent information.

BGM EC 606 ADJUSTED UM AND BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

The 2019 approved budget was projected at about \$7.2 million. Once the actual 2018 figures came in, it was necessary for a -4.13% adjustment on the 2019 approved budget. Refer to the attached document "2019 Adjusted UM and Budget Adjustments"

Paul Higgins made a motion and seconded by Dean Parker to make the proposed adjustment to the 2019 Budget shown on Page 3 of the attached document "2019 Adjusted UM and Budget Adjustments" with resulting additional deficit \$119,243.18 funded from reserves.

BGM EC 607 MMBB ADOPTION AGREEMENT

The MMBB adoption agreement for staff retirement plans needs to be signed.

Judy Fackenthal made a motion and seconded by Cedric Jones to grant permission for Paul Higgins to sign the MMBB Adoption Agreement.

LUNCH 12:00 PM

A buffet lunch was served at 12:00 PM in the Atrium of the hotel. The BGM Executive Committee and special local guests met for lunch. Guests included:

Jonathn Soltero and his wife

Bob and Laurena Fisher

Leo and Yvonne Martinez Thorne

Mark Bartel

Jeri Higgins

Regrets from those not able to attend included Dan Weiss and Dee Dee Turlington.

BGM EC 608 EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Committee met in Executive Session. Actions taken during this meeting will be placed in a sealed envelope and filed with the official minutes in the General Secretary's office.

DINNER

Dinner was served at 5:00 PM in the Atrium of the hotel.

Saturday, March 16, 2019, 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.: Discovery Room

BGM EC 609 EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Executive Committee met in Executive Session. Actions taken during this meeting will be placed in a sealed envelope and filed with the official minutes in the General Secretary's office.

BGMEC 610 DEVOTIONS

Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence and shared a Devotion.

BGM EC 611 REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

ABC Minister's Council Request:

The American Baptist Foundation holds an account called, "Ministers Conference Endowment Fund" which was given by Virginia Palmer in 2007 to support ABC ministers conferences. Interest on the \$200,000 endowment may be used biannually, and the Ministers Council and Office of the General Secretary must agree in order to use it. The ABC Ministers Council is requesting funds to be used from the Palmer Ministers Conference Grant for two events: a Pre-Mission Summit "Day of Jubilee" and the "2020 Celebrating Ministering Women Conference."

Paul Higgins made a motion and seconded by Judy Fackenthal to agree with the use of the funds from the Ministers Conference Endowment Fund for the two requested events.

Approved with no objections. Lee will be in contact with the Ministers Council.

Hopevale Commemoration Sunday

In response to the 75th Commemoration of Hopevale Martyrdom in the Philippines, the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches (CPBC) Board of Trustees recently approved a resolution to designate the Sunday nearest to December 20 as Hopevale Commemoration Sunday. This action of the CPBC Board was inspired "by the thought that we need to preserve faith stories and traditions that connect us to the Hopevale event, to ensure that we will not lose track of its rich meaning and significance in our lives as Baptists.

Furthermore, we want to inspire and educate future generations on the life, faith, struggles, hopes, and triumphs of our Hopevale Martyrs that they may become faithful to the heavenly vision of doing God's mission in the world." The CPBC Board requests that ABCUSA designate the Sunday nearest to December 20 as Hopevale Commemoration Sunday "where we can celebrate our common missiological identity and our mutual support and solidarity in doing God's mission."

The following recommendations were made:

1. To plan and resource the celebration of Hopevale with IM each year but not to be used as a fundraiser.
2. Include poetry of the nurse.
3. Include Green Lake.

Judy Fackenthal made a motion and seconded by Paul Higgins to designate the Sunday nearest to December 20 as Hopevale Commemoration Sunday.

Approved with no objections.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Initiatives

Raimundo Barreto is the ABCUSA representative at the NCC's Interreligious Relations and Collaboration Convening Table, and additionally participates in the national Muslim-Christian dialogue. Lee Spitzer will be attending the next meeting May 21 in Philadelphia. The topics to be covered will include anti-Semitism and racism. While the topics are generally theological and/or sociological, there will be time to include a brief discussion of Israel – Palestine on the agenda, as many representatives from both communities want to make sure critical conversations on that topic aren't missed.

Shane Kinnison is the ABCUSA representative at the NCC's National Hindu-Christian Dialogue which Kinnison attended in January at the Vedanta Society of Southern California in Los Angeles. The dialogue presentations centered around the two themes of "Historical Roots of Our Faiths" and "Historical Intersections between Our Faiths, in East and West."

Staff Appreciation

Lee made the recommendation for the BGM Executive Committee to give the OGS staff an extra week of vacation due to the amount of work they are doing to prepare for the Biennial and the move.

Paul Higgins made a motion and seconded by Judy Fackenthal to empower the General Secretary to make provisions for an extra week of paid vacation for staff following the Biennial and move.

BGM EC 612 REPORT OF THE ABCUSA PRESIDENT

Josué Gómez-Menéndez, with the ABCUSA Hispanic Caucus, participated in a learning experience last month in the New York City Metro area with pastors and leaders regarding Baptist Principles. In April Josué plans to speak at the Ordination Service for the President of the Hispanic Caucus and will be attending the New Jersey Hispanic Annual Gathering Event in May. Josué also plans to represent ABCUSA at the Baptist Peace Fellowship Annual Event in Cali, Columbia in July.

BGM EC 613 ABC CAMPING AND CONFERENCING

A survey for those interested in camping and conferencing was distributed to the ABCUSA regions. 1/3 of the regions responded and showed an interest in gathering with other people involved in ABC Camping and Conferencing.

The following recommendations were made:

1. Ask Kevin Walden to attend the American Baptist Camp Leadership Gathering scheduled

for September 17-19, 2019 at Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center in Linwood, NE. Kevin would then give a report at the November BGM meeting.

2. Create a catalogue of camps to post on the webpage to access various ABCUSA camps with a link to their camp websites.

BGM EC 614 AMO REQUESTS

A request was made for a checklist of the necessary documents to apply for AMO status.

The following recommendations were made:

1. Paul Higgins will make a checklist of the necessary documents to apply for AMO status.
2. Kathy Jachowski will call Cathy Brubaker to get more information on a group that previously applied for AMO status.

BGM EC 615 ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting of BGM Executive Committee: June 17-18 2019 in Virginia Beach, VA.

Submitted by,



Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer
General Secretary

LBS/kj

Documents attached

BGM EC Integrated Schedule (1008:03/19)
BGM EC Proposed Agenda (1101:03/19)
BGM EC Roster March 2019
BGM Executive Committee Minutes: November 2018 (1002:11/18)
ABCUSA Financial Report as of December 31, 2018
Adjusted United Mission and Budget Adjustments
UM Pilot Regions Comparison of Giving Year
2019 Biennial Mission Summit Update (Brochure Enclosed)
OTABL Update
ABCUSA Proposal Renovation Cover Letter
ABCUSA Renovation Bid
ABCUSA Vendor Selection Letter
Report from the Office of the General Secretary
Letter regarding Hopevale Anniversary
Request to consider Hopevale Commemoration Sunday
Ecumenical and Interfaith Initiatives: Hindu Christian Dialogue
ABC President's Report (1201:03/19)
Camping and Conferencing Survey
Sparrowk Nomination Information

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

*Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer
General Secretary*

Please Note: A version of this letter was presented in Executive Session to the Board of General Ministries' Executive Committee on Thursday morning, March 14, 2019. It is dated March 1, 2019 because that is the first day Dr. Spitzer resumed his ministry as General Secretary.

March 1, 2019

Dear ABCUSA Family,

Greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ!

I would like to express my deep appreciation to everyone in the ABCUSA family that prayed for my recovery and sent me cards, emails and gifts during my six-month medical leave. The love and concern I received encouraged and strengthened me. Following open heart surgery, I have experienced the healing power of God in many ways. Physically, the emergency repair of my congenital heart defect has given me a fresh start – a new opportunity to live a longer, productive and satisfying life. Spiritually, I feel as close to God as I ever have, and through extensive and deep reflection, prayer and study, I believe I am emerging out of this healing journey with a clear sense of direction and purpose.

Toward the end of the medical leave, while in prayerful conversation with God, I believe that I received specific guidance concerning my post-recovery journey. Accordingly, I would like to share with all of you in the ABCUSA family my intention to retire from administrative and pastoral leadership as ABCUSA General Secretary on December 31, 2019. For some four decades, I have labored as a local church pastor, senior regional pastor (Executive Minister) and General Secretary with joy and, I hope all would say, faithfulness. I love the American Baptist family with all of my heart and soul, and consider it a great privilege and honor to have served this family for all of my adult life.

My decision to retire is based solely on my sense of divine guidance, my understanding of the course of my spiritual journeys, and conversations with my wife and others who are most close to me. It is not based on any dissatisfaction with OGS (the Office of the General Secretary) or the ABCUSA family. There are several factors which have led me to embrace retirement and all of its challenges and joys.

Years ago, while I was still ABCNJ's Executive Minister, I began sharing with the region's ministry team and leadership my life-long dream to retire when I reached 62 years of age, a milestone I will celebrate in April. My goal was to model voluntary "giving up of power" for other clergy. When I embraced the call to serve as General Secretary, I reluctantly accepted that an early retirement might not be possible. However, in light of the medical leave, I believe retiring by the end of this year is not only best for me personally (health-wise), but an appropriate response to the insights I have gained while on medical leave.

One insight is in regard to my family's health, happiness and welfare. Many of you have met Lois, my wife, Joshua, my son, Larisa, my daughter, her husband Travis and my grandson, Restyn. Simply stated, the extensive travel, stress and demands of being General Secretary have taken me away from my family's life more than I deem to be healthy. They have all keenly felt my continuous absence, especially Joshua. As a young man with autism, he is especially close to me and needs my presence more than I can currently give to

him. There are many spiritual leaders in American Baptist life, but only one father for Joshua. And now that I am a grandparent, I wish to “be there” for Restyn during these all-important early years of his life. Vocationally, retirement for me is full of exciting challenges and ways to continue serving God’s people. My Holocaust research and writing is a vital part of my legacy to the Baptist family, but it requires far more time and attention than I can currently give it. There are at least four more books to write! I also intend to become more involved in Jewish-Christian relationships, and to provide a strong voice against the rising tide of anti-Semitism, an evil that is re-emerging in both the United States and the world. I enjoy teaching on the seminary and university level, and intend to remain involved in missional movements and organizations, both within and beyond ABC, that seek to share the Gospel with the world in word and deed. Along the way, I hope to spend more time on my photography, which is a source of great personal enjoyment. Life is rich, and I am looking forward to the next stage of my life’s journey!

Although the length of my tenure as General Secretary will be short (two and a half years), much has been accomplished and set into motion that will ensure a bright future for OGS and ABCUSA. A clear vision for the Office of the General Secretary, based on the centrality of its pastoral role, has been articulated. Pastoral letters on several key issues, such as racism, violence and immigration, garnered widespread affirmation. Pastoral visits by OGS team members to regions have generated denominational goodwill.

Furthermore, we are hard at work on both the 2019 and 2021 Biennials. New partnerships and initiatives, such as the National Institute for Civil Discourse and Fresh Expressions, have been embraced by several regions and are making an impact. ABCUSA’s focus on environmental concerns and creation care have been re-energized, especially due to our partnership with eco-America. We have elevated the importance of Women in Ministry, and the 2020 Celebration planning is well under way. We have engaged national leadership in a conversation on United Mission. ABCUSA’s relationship with the Baptist World Alliance has been strengthened, and we remain committed to our international partners, especially in the Philippines and Myanmar (Burma). Ecumenically, our relationship with the National Council of Churches was demonstrated in our deep involvement in the Martin Luther King Jr. anniversary event last April, and in our participation in the newly emerging Hindu and Buddhist dialogues.

I am announcing my retirement 10 months in advance so that I can focus my remaining time and energy on several key projects in 2019. The upcoming Biennial Mission Summit will be a wonderful event, and I am looking forward to being with everyone in Virginia Beach. I am eager to help the OGS ministry team move into their new building, which should be accomplished soon after the Biennial. There are regions and other ministries to visit and encourage with a positive pastoral word. I imagine we will dedicate the building at the November 2019 board meeting. There are key initiatives and ongoing ministries the OGS team is working on that I would like to strengthen. I trust that my announcement will also provide the Executive Committee and the BGM sufficient notice to plan for a positive transition, following the conclusion of my ministry. It will be a busy year, but I am confident that God will guide and lead us.

Thank you for your support. It has been a pleasure to serve the American Baptist family as your General Secretary!

Yours in Christ,



Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer
General Secretary
American Baptist Churches USA