



**BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA
June 18-20, 2019
MINUTES**

Meeting Site: DoubleTree by Hilton
1900 Pavilion Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23451
Ph: 757-422-8900

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

Parliamentarian: Dennis Johnson **BGM Chaplain:** Zina Jacque

Tuesday, June 18, 2019. 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Plenary; Sequoia

BGM 454 CALL TO ORDER

American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) President Josué Gómez-Menéndez welcomed all of the BGM directors and staff and then called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. in the Sequoia meeting room of the DoubleTree by Hilton. He expressed appreciation to Camille Brown and Bill Poland for agreeing to serve as tellers. Josué continued with regrets from BGM directors not able to attend and shared announcements.

BGM 455 WORSHIP

BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence. Zina led a devotion based on Mark 8:31-38.

BGM 456 ABCUSA FOCUS STATEMENT

The ABCUSA Focus Statement was shared in unison.

American Baptist Churches are missional congregations that nurture devoted disciples of Jesus Christ who live their lives in mission and ministry for the healing of the world through the love of God.

BGM 457 CONSENT AGENDA

Wesley Roberts made a motion to approve the General Consent Agenda: written reports posted prior to the meeting and the Proposed Agenda and Minutes of the BGM's November 9-11, 2018 meeting held in King of Prussia.

No objections, motion approved.

BGM 458 REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

General Secretary Lee Spitzer shared his report with the board stating that he has resumed pastoral visitations to regions that included his most recent trips to Indianapolis and Indiana/Kentucky. In addition to visiting regions, Lee represented ABCUSA at this year's National Council of Churches Christian-Jewish Conversation in Philadelphia. Lee shared that he met with each of the staff upon his return from the six-month disability period and thanked Jeff Woods for serving as Acting General Secretary.

The previously presented five-point vision statement is now consolidated into three areas that articulate the unique identity of the Office of the General Secretary (OGS) as the vital part of the ABCUSA denominational family. The vision statement states, "As the hands and feet of Christ, we serve to unify our ABCUSA family, strengthen our regions, and resource churches and pastors." Along with the vision statement, a new booklet will be ready for its preview at the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit that will make the ministry of OGS clear and understandable.

Several OGS team members visited the Roblee Building, the future home of ABCUSA/OGS and the American Baptist Historical Society. Lee also invited ABMen to have a space in the building.

Lee spoke about ABC-Core, a web based extension of ABCIS, which will soon be ready for "alpha testing" by selected Executive Ministers and other key users.

The national leaders of ABCUSA including the Board of General Ministries Directors joined together to share a public letter of solidarity and support to the residents of the Virginia Beach area. The letter will be published in the local Virginia Beach newspaper on Thursday, June 20, 2019 and Sunday, June 23, 2019.

Lee finished by reminding the board of his plans to retire on December 31, 2019, and said what an honor it has been to serve the board and the denomination.

June Totten raised questions regarding Lee's written report recommendations to the board of four specific proposals related to United Mission for consideration. Josué asked to table June's questions until later in the meeting. Lee's four proposals state:

1. The Board should adopt a policy that ABC related ministries that receive UM funding must promote UM in their publications, activities, website, and other venues. For example, ABHMS receives over \$300,000 in UM funding for American Baptist Personnel Services. Isn't it

reasonable that ABHMS should promote UM?

2. Future adjustments to UM distribution should impact all budget lines, and not disproportionately hurt OGS.
3. UM should be considered primarily a joint mission offering for regions and OGS, and marketed accordingly.
4. Lee recommends that the BGM endorse the tagline, “United in Christ, Together in Mission.” (See BGM 461, below)

BGM 459 ORIENTATION TO AMERICAN BAPTIST LIFE (OTABL)

Kevin Walden described the three webinars that were held ahead of the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit and were well attended. OTABL provides an opportunity for networking and making friendships and being able to share with others about being a Christian. The focus of this year’s OTABL is to equip participants to share their story of faith.

BGM 460 YOUTH AT THE 2019 BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT

Marsha Scipio shared that this will be the first youth conference held at the Biennial Mission Summit with over 70 young people registered and leaders from across the country. The program is based on Mark 2:13 – Lessons at the Seashore. During their time at Virginia Beach, the youth will be involved in a park beautification project for mission.

BGM 461 UNITED MISSION TASK FORCE

Jeff Woods shared a report of the meeting of the United Mission Task Force that formed at the request of the National Leadership Council (NLC) when it met in the spring of 2018. On October 30, 2018 the task force met and included Aidsand Wright-Riggins, Jeff Woods, Frank Frischkorn, Steve Bils, and Tina Turner. The purpose of the UM Task Force was to propose a new narrative or “tag-line” attached to United Mission. The UM Task Force is proposing the narrative, “United in Christ, Together in Mission.”

Judy Fackenthal made a motion to endorse the tag-line “United in Christ, Together in Mission” and allow phase 2 to meet on implementation.

No objections, motion approved.

Judy Fackenthal made another motion that a Mission Table be held for discussing how we are united in Christ, together in mission, using the tag-line the UM Task Force came up with.

No objections, motion approved.

BGM 462 GENERAL SECRETARY EVALUATION REPORT

Dean Parker oversaw the GS Evaluation Task Force. Dean explained that the confidential process of the one year evaluation of the General Secretary was postponed until after the General Secretary returned from medical leave. Terry Weaver, who works with an outsourced human resources company, conducted the interviews. The evaluation allowed for ratings and comments. The task force is currently working on putting together a narrative summary for the General Secretary and the board. This summary is to help Lee and to help the search committee for the new General Secretary search.

Josué explained that an Interim General Secretary will be named in November to allow for an overlap with Lee's retirement time frame so that the Interim can spend some time with Lee in the office. The new ABCUSA President will begin the search process for the new General Secretary once the new president begins in January 2020.

Dennis Johnson led a prayer for the process and transition.

BGM 463 RECESS OF MEETING FOR DINNER

At 5:00 PM, the BGM directors, spouses, and staff gathered for dinner in the Oak Room, followed by Evening Vespers in the Sequoia Room. After Evening Vespers, new BGM Directors stayed in the room to meet for orientation.

Wednesday, June 19, 2019. 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.; Plenary; Sequoia

At 7:00 a.m., the BGM directors and staff, along with members of the International Ministries Board, enjoyed breakfast in Ballroom South of the DoubleTree. Also at 7:00 a.m. the BGM Finance Committee met for a breakfast meeting in the Willow Room and CCUIR met for a breakfast meeting in the Elm Room.

BGM 464 RECONVENING/WORSHIP

ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Sequoia Room. BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence and led a morning devotion.

BGM 465 588 PROPERTY UPDATE

Alan Musoke gave an update from November to the present. Closing on the Mission Center is expected for December 2, 2019. There is a clause in the contract that allows for three extensions if needed which means closing could take place as late as March 2020.

BGM 466 ROBLEE BUILDING UPDATE

Alan also gave an update on the Roblee Building. Since March, the main contractor was able to negotiate bids for the renovations from \$1.33 million down to \$1.27 million, but additional windows and a few other items are not yet priced. Demolition was completed in May 2019. The Roblee Building will be a brand new building when finished. The move date is expected for some time in September 2019. The estimated cost of furniture for staff is \$40,000. Lee shared that the Dedication of the Roblee Building will take place during the November board meetings. The board wants to express the theme of "unity" at the dedication.

BGM 467 ROBLEE FUND ENDOWMENT IMPACT

Paul Higgins read the portion of the will to share the history of how the funds are to be used. Currently \$180,000 a year is being given to International Ministries (IM) from the interest of the fund. IM was notified in the spring of this year that they should expect to see a decrease in the amount they have been receiving. IM requested that we replace those funds with money from the sale of 588. The BGM Executive Committee will consider options regarding the funds at its September meeting.

BGM 468 CREDENTIALS & CAUCUS COMMITTEE

Manuel Jose Magana shared that there are now 5042 ABCUSA Churches from 5065. Two dismissed churches, two merged churches, and twenty churches withdrew.

It was also decided that there will be a point system for 2020 that will be incorporated into the guidelines for caucuses for budget requests.

Judith Christiansen made a motion and seconded by Zina Jacque to accept the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches (1205.1:06/19) dated November 9, 2018 to June 17, 2019.

VOTED: Motion Approved

BGM 469 ABCUSA 2018 AUDIT REPORT

The report of the independent certified public accountants, Tait, Weller & Baker LLP was presented by Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer. (see attached document).

BGM 470 YEAR TO DATE FINANCIALS

Overall the year-to-date financials show a net loss of \$126,000. This is determined by subtracting the Biennial revenue and expense since the Biennial financials are not finalized. The loss was primarily due to the Development Office which had a loss of \$75,000, and Information Technology which had a loss of \$90,000.

Revenue compared to last year is up \$164,000. This increase is determined by subtracting the Biennial from the total revenue from this year and last year. The primary reason for this increase was due to Denominational Emphasis which had funds released from restriction.

Expenses are higher this year as compared to the previous year by \$283,000. This increase in expense is determined by subtracting the Biennial from the total expenses for this year and last year. The primary reason for the increase in expenses was due to the funds released from restriction in the Denominational Emphasis Department.

Numbers for the Biennial are preliminary. Not all revenue and expenses amounts are reflected in the April financial results. Final financial results for the Biennial will not be available until the August financials are processed.

Total United Mission giving is down 7.24% from the previous year. World Mission Offering is down 4.01%. Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering is down 6.74% and Region Offering is down 16.97%.

BGM 471 DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY TEAM (DAT) UPDATE

Ken Marsenburg expressed the importance for the board directors to talk to people they know in their churches to give to and support ABCUSA.

BGM 472 ABCUSA PRESIDENT'S NOMINATION

For service on the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations, Josué nominated Shawna Simmons to replace Eh Bludoh.

Judy Fackenthal made a motion and seconded by Judith Christiansen to accept Shawna Simmons for service on the committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations.

VOTED: Motion Approved

BGM 473 RECESS OF MEETING FOR BGM ACTION GROUPS

From 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., the BGM convened in the following Action Groups to focus its work in various areas.

BGM Finance Committee – Willow Room

Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations – Elm Room

Becoming a Beloved Community – Pine Room

Communicating ABC Identity – Maple Room

AMERICAN BAPTIST GATHERING OF MEMBERS OF NATIONAL BOARDS (ABCUSA, ABHMS, ABWM, IM, MMBB)

Members of the National Boards (ABCUSA, ABHMS, IM, MMBB) and the board of ABWomen's Ministries enjoyed dinner together at 6:00 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom of the DoubleTree. The purpose of this dinner was fellowship, connection, and sharing about each other's boards. Leaders from each organization spoke about their boards and gave greetings.

Thursday, June 20, 2019, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; Plenary; Sequoia

At 7:00 a.m., the BGM directors and staff, along with members of the International Ministries Board, enjoyed breakfast in Ballroom South of the DoubleTree.

BGM 474 RECONVENING/WORSHIP

ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Sequoia Room. BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence and led a morning devotion.

BGM 475 ACTION GROUP REPORTS

Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations:

June Totten reported on the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations (CCUIR). The World Council of Churches is bringing attention to their campaign against rape and violence by wearing black on Thursdays in June. CCUIR is again staffing an exhibit at the ABCUSA booth for the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit. At the CCUIR Dinner on Friday night Elijah Brown, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, will be the guest speaker and the Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award will be presented to Dr. Stephen Butler Murray. The committee also discussed ways to lift up their ministry throughout the ABCUSA family during BGM meetings, the ABCUSA website, and press releases; and by doing so, inspire our constituency through testimonies and stories involved in one or more CCUIR related events.

Beloved Community Action Group:

Judith Christiansen, on behalf of the Beloved Community Action Group, recommended to the BGM Executive Committee to add to their agenda in the September meeting a discussion about including an NICD workshop in the November BGM meeting. This would include deciding on one of two options to add to the November agenda; a two hour module training or a train the trainer training of four hours. Also, a standing agenda item at all BGM meetings that would include a short training or video on civility.

Communicating ABC Identity:

Tasha Wilson shared that the meeting began by each person telling the ABC story in six words and sharing what it means to be the ABCUSA family. Tasha gave out prizes for the challenge to talk about UM to churches in their regions. Eight out of forty-five board directors participated. Bonnie Higgins, Kurt Kauffman, Judith Christiansen, Jim Wolfe, and Bruce Van Der Beek received prizes.

ABCUSA Finance Committee Action Group:

Paul Higgins asked Josué to defer the Finance Committee report until after the board received the report from Salvador Orellana, as it seemed inappropriate to discuss the Roblee Fund in front of a guest from ABHMS.

BGM 476 UPDATE ON REBUILDING, RESTORING, RENEWING PUERTO RICO

Salvador Orellana, Director of Intercultural Ministries and Rebuilding, Restoring, Renewing Puerto Rico, visited the BGM to share an update on the progress. During phase one supplies were provided including money for food and water on the island, hygiene kits, tarps, water filters, propane stoves, solar lights and chargers, batteries and flashlights. Once phase one was complete in December 2018, phase two began with the hiring of Abigaíl Medina Betancourt to serve as a coordinator in Puerto Rico. Phase two also included rebuilding the Ruth Maldonado Retreat Center, 27 churches, Baptist academies and schools, the seminary, and the Genesaret Retreat Center. The current phase three includes additional work with churches and houses for individualized support. There are still at least 25,000 families living under blue tarps since Hurricane Maria. The goal is to complete the mission of rebuilding, restoring, renewing Puerto Rico by 2022.

CONTINUATION OF BGM 475

ABCUSA Finance Committee Action Group:

Budget Review Officer Paul Higgins reported on the ABCUSA Finance Committee Action Group, stating that the committee considered a request from the Mission Initiative Fund. The request was for funding for a collaborative effort between ABWIM, ABWM, and others in a denomination-wide conference next June. While the committee viewed the concept favorably, funding for this request was denied as the committee did not believe the request met the guidelines for the Mission Initiative Fund.

Paul presented a report to the BGM Finance Committee that showed the audits, compilations, reviews, and internal financial statements received from each region that provided such reports for 2010-2018. Discussion followed regarding concerns from some regions about the high cost of audits compared to the alternative use of those funds for ministry purposes. Concern was raised about the number of regions that consistently fail to provide financial reports or audits.

As described in Standing Rule 14.8.2, the Finance Committee received a budget request from the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations. The request was referred to staff for further action and consideration.

The ABCUSA Finance Committee proposed that the Board of General Ministries politely and lovingly decline the request from International Ministries to replenish the Roblee Fund with monies received from the sale of the Mission Center.

VOTED: No objections

BGM 477 ASSOCIATED MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS (AMO) STATUS REQUEST

Lee shared that he previously received a letter from the Kachin American Baptist Association (KABA) requesting AMO status. Lee asked the BGM for a motion for the BGM Executive Committee to review the application at the September meeting and if approved, to invite KABA's leadership to the November board meeting to be accepted in full AMO status.

Judith Christiansen made a motion and seconded by Kurt Kaufman to forward the AMO request of the Kachin American Baptist Association for review at the September BGM Executive Committee meeting.

VOTED: Motion Approved

BGM 478 BGM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Tasha Wilson made a motion asking that staff leave the room to hold Executive Session. Legal counsel was asked to stay in the room. Josué Gómez-Menéndez recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries for an Executive Session. If any action was taken during this time that action will be recorded and sealed in an envelope attached to the official set of minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

BGM 479 CLOSING WORSHIP AND ADJOURNMENT BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque led the closing worship service with communion. Offering collected was added to the Virginia Beach victims offering that will be collected at the Biennial communion service on Sunday morning. ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez adjourned the meeting of the Board of General Ministries.

FUTURE BGM MEETINGS:

November 8-10, 2019 King of Prussia, PA

FUTURE BGM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

September 12-14, 2019 Denver, CO

November 7-8, 2019 King of Prussia, PA

Submitted by,



Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer
General Secretary

LBS/kj

Documents attached

BGM Integrated Schedule (1008:06/19)

BGM Proposed Agenda (1102:06/19)

BGM Minutes – November 2018 (1001:11/18)

BGM Executive Committee Minutes: March 2019 (1002:03/19)

BGM Executive Committee Minutes: November 2018 (1002:11/18)

Financials YTD through April 2019

ABCUSA 2018 Audited Financial Statements

Reports from Directors to Other Boards: ABHMS

Reports of ABCUSA OGS Staff and AMOs

Rhythms of the Spirit Report

Professional Ministries Report

Burma Refugee Commission Report

World Relief Committee Report

United Mission Task Force Update

ABC President's Report (1201:06/19)

Action Groups Assignments June 2019

Report of Changed Relationships November 9, 2018 to June 17, 2019 (1205.1:06/19)

Robert A. Roblee Building Update

588 Property Update