



**BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES
KING OF PRUSSIA, PA
NOVEMBER 8-11, 2019
MINUTES**

Meeting Location: Crowne Plaza
260 Mall Boulevard
King of Prussia, PA 19406
Ph: (610)265-7500

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

Friday, November 8, 2019. 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Robert A. Roblee Building

The Board of General Ministries Directors and other guests were invited to the building dedication of the Robert A. Roblee Building, the new home of the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) Office of the General Secretary and the American Baptist Historical Society's Financial Secretary's office, located at 1015 West Ninth Avenue, in King of Prussia, PA. The dedication service was preceded by an open house. ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez recognized the retirement of ABCUSA General Secretary Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer, presenting him with a crystal globe and book of letters.

DINNER

At 5:30 PM, the BGM directors, spouses, and staff gathered for dinner in Independence South.

Saturday, November 9, 2019. 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.; Plenary; Independence North

At 7:00 a.m., the BGM directors and staff enjoyed breakfast in the Forager Restaurant of the Crowne Plaza. At 7:30 a.m. the BGM Finance Committee met for a breakfast meeting in the Devon Room and the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations (CCUIR) met for a breakfast meeting in the Radnor Room.

BGM 480 CALL TO ORDER

ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez welcomed all of the BGM directors and staff and then called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Independence North meeting room of the Crowne Plaza. He expressed appreciation to Emmett Dunn and Kathryn Ray for agreeing to serve as tellers and to Marijane Kiley for sharing her gift of music during the meetings. Josué continued with regrets from BGM directors not able to attend and shared announcements.

BGM 481 WORSHIP

BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence. Zina led a devotion based on II Corinthians 5:7.

BGM 482 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 483 CONSENT AGENDA

Judith Christiansen 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 June 18-20, 2019 meeting held in Virginia Beach, VA.

No objections, motion approved.

BGM 484 RECESS BGM/CONVENE AMERICAN BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ABCUSA President Josué Gómez-Menéndez recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries. Rev. Garth Brokaw, President of the American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS), called the annual corporate meeting of ABHS to order. ABHS Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Priscilla Eppinger shared that from January to October the Historical Society welcomed 69 researchers for a total of 103 research days; as well as, an additional 65 research requests. 2019 was the first year in the past four years that ABHS did not have a search for a new staff member. Inventories for about 100 collections, consisting of over 1700 boxes, have been uploaded to "ArchivesSpace," their online catalogue, including the inventory of their congregational files collection, one of the collections most frequently added to. Congregational files hold histories, anniversaries, and various other documents or hundreds of churches.

Bill Fredrickson made the following motions...

The Board of Managers of the American Baptist Historical Society moves the election of the following nominees to the Board of Managers of the American Baptist Historical Society -- class of 2023:

Beverly Fink (First Term), Janice Fletcher (First Term), William Frederickson (Second Term), Josué Gómez-Menéndez (First Term), Everett Goodwin (Third Term), Heidi Holmstrom (Third Term), Dennis Johnson (First Term), Jonathan Malone (Third Term), James Napolitan (First Term).

No objections, motion approved.

The Board of Managers of the American Baptist Historical Society moves that we accept, with regret, the resignation of Travis Norvell, class of 2021, and nominate Felipe Candelaria to fill Reverend Norvell's unexpired term.

No objections, motion approved.

The Board of Managers of the American Baptist Historical Society moves that the following be elected officers of the American Baptist Historical Society:

Jonathan Malone - President

Mitch Homma - Vice President

Heidi Holmstrom - Secretary

Joe Stoner – Treasurer

No objections, motion approved.

The annual corporate meeting of ABHS was adjourned and the BGM meeting was reconvened.

BGM 485 RECONVENE BGM/C-TAC REPORT

Rev. Garth Brokaw is the ABCUSA representative for the Coalition for the Transformation of Advanced Illness Care (C-TAC). Garth gave an update from the 2019 National Summit on Advanced Illness Care that convened in Minneapolis, MN. C-TAC's mission is to improve the quality of care and determination of goals for care that affect the person, families, caregivers and healthcare providers by addressing the inclusion of spiritual care and social justice through recognition of persons' beliefs and values and to reduce the variations in the quality of advanced illness care, particularly for traditionally under-served and marginalized populations.

BGM 486 REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

General Secretary Lee Spitzer talked about "the great work that the Region Executive Ministers are doing in the regions." Lee reflected on ABCUSA not having a building home when he first began his work as General Secretary to now having a new building and a new future as the Robert A. Roblee Building was dedicated the day prior. Also, when he began his time as General Secretary, Lee noted that there was no location named for the 2019 Biennial Mission Summit; whereas just this past summer, ABCUSA made history in Virginia Beach with the historical document that was printed in the newspaper. Not only did the Biennial location get named for 2019, the 2021 Biennial Mission Summit will be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Over the past two years as General Secretary, Lee presented a pastoral vision and ministries of the Office of the General Secretary to unify the American Baptist family, strengthen the regions, and resource churches and pastors. This vision articulated the reason for the General Secretary and why the Office of the General Secretary (OGS) exists as it is "Uniquely the pastoral expression...we embrace the total family to be united people in the Kingdom of God." Lee expressed the privilege it has been for him to work with all of the OGS team.

Also in the past two years, Lee shared the prophetic voice of the office through Pastoral Letters in which he included national partners, Region Executive Ministers, and the board to share a perspective for a

coherent document. “God called us to be pastoral, prophetic, and apostolic.” Lee’s final ministry is the launching of the inaugural Hopevale Commemoration in December 2019 in conjunction with the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, International Ministries, the American Baptist Historical Society, Green Lake Conference Center, and the Office of the General Secretary.

Lee closed his report by thanking everyone for allowing him to live out his calling of God.

BGM 487 588 PROPERTY UPDATE

Because of the longer than anticipated time for the Purchaser to obtain the Upper Merion Township’s (UMT) site plan approval, which impacted its ability to obtain all of the other final and un-appealable approvals of the other public entitlements before closing, it will be necessary for the purchaser to exercise the extension option provision in the Purchaser Sale Agreement (PSA). The provision provides for three (3) 1-month extensions of the closing date for the consideration of \$100,000 per extension. The extension option amount is applied to the purchase price at closing if the transaction closes.

Subsequent to receiving the additional information, the Planning Commission approved the plan. The plan was presented to the UMT Board of Supervisors in August and received unanimous approval. PPG is now in the process of obtaining all of the other necessary public entitlement approvals which include, but are not limited to: water/sewerage; Department of Transportation; storm drainage; environmental; soil conversation; utilities; and other approvals.

BGM EC 488 REPORT OF THE BUDGET REVIEW OFFICER

YTD Financials/UM Funding Distribution

The year-to-date financials show a net loss of \$498,000 without the Biennial Mission Summit (BMS) and a net loss of \$663,000 including the BMS.

Net revenue compared to last year is up \$155,000. Expenses as compared to last year are higher by \$390,000. The increased expense in 2019 is primarily due to a full nine months of the IT department, which joined ABCUSA July 1, 2018. Also, Denominational Emphasis had a disbursement of \$208,000, which was offset by added revenue of \$208,000. This additional expense skewed the financials which showed a larger expense in 2019 than in 2018.

The following are the primary reasons for the net loss of \$663,485:

- Budgeted \$138,075 from the expected September 2019 Mission Center Sale Proceeds. Closing will be next year in 2020.
- Budgeted \$96,732 from reserves to fund the 2019 Budgeted deficit.
- Biennial Mission Summit deficit of \$175,000.
- Budgeted 2019 income from the Development Department is short \$130,000.
- Women in Ministry and Transitional Ministry departments have a combined loss of \$110,000.

The ABC Finance Committee recommended for approval by the board the proposed 2020 Distribution of the National Portion of United Mission.

VOTED: Motion Approved

Total United Mission (UM) is \$4,953,997. This is a decrease of \$186,144 from the prior year. This represents a reduction of 3.62%. However, ABCUSA's UM Distribution is down 16% from the prior year.

ABCUSA 2020 Budget Highlights include:

There is a need to continue drawing from the Building Proceeds Endowment at 5% to help balance the budget. Additionally \$130,000 (5%) is included in the budget expected from the 2020 proceeds from the sale of the Mission Center to cover the \$126,000 budget deficit for 2020.

The Development Department budget has a deficit of \$75,000. There is currently no department head although the budget shows full annual salaries and benefits expenses for the department head and minimum income. Expectations are that it will take some time for a new person in this role to generate enough income to cover the department expenses.

The BGM Executive Committee recommended to the Finance Committee to restructure the National Portion of United Mission. The 2020 proposed UM Distribution is in accordance with the recommendation by the Executive Committee. The UM funding allocated to ABCUSA is for American Baptist Churches Information Systems (ABCIS), Mission Resource Development, Representative Process, Orientation to American Baptist Life (OTABL), and ABCUSA General Funding. Total UM decreased by 5% in 2018 and is projected to decrease by 5% in 2019; as well as, in 2020 in accordance with the trend. UM Distribution for ABCUSA decreased by \$128,000 (6.57%) in 2018 and is projected to decrease by \$91,000 (5%) in 2019 while increasing by \$70,000 (4%) in 2020 using the recommended allocation.

Salaries in the proposed 2020 budget reflect a 1.7% increase. The data used is specific to non-profit organizations. Salaries increased by 2%, 1.9%, 2.23%, 2.17%, and 2.2%, in 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, and 2015 respectively.

Medical costs for the 2020 budget are increasing by about 9%. Medical costs in 2019 increased by 15%, increased by 13% in 2018, and increased in 2017 by 9.9%.

The proposed United Mission distribution for 2020 was reviewed by the ABCUSA Finance Committee which consists of the BGM Finance Committee, one representative from American Baptist Home Mission Societies, who was not present, and one representative from International Ministries.

The ABCUSA Finance Committee recommends that the Board of General Ministries approve the proposed UM distribution for 2020.

VOTED: Recommendation Approved

ABCUSA Budget for 2020

The Budget is based on the 2020 UM Distribution recommended by the ABCUSA Finance Committee. UM provides approximately 38% of the ABCUSA budget. A 5% draw from the Building Proceeds Quasi-endowment fund provides another 23% of the budget.

The budget includes a salary increase of 1.7% and an increase in medical costs of 9%. Also a deficit for 2020 is expected of \$126,000. The Executive Committee advised staff to prepare the budget with the

expectation of using part of the proceeds of the building sale closing to cover the 2020 deficit, rather than investing those proceeds.

On December 10, 2019 the members of the BGM Executive Committee signed unanimous consent in lieu of meeting to make a correction to the Resolution on the United Mission Allocation for 2020.

RESOLVED, the prior resolution on the United Mission allocation for 2020, adopted by the Executive Committee by unanimous consent on November 22, 2019, shall be corrected to change the phrase “adopted by the Board of General Ministries on October 26, 2019” to read “adopted by the Board of General Ministries on November 9, 2019.”

RESOLVED, any officer of ABCUSA is authorized to execute such other agreements, certificates, consents, corporate papers and other documents, make 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 actions of such officers heretofore taken consistent with the intent and purposes of the foregoing resolutions are approved, ratified and confirmed.

The BGM Finance Committee recommends that the Board of General Ministries approve a 5% draw from the building quasi-endowment for 2020.

VOTED: Recommendation Approved

The BGM Finance Committee recommends that the Board of General Ministries adopt the proposed 2020 Estimated Income and ABCUSA Budget as presented

VOTED: Recommendation Approved

The BGM Finance Committee recommends that the Board of General Ministries approve the use of up to \$126,000 from the proceeds of the sale of the 588 N. Gulph Road property to cover the 2020 deficit.

VOTED: Recommendation Approved

The costs to maintain and sell the property at 588 N. Gulph Road has rendered a cash flow dilemma making it difficult to pay current bills.

The BGM Executive Committee made a motion to withdraw from the Building Proceeds Quasi-Endowment Fund an amount not to exceed our accumulated investments in and related expenses for the 588 N. Gulph Road property.

VOTED: Motion Approved

BGM 489 CREDENTIALS & CAUCUS COMMITTEE

Manuel Jose Magana shared that there are now 5039 ABCUSA Churches, down from 5049.

Dean Parker made a motion and seconded by Zina Jacque to accept the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches (1205.1:11/19) dated June 18, 2019.

VOTED: Motion Approved

LUNCH/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The meeting resumed following lunch with announcements from Josué regarding the exit interviews for retiring board directors which will be conducted by phone at a later specified date and time. Angela Russel requested prayer for the missing and murdered Indigenous men and women of Montana for whom Lee Spitzer led a prayer. After the prayer, Josue asked to postpone the agenda item for the Employee Handbook as the BGM Executive Committee plans to distribute a final copy after the March 2020 meeting.

BGM 490 PRESIDENT'S NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS: 2020-2021

President Josué Gómez-Menéndez, following prior consultation with President-Elect Karen Podsiadly, presented to the BGM for action the 2020-2021 Presidential Nominations.

A motion was made by Dean Parker, seconded by Tasha Wilson, and it was

VOTED: To elect the President-Elect Karen Podsiadly's Nominations for the 2020-2021 biennium as listed below:

For service on the BGM Executive Committee:

Cedric Jones
Judith Christiansen
Raimundo Barreto

As Chair of the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations:

Annie Svitavsky

Presidential Appointments

President Josué Gómez-Menéndez, in consultation with President-Elect Karen Podsiadly, presented to BGM for action the 2020-2021 Presidential Appointments.

A motion was made by Tasha Wilson, seconded by Cedric Jones, and it was

Election of BGM Director to the Board of ABHMS

Kathryn Ray was recommended by the BGM Executive Committee to serve as BGM Director to the Board of ABHMS for the rest of the Biennium.

No objections, approved.

VOTED: To receive the following appointments of the President-Elect Karen Podsiadly for the 2020-2021 biennium as listed below:

For service on the ABCUSA Nominating Committee:

Kathryn Ray (clergy)
Emmett Dunn (clergy)
James Wolfe (clergy)
Stephanie Commandest (laity)
Judith Christiansen (laity)
Kurt Kaufman (laity)

For service on the BGM Finance Committee:

Mark Harvey
Cedric Jones
Kelly Legg
Noemi Nunez-Sanchez
Tom Ross

For service on the Biennial Mission Summit Planning Team:

Tasha Wilson (Vice Chair)
Bill Fredrickson
John Campbell

For service as Board Chaplain:

Zina Jacque

BGM 491 BGM EXECUTIVE SESSION (INDEPENDENCE NORTH 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 492 RECONVENING OF MEETING

Josué Gómez-Menéndez reconvened the meeting of the Board of General Ministries.

BGM 493 REPORT OF THE ABCUSA PRESIDENT

Josué gave words of appreciation and reflection on the past two years by sharing his accomplishments, celebrations, concerns, and opportunities. Past President Judy Fackenthal reminded the board that Josué is the first ABCUSA President to serve the denomination from Puerto Rico and said, "You leave us a legacy of hopefulness and perseverance...a legacy of love for your Lord." Judy presented Josué with a memory book of the biennium in which he served as president and noted that a piece of the ribbon from the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Roblee Building Dedication Service is included in the back of the book.

BGM 494 RECOGNITION OF RETIRING BGM DIRECTORS

Retiring Board Directors were recognized. Camille Brown, Judy Fackenthal, Kay Farley, Dennis Johnson, Manuel Luquin Dean Parker, Thomas Roberts, Wesley Roberts, June Totten, and Tasha Wilson were all presented with the book, *Baptist Roots: A Reader in the Theology of a Christian People* by Freeman, McClendon and DaSilva.

BGM 495 RECESS OF MEETING FOR BGM ACTION GROUPS

From 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., the BGM convened in the following Action Groups to focus its work in various areas.

BGM Finance Committee – DeKalb
Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations – Von Steuben
Becoming a Beloved Community – Devon
Communicating ABC Identity – Radnor

DINNER

At 5:30 p.m., the BGM directors, spouses, and staff gathered for dinner in Independence South. At 6:30 p.m. BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque led the board in a time of evening prayer and meditation during the vesper service along with prayers for Lee Spitzer as he begins a new journey in retirement.

Sunday, November 10, 2019. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; Plenary; Independence North

At 7:00 a.m., the BGM directors and staff enjoyed breakfast in the Forager Restaurant of the Crowne Plaza.

BGM 496 RECONVENING/WORSHIP

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

**BGM 497 SIGNING OF THE AMO COVENANT:
ABCUSA/KACHIN AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

President Josué Gómez-Menéndez welcomed Rev. Dr. Tu Lum Lamung, Executive Minister of Kachin American Baptist Association; Rev. Dr. Zau Sam Lahtaq, Associate Executive Minister; and Rev. Dr. La Seng Labya, Vice President to the morning's meeting of the Board of General Ministries.

At the recommendation of the BGM Executive Committee it was

VOTED: To approve the Kachin American Baptist Association an Associated Ministry Organization (AMO) with ABCUSA.

Subsequent to this vote, there was a formal signing of a covenant agreement.

Josue Gómez-Menéndez, Dean Parker, and Lee Spitzer signed the covenant on behalf of ABCUSA; Rev. Dr. Tu Lum Lamung, Rev. Dr. Zau Sam Lahtaq, and Rev. Dr. La Seng Labya signed the covenant on behalf of the Kachin American Baptist Association.

Dr. Lumung shared some remarks and presented a certificate of gratitude as a gift to ABCUSA. There was a time for picture taking as a means of commemoration of the occasion.

BGM 498 WORSHIP/COMMUNION AND BGM OFFERING

BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque led the board in a time of morning worship and communion. As part of the worship, an offering was collected for the 2020 Women's Conference/40th Anniversary Grant Fund.

BGM 499 PRESIDENT'S NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS: 2020-2021 (CONT.)

A motion was made by Bonnie Higgins, seconded by Noemi Nunez-Sanchez, and it was

VOTED: To elect the President-Elect Karen Podsiadly's Nominations for the 2020-2021 biennium as listed below:

For service as Chair of the World Relief Committee:

Zina Jacque

BGM 500 JEFF WOODS ELECTED AS ACTING GENERAL SECRETARY

The Board of General Ministries voted to approve the nomination of Rev. Dr. C. Jeff Woods as Acting General Secretary of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA).

Josué announced that the Executive Committee gifted Lee Spitzer with extra weeks of vacation leading up to his retirement.

BGM 501 ACTION GROUP REPORTS

BGM Finance Committee Action Group:

The committee voted to again retain Tait Weller to perform the 2019 financial audit. There was a review of the legacies and gifts. The committee met with Perkin Simpson from the American Baptist Foundation (ABF) to discuss ABCUSA's investments with ABF. David Moore from ABHMS joined by video conference regarding ABCUSA's investments in the ABHMS Common Investment Fund. Both investment management organizations have ten-year returns that are better than the benchmark specified in our investment policy. Following Paul's earlier presentation to the board in which the \$174,000 loss from this year's Biennial Mission Summit was communicated, the committee received additional information from Alan Musoke regarding the primary sources of the loss. Concern was expressed about ensuring better controls and budgeting for the 2021 Biennial Mission Summit.

Beloved Community Action Group:

Camille Brown reminded everyone to stay after the June 2020 board meeting for the June 2020 Women's Conference/40th Anniversary at Green Lake. Judith Christiansen asked the board to keep the training and skills at the forefront of what the board does and asking the board to be open to different voices and opinions as the denomination moves through transition. On behalf of the committee, Judith requested (1) that the board set aside all of the first day board meeting to train the trainer to teach and share the training with the regions. (2) Let the churches and regions know about the "Golden Rule 2020" faith based call for dignity and respect in light of the 2020 elections. Resources are available on the ABCUSA website. (3) Renew the request to have a civility moment during each meeting.

Communicating ABC Identity:

Tasha Wilson shared suggestions from the committee to communicate ABC Identity at the Biennial Mission Summit in 2021. Such ideas included better utilizing of the program book and screen time before the worship services, include talking points for the BGM to assist; a map at the registration desk that highlights the regions and stickers for attendees to add to the map of their region; quotes from American Baptists, and a roving reporter to share stories.

Tasha also asked the board to think about the stories that are going on in their churches and regions and to share them with Bridget Lipin. It could be in the form of a 30 second clip or written in an email. An opportunity to "share and proclaim the light."

Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations (CCUIR):

June Totten thanked the CCUIR members and staff. The committee reviewed the Biennial Mission Summit activities and responses; as well as, shared reports on ecumenical and interfaith events. The committee reviewed the budget and financial commitments. Lastly, the committee nominated representatives to their ecumenical and interfaith partner organizations. June finished by thanking all of the staff of ABCUSA.

BGM 502 CLOSING BENEDICTION AND ADJOURNMENT

Jeff Woods gave the closing benediction.

Submitted by,



Dr. C. Jeff Woods
Acting General Secretary

CJW/kj

Documents attached

BGM Integrated Schedule (1008:11/19)

BGM Proposed Agenda (1102:11/19)

BGM Minutes – June 2019 (1001:06/19)

BGM Executive Committee Minutes: September 2019 (1002:09/19)

BGM Executive Committee Minutes: June 2019 (1002:06/19)

Financials YTD through September 2019

2020 Budget Highlights

Reports from Directors to Other Boards: ABHMS and MMBB

Reports of ABCUSA OGS Staff and AMOs

Rhythms of the Spirit Report

Professional Ministries Report

Burma Refugee Commission Report

ABC President's Report (1201:11/19)

Report of the General Secretary

Action Groups Assignments Nov. 2019

Report of Changed Relationships (1205.1:11/19)

588 Mission Center Sale Update

Application for AMO Status (KABA)

KABA Letter of Acceptance

ABCUSA Personnel Handbook