

United Mission Task Force Update  
November 2018

At the spring 2018 NLC meeting, the NLC called for the formation of a task force to work on a new ABCUSA identity statement and alternatives to United Mission. Over the summer a task force was formed and met on October 30, 2018. The following information below is presented for feedback.

Proposed Narrative: "United in Christ, Together in Mission."

While the task force engaged in a number of exercises to explore new narratives, they kept coming back to the principle that American Baptists will never be able to raise adequate funds for ministry unless we are more unified as a denomination. The adaptive challenge to United Mission lies in the word "Unity." While it may no longer be feasible to be united in mission, we are united in Christ and we have a mission.

Other thoughts that support this proposed narrative include:

- We must emphasize "being" before "doing."
- We need a narrative that is grounded in theology.
- Living into the reality of being one body in Christ implies that we will strengthen the relationships among us.
- Our allegiance must be to the Kingdom rather than to institutions.

Some of the practical ways that this new narrative could be lived out include:

- Engage in Bible studies on the theme of "United in Christ, Together in Mission" at every level, locally, regionally, and nationally.
- Shift from focusing upon the recipients of United Mission to lifting up the impact of our common ministry. Perhaps we could estimate the total number of dollars raised by ABC congregations and explore the many ways that we are involved in mission and ministry through the local congregation.
- Encourage churches who do not give to United Mission to give to the common ministries supported by United Mission such as sharing the Gospel, making disciples, developing leaders, resourcing congregations, and meeting human need.
- Yoke and network congregations together to do mission and ministry. Link congregations with common interests to pray, do Bible study together, go on mission trips, support agencies like Rainbow Acres, etc.