



**BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES
VIRTUAL MEETING
JUNE 3-4, 2021
MINUTES**

Officers: Karen Podsiadly, President
Jim Wolfe, Vice President
Josué Gómez-Menéndez, Past President
Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer
Jeff Woods, Interim General Secretary

Parliamentarian: Bill Frederickson **BGM Chaplain:** Zina Jacque

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, precautions were taken to hold the June meeting of the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee via virtual platform instead of in person.

Thursday, June 3, 2021, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.:

BGM 520 CALL TO ORDER

American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) President Karen Podsiadly welcomed all of the Board of General Ministries (BGM) directors and staff and then called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Karen gave a special welcome to new directors: Laura H. Austin (Conn.), Christopher E. Hamilton (Pennsylvania and Delaware), John A. Nichols (Central Pacific Coast), Lillian Ramos (New Jersey), Damaris Santiago-Lebron (Puerto Rico), Douglas V. Scalise (Mass.), and Dwayne T. Williams (Dakotas).

BGM 521 WORSHIP

BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence. Zina led a devotion.

BGM 522 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 523 BGM OFFERING

Karen Podsiadly announced that the BGM Offering will be given to COVID relief in India. Donations will be given to One Great Hour of Sharing COVID response – India.

BGM 524 CONSENT AGENDA

Karen noted that an additional item will be added to the agenda, “Guidelines for Establishing a Commission.”

MOTION: *Kathryn Ray 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 13-14, 2020 meeting held virtually.*

AMENDED MOTION: *Kathryn Ray made a motion to accept the minutes and the agenda with edits to redact reports not posted.*

Motion approved.

BGM 525 REPORT OF THE INTERIM GENERAL SECRETARY

Interim General Secretary Jeff Woods submitted a written report highlighting 2021 goals, which include: (1) The empowerment of staff and volunteers, (2) The clarification of identity for the Office of the General Secretary, and (3) the continued strengthening of relationships among national and regional staff. For his verbal report, Woods expounded on the second goal by highlighting activities of the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary and the BGM over the past six months that exemplify important purposes and functions of a denomination. A denomination...

- not only raises up missionaries but continues to support them and nurtures relationships with related foreign countries and international communities, such as the advocacy provided through the collaborative leadership of the Burma Refugee Commission.
- plans and hosts denomination-wide events in a manner that includes major partners in the planning, makes opportunities available to the breadth of entities and partners, and aims to serve all levels and diversity of the denominational family, such as the 2021 Biennial Mission Summit.
- resources its constituency with timely and critical information gained by being invited to key forums and tables, such as in the dissemination of COVID-19 related information and programs.
- welcomes and orients newcomers to the breadth of the denomination, such as in the collaborative planning and implementation of the 2021 Orientation to American Baptist Life (OTABL) conference.
- seeks ways to continue its legacy and heritage, such as in the formation and continuing development of the Anti-Racism Task Force that is leading efforts to dismantle racism in all levels of the denomination.
- takes the responsibility to improve and maintain accurate record keeping of clergy credentialing, service, and misconduct reports; centralized mission giving accuracy and disbursement to recipients within the denomination; and member congregations’ demographic data and mission involvement, such as in the implementation of an American Baptist Churches Information System (ABCIS) in 2021.

Jeff concluded his report saying that ABCUSA was named in four lawsuits on cases that date back to 1979 involving clergy misconduct.

BGM 526 REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The nominating committee recommends the following nominations:

1. Mrs. Damaris Santiago-Lebron for the vacancy in ABC of Puerto Rico, completing the term of Liani Colon-Sanchez.
2. Dr. Lillian Ramos for the vacancy in ABC of New Jersey, completing the term of Rosa Sierra.
3. Rev. Dr. Douglas Scalise for the vacancy in ABC of Massachusetts, completing the term of Stephanie Salinas.
4. Rev. Dwayne Williams from ABC of Dakatos to serve the term 2021-2024.

MOTION: *Cedric Jones made a motion to approve the nominations to fill the vacancy and term to be completed.*

No objections, motion approved.

Additional nominations:

1. Robin Stoops has been nominated to service on the Burma Refugee Commission.
2. Karen Yee has been nominated by the American Baptist Home Missions Society Board to be their representative on the ABCUSA Finance Committee.
3. Ivan Greuter has been nominated by International Ministries to be their representative serving on the World Relief Committee.
4. Christopher Hamilton and Lillian Ramos have been appointed by the President in Consultation with the Interim General Secretary to serve as members on the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations.

MOTION: *Nancy Lewis made a motion to approve these nominations.*

No objections, motion approved.

BGM 527 REPORT OF THE BUDGET REVIEW OFFICER

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

Paul Higgins referred to the financial report prepared by Alan Musoke, highlighted in the year-to-date through March 31, 2021 report showing a surplus of \$12,000 with the Biennial. The net surplus without the Biennial is \$151,000.

The following activity is based on the financials excluding the Biennial. There was no Biennial last year and there is a Biennial this year.

Net revenue compared to last year is down \$41,000. Revenue is down mainly due to Transition Ministries.

Expenses as compared to last year are lower by \$181,000 mainly due to the reduction of Travel expenses in the first quarter. Staff costs were reduced by two net positions. Expenses related to Transition Ministries are lower proportionately as revenues.

ABCUSA received an additional Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan in 2021 in the amount of \$744,802 from the PPP shown as a liability. The total PPP loans received in 2020 and 2021 are \$1,364,761. Once forgiven this amount will be booked as income.

Total United Mission (UM) is \$1,539,252. This is an increase of \$34,576 from the prior year. This represents a reduction of 2.30%.

BGM 528 REPORT OF THE ABCUSA PRESIDENT

Karen Podsiadly shared her service as President over the past months that included:

1. Continuing to work with the Biennial Mission Summit (BMS) Planning Team and looking forward to being at the studio.
2. Traveling to Atlanta to present the Cora and John Sparrowk President's Award to Paul Albert Brinson and created video for the BMS.
3. Working with the Anti-Racism Task Force.
4. Participating in the New Director Orientation.
5. Leading a staff diversity-training program with the staff of the Office of the General Secretary.
6. Continuing work in ABCUSA identity, the intentional interim process, Inclusion in the denomination, the role of caucus funding, and mission support.
7. Karen will be speaking at First Baptist Church Brockport on July 4 and at the Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Churches of Connecticut on September 25.

BGM 529 CREDENTIALS & CAUCUS COMMITTEE

Josué Gómez-Menéndez Chair shared that there were 5003 ABCUSA churches at the start of the report, and ending with 4,970. See the *Report of Changed Relationships* for more details.

MOTION: *Judith Christiansen made a motion and seconded by Jim Wolfe to accept the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches (1205.1:06/21) dated November 14, 2020 to June 3, 2021.*

No objections, motion approved.

BGM 530 2021 BIENNIAL MISSION SUMMIT

Jeff Woods gave an update on the 2021 Biennial Mission Summit which will be held online due to the pandemic. The theme for the 2021 Biennial Mission Summit is "Imagine." Some events will be live on the stage at a location close to the Roblee Building in King of Prussia, PA and others will be pre-recorded. Following the theme of Imagine, the speakers for each night are as follows:

Thursday Evening – "Imagine Unity"

Friday Evening – "Imagine Healing" keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Winterborne LaPucelle Harrison-Jones

Saturday Evening – "Imagine Hope" keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Brianna Parker

The on-line event will also include award presentations, bible studies, and workshops. The Exhibit Hall will include a virtual showcase and the ability to schedule an appointment to interact with a person in the hall. Marie Onwubuariri shared the website for the Biennial Mission Summit and information on becoming a booster by giving \$100 or more.

BGM 531 ORIENTATION TO AMERICAN BAPTIST LIFE (OTABL)

OTABL is led by Judy Fackenthal and Zina Jacque and assisted by a team that includes three Region Executive Ministers (REMs), a representative from International Ministries and American Baptist Home Missions Society; along with, American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS) giving a presentation on the history of the ministry partner for that evening session. Zina shared that each session is 90 minutes with 49 individual participants and 38 guests. The small groups are led by the

Region Executive Ministers. Even though the Associated Ministry Organizations did not have face time, they shared documents about their organizations. Handouts and videos of the sessions are available on the ABCUSA Website.

BGM 532 WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE REPORT

Zina Jacque reported that the First Baptist Church of Palo Alto, Calif., provided a gift designated for disaster relief from the sale of their building.

BGM 533 CLOSING WORSHIP

Zina Jacque closed the afternoon meeting with a devotion.

Friday, June 4, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.:

BGM 534 WORSHIP

BGM Chaplain Zina Jacque lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence. Zina led a devotion.

BGM 535 CHANGE TO STANDING RULES

American Baptist Women's Ministries requests staff representation on the World Relief Committee. Currently staff representatives, who are non-voting members from International Ministries, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, and American Baptist Churches USA attend the World Relief Committee meeting in addition to the board members representing each of these organizations.

***MOTION:** Cedric Jones made a motion to accept the recommendation of the BGM Executive Committee to change the Standing Rules to read:*

14.7.1 Membership. There shall be a World Relief Committee consisting of eleven (11) members including:

...

(b) four (4) non-voting members, one (1) each from the staffs of ABCUSA, ABFMS, ABHMS and American Baptist Women's Ministries ("ABWM"), appointed by the General Secretary in consultation with the appropriate respective members of the National Executive Council.

No objections, motions approved.

BGM 536 GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A COMMISSION

See the attached document *Guidelines for Establishing a Commission*.

***MOTION:** Judith Christiansen made a motion and seconded by John Nichols to accept the guidelines for establishing a commission as presented.*

No objections, motions approved.

BGM 537 ACTION GROUP REPORTS

BGM Finance Committee Action Group:

Acting as the Audit Committee they received and reviewed the 2020 audited financial statements for ABCUSA.

At the May 7 meeting, Paul presented a report showing the audits, compilations, reviews, and internal financial statements received from each region that provided such reports for 2010-2019. Paul noted that

he had informed the Executive Committee in March that six regions have not supplied an audit for at least five years and four have not done so for at least ten years, despite the requirements of the Common Budget Covenant. See the report of the Finance Committee for more items and details. Paul Higgins thanked Alan Musoke and his team for the incredible work they did as the 588 Associates dissolved and all of the responsibilities after everyone moved out of the Mission Center in Valley Forge.

Becoming a Beloved Community:

The action group presented the BGM Executive Committee with a proposal for the November BGM Meeting for staff and board to get to know each other again and for new board directors to be able to meet the board as well, especially since the board has been apart for so long and has changed. The proposal is an exercise in engaging one on one, then at their tables, and then the whole board to reconnect with the gifts we bring from our regions.

Communicating ABC Identity:

Working to identify who we (American Baptists) are and what we believe as the “hands and feet of Christ,” and how we convey it to the local levels.

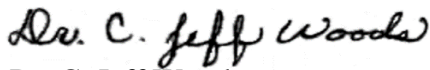
ABCUSA Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations (CCUIR):

See the report for details on the various ecumenical ministries and the involvement of CCUIR. The Luke Mowbray Ecumenical Award was presented to Rev. Adesanya virtually on May 18. The video of the presentation will be part of the CCUIR virtual booth at the 2021 Biennial Mission Summit.

BGM 538 CLOSING WORSHIP

Zina Jacque closed the meeting with a devotion.

Submitted by,



Dr. C. Jeff Woods

Interim General Secretary

CJW/kj

Documents attached

BGM Proposed Agenda (1102:6/21)

BGM Minutes – November 2020 (1001:11/20)

BGM Executive Committee Minutes: March 2021 (1002:03/21)

BGM Executive Committee Minutes: November 2020 (1002:11/20)

Financials YTD through March 2021

ABCUSA Financial Statements and Report of Independent CPAs Dec. 31, 2020 and 2019

Report from Director to ABHMS Board

Reports of ABCUSA OGS Staff and AMOs

Burma Refugee Commission Report

Professional Ministries Report

Report of the Interim General Secretary

Anti-Racism Task Force Report June 2021

Report of Changed Relationships (1205.1:06/21)

Communicating ABC Identity Action Group Report to BGM

Beloved Community Action Group Report to BGM

CCUIR Report to BGM

BGM Finance Committee Report to BGM

BGM Virtual Meeting Resource Sheet (Zoom Reference Guide)

Guidelines for Establishing a Commission

World Relief Committee Proposal from ABWM

ABWM Request for Staff Representation on WRC. Change Standing Rule

Amending the Bylaws and Standing Rule

WRC Policy Manual