

ABCUSA ACTION GROUP, COMMITTEE, COMMISSION, AND TASK FORCE GUIDELINES

Chairpersons of Committees, Commissions, and Task Forces

To ensure that BGM committees, commissions, and task forces (hereafter referred to as “entity”) carry out their stated mission and function to their fullest capacity, these guidelines are provided for members and chairpersons of these entities.

In addition to the guidelines provided for each entity, the following additional desired characteristics and duties apply to those who serve as chairpersons:

Desired Characteristics of Chairpersons:

- Commitment to the mission and ministry of ABCUSA
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Facilitation skills
- Open-mindedness and fairness
- The ability to respect confidential information
- Experience in delegating and following-up on assignments

Duties of Chairpersons:

- Understand the purpose of the entity
- Be knowledgeable of the ABCUSA bylaws and standing rules
- Create an agenda for meetings in consultation with assigned ABCUSA staff
- Suggest agenda items for fulfillment of the purpose of the entity
- Run meetings according to the agenda
- Ensure that meeting notes are taken, distributed, and filed with the ABCUSA office
- Remind persons of the need to respect all perspectives
- Encourage persons to share air or talk time
- Regarding decisions, seek consensus where possible and conduct proper voting where needed
- Foster positive relationships within the entity and with staff
- Suggest bylaw and standing rule changes where needed to increase functionality

From the ABCUSA Standing Rules

Section 11.1.5: Chairpersons

Except where otherwise provided by the Bylaws or these Standing Rules, the chairperson of each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall be appointed from the membership of the respective committee or commission by the President in consultation with the General Secretary and shall serve until the expiration of the term of the appointing President. When the chairperson is not present, the committee shall elect an acting chairperson for that meeting to serve until the chairperson arrives.

Becoming a Beloved Community Action Group

Description of the Work (Current)

ABC life has welcomed and celebrated the great diversity and gifts that its members bring to the whole. Statistically, ABC is more multi-ethnic than any other Protestant group in the US. While we have affirmed such God-given richness, we still have not attained the spirit of a “beloved community.” What does it mean to be the Body of Christ that values all of its members? How is power shared among its members? The composition of BGM is designed to reflect a “beloved community” in its members but how may we truly function in spirit?

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity (name your top 3)

- Example: Understanding and appreciation of a variety of backgrounds and cultures
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Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

- Example: Experience in strengthening the capacity of an organization
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Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

- Example: Become familiar with the definitions of diversity and inclusion
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Communicating ABC Identity Action Group

Description of the Work (Current)

Our ABC Identity can be a positive and a negative all at the same time. Unlike other Christian groups that may have a historical figure or a particular practice that defines them, ABC doesn't seem to have such clear distinctives except the strong affirmation of Baptist principles. Joined together by Baptist principles has included many groups from all walks of life in the making of ABC. Against this reality and the increasing moving away from organized religion in American life, what is "ABC Identity" today? For any group to function effectively, what is needed to communicate ABC identity that would draw us together to do mission and ministry together? This Action Group will continue the ACT on this topic with the hope of identifying findings that would influence the work of BGM such as the national ministers conference and the Orientation to AB Life

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity (name your top 3)

- Example: Experience with marketing, branding, social media, etc.
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Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

- Example: Opportunity to help shape the message of ABCUSA
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Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

- Example: Take an active interest in ABCUSA press releases and other forms of communication
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BGM Finance Committee

Description of the Work (Current)

The BGM Finance Committee is a standing committee of the Board of General Ministries. The functions of the Board of General Ministries Finance Committee shall be to:

- (a) Serve as the Audit Committee for ABCUSA, and in such capacity:
 - (i) Make recommendations of auditors; and
 - (ii) Receive Audit Reports
- (b) Review, consult with staff, and send the ABCUSA Budget proposal to the Executive Committee and the full Board with a recommendation for either approval or disapproval with respect thereto;
- (c) Maintain financial oversight of ABCUSA;
- (d) Maintain investment oversight of the ABCUSA Endowment and Reserve Funds;
- (e) Receive and monitor financial statements from Regions, with the understanding that all Regions have been asked to provide an audited financial statement, including a comparative balance sheet and comparative statements of operations, to the Board of General Ministries Finance Committee on behalf of the Board of General Ministries; provided that if audited financials are not available, the financial statements presented to the respective Region's respective governing board, that includes both a balance sheet and a statement of operations, is to be presented annually; and
- (f) Determine appropriate banking relationships within guidelines established by the Board of General Ministries.

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity (name your top 3)

- Example: Experience in financial services
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Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

- Example: Experience in developing effective stewardship of financial resources
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Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

- Example: Develop a biblical understanding of stewardship
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Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations

Description of the Work (Current)

The Committee on Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations is a standing committee of the ABCUSA. The committee acts on behalf of the denomination to engage in Baptist-Muslim dialogues and ecumenical relationships including: NCCC, BWA, WCC, and other efforts to exemplify the oneness in Christ.

Functions. The functions of the Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations shall include:

- (a) helping American Baptists achieve a wider understanding of the meaning of Christian unity;
- (b) holding conversations with other Christian bodies or other faith groups on authorization of the Board of General Ministries;
- (c) exploring what may be involved in a plan of union or federation with one or more other denominations on authorization of the Board of General Ministries and presenting any such plans to the Board of General Ministries for action;
- (d) developing plans to underwrite ABCUSA membership in various ecumenical bodies and recommending the plans for consideration by the Board of General Ministries Finance Committee; and
- (e) submitting to the Board of General Ministries in consultation with the General Secretary slates of nominees for election as members of the governing bodies of the ecumenical interfaith bodies to which ABCUSA belongs.

Membership. There shall be an American Baptist Committee on Christian Unity and Interfaith Relations having at all times at least six (6) members nominated by the President and elected by the Board of General Ministries. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be nominated by the President in consultation with the General Secretary and elected by the Board of General Ministries. Committee members shall be competent in any or all of the following areas:

- (a) theology and history of the Church (including American Baptist Churches);
- (b) the nature of ecumenical organizations of which ABCUSA is a member; and
- (c) interfaith relations.

The membership of the Committee shall include clergy, laymen, and laywomen.

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity (name your top 3)

- Example: Experience in ecumenical and interfaith activity
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Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

- Example: Experience in working with other national organizations committed to ecumenism and interfaith work
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Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

- Example: Knowledge of national ecumenical and interfaith organizations
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ABCUSA Nominating Committee

Description of the Work (Current)

Membership: ABCUSA President (chair), Immediate Past President, 3 persons appointed by REMC, the Intercaucus president and 6 reps from BGM (3 clergy and 3 laity). Members of the Committee shall be elected or appointed, in accord with the above, during the year of each Biennial Meeting of Delegates for a term of two years commencing on January 1 next following the date of their election or appointment. A vacancy in the membership of the Committee shall be filled by the Board of General Ministries for the remainder of the term vacated. When the Nominating Committee is acting to submit a nominee for the position of General Secretary, one additional member selected by the National Boards of ABCUSA shall be added to the Committee for that specific nomination process.

Functions:

- (a) as called for in Article XV, Section 1 of the Bylaws, submitting to the Biennial Meeting of Delegates a slate of nominees for the positions of President, Vice-President, and Budget Review Officer of ABCUSA;
- (b) as called for in Article X, Section 1, of the Bylaws, selecting from the list of names of persons submitted by each Region, a slate of nominees for the classes of At-Large Directors to be voted upon at the next Biennial Meeting of Delegates;
- (c) submitting to the Board of General Ministries a nominee for the position of General Secretary when a vacancy in that office occurs or a term is about to expire;
- (d) submitting to the Board of General Ministries a slate of nominees for membership on The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of American Baptist Churches;
- (e) after consultation with the respective nominating committees of each of ABFMS and ABHMS, submitting to the Board of General Ministries a nominee for election by the Board of General Ministries of a director to serve on the Board of ABFMS and a director to serve on the Board of ABHMS;
- (f) submitting to the Board of General Ministries from among the At-Large Directors a nominee for election by such Board pursuant to Bylaws Article XV, Section 1 to fill a vacancy in the office of Vice-President of ABCUSA;
- (g) submitting to the Board of General Ministries a nominee for its election to fill a vacancy in the membership of The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of American Baptist Churches, where such position is to be filled by the Board of General Ministries;
- (h) submitting to the Board of General Ministries a nominee for election as an At-Large Director to fill any vacancy referred to in Bylaws Article X, Section 1, according to the requirements of that Section;
- (i) as requested by the American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS) Constitution or Bylaws, submitting to the ABHS corporate membership a slate of nominees for election as ABC Managers of the ABHS and submitting to the ABHS Board of Managers nominees to fill vacancies among ABC;

(j) in accordance with Bylaws Article VII, Section 2, selecting from among the list of names of local church representatives submitted by each Region a local church representative from each Region to be a participant at the Mission Table; and

(k) the performance of such other functions as the Board of General Ministries, the Bylaws, or the Standing Rules may from time to time specify.

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity

- Knowledge of the history of American Baptists
- Understanding of the mission and ministry of BGM
- Knowledge of the critical leadership issues facing BGM

Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

- Opportunity to identify future ABC leaders
- Gain an understanding of skill assessment
- Learn from other wise and committed persons

Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

- Commitment to expectations of diversity and inclusion within ABCUSA
- Thoroughly review material in advance of meetings
- Able to work in a collaborative setting

Burma Refugee Commission

Description of the Work (Current)

In 2007, the American Baptist Churches formed a taskforce (now a denominational commission) to address how we might respond to both the increasing number of refugees from Burma seeking resettlement in the US and the persecution of Baptist ethnics and others by the military. This effort brought together 3 main denominational entities: The Office of the General Secretary (head of our communion and denominational spokesperson on issues related to Burma), International Ministries (our arm for global mission initiatives) and the American Baptist Home Mission Society (responsible for refugee resettlement) together with the leaders of the Baptist bodies formed by refugees from Burma in the US that were related to us. The Commission has visited the Baptist churches and affected areas in Burma, met with Aung San Suu Kyi, military leaders, and leaders of the Armed Ethnic Groups in efforts to end the persecution, provide humanitarian aid, and work toward a stable political resolution that would honor the rights of all citizens of Burma in a federal democratic government. Likewise, the commission has visited on several occasions the refugees in the Thai camps and in Malaysia and has worked with UNHCR related to both situations. It has also pursued advocacy with the President, Congress, the State Department and with the UN on matters of humanitarian relief, refugee resettlement, and issues of human rights and religious liberty. In all of this we have worked together with Baptist leaders within Burma and the diaspora community within the US.

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity

- Familiarity with the Burma Diaspora
- Understanding of the historical involvement between ABC and Burma
- Connections with persons of influence regarding advocacy work

Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

- Appreciation of missionary involvement
- Opportunity to engage in advocacy work on behalf of the people of Myanmar and the Burma Diaspora
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Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

- Openness to travel to Myanmar
- Willingness to engage members of the Burma Diaspora in your community

Emerging Theologians Commission

Description of the Work (Current)

Formed as a taskforce in 2007 and voted as a commission in 2014 to fulfill the charge given by General Secretary Roy Medley: to place theological reflection at the heart of ABC's denominational life; to establish a stronger public theological voice from American Baptist perspectives; to provide opportunities for self-identified American Baptist theologians and emerging theologians, pastor-theologians, and theological educators to network and collaborate together; and to re-establish stronger connections between the denomination and its seminaries and colleges. In addition, the Commission is deeply committed to providing opportunities to engage the multiple, rich, and diverse voices of American Baptist theologies. It seeks to identify and lift up emerging theological voices, establishing an ongoing sense of commitment to ABC among its up-and-coming theologians.

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity (name your top 3)

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Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

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Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

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Anti-Racism Task Force

Description of the Work (Current)

The task force was formed out of a “Call to Prayer” event for the work of anti-racism in the fall of 2020. The task force includes three subgroups charged with developing resources for individuals, congregations, and institutions for the work of anti-racism.

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity (name your top 3)

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Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

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Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

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Creation Justice Network

Description of the Work (Current)

The General Secretary committed on behalf of ABCUSA to:

- 1) assist in the development and support of a website for the next 15 months,
- 2) fund a booth at the biennial, which Mevorach, Redfern and Carr would staff and resource,
- 3) name Ian Mevorach as the ABC representative to the national Creation Justice Network, covering his expenses to attend and
- 4) seek funds to assist Chuck Redfern and Ian Mevorach to attend the biennial.

The ABCUSA website will carry information regarding the formation of this network, sharing goals of the network, educational resources with a study guide and inviting people and churches to interact by sharing their own stories, sermon ideas, etc.

To begin to grow the network Ian Mevorach will reach out to African American leaders in the Boston area and contacts will be made through Tom Carr with ABC-related seminars.

In October 2014 former GS Medley met in Boston with three ABC pastors—Ian Mevorach (finishing his PhD at Boston University and starting a new church in MA), Chuck Redfern (writer on creation/justice issues) and Tom Carr (who has been ABC's representative for various creation/justice issues)—who expressed interest in launching a new effort in the form of the "ABC Creation Justice Network" that will lead American Baptists on a journey into ecological consciousness and care for creation. If the network gains strength, the hope is to incorporate, but until that time it will be shepherded by ABCUSA.

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity (name your top 3)

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Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

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Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

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World Relief Committee

Description of the Work (Current)

Functions. The functions of the World Relief Committee shall include:

- (a) establishing policy, subject to the approval of BGM, with respect to the distribution of funds received from the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, including the funding of the World Relief Office subject to budgetary provisions voted by BGM;
- (b) determining the allocations to be sent to cooperative bodies such as Church World Service and the Baptist World Aid; and
- (c) granting to National Program Boards and to Region Boards the administration of funds within the policies adopted by the Committee and approved by BGM.

Members of this Committee from BGM shall be nominated by the President and elected by BGM. There shall be a World Relief Committee consisting of ten (10) members including:

- (a) seven (7) voting members to be elected by the Board of General Ministries: (1) two (2) persons nominated by the Board of Directors of ABFMS from among its membership; (2) two (2) persons nominated by the Board of Directors of ABHMS from among its membership; (3) two (2) persons nominated by the ABCUSA President from among Board of General Ministries membership, with one of those person to be appointed chair of the Committee by the ABCUSA President; and (4) one (1) person nominated from the American Baptist Women Executive Committee from among that Committee's membership.
- (b) three (3) non-voting members, one (1) each from the staffs of ABCUSA, ABFMS and ABHMS appointed by the General Secretary in consultation with the appropriate respective ABCUSA National Secretary from ABFMS and ABHMS.
- (c) The World Relief Officer shall staff the Committee.
- (d) Any vacancy shall be filled by nomination and election or appointment as aforesaid.

Responsibilities that apply to all commissions, committees, and task forces (entities):

- Know and abide by the duties of your entity
- Attend scheduled meetings and events
- Participate in discussions and decision making
- Advocate for the work of your entity
- Comply with the conflict of interest policy

Skills, experience, and perspectives that add value to this entity (name your top 3)

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Potential benefits of service on this entity (name your top 3)

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Additional expectations of involvement (name up to 3)

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{{This page should accompany every individual committee and commission page}}

From the ABCUSA Standing Rules

Rule 11.1. General Rules:

11.1.1 Procedures. Each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall fix its own rules of procedure, provided they are consistent with the Bylaws and these Standing Rules.

11.2.1 Meetings. Generally the meetings of Committees and Commissions shall be held at the time of the Board of General Ministries sessions. Additional meetings may be held at such other times as each chairperson in consultation with the General Secretary shall determine.

11.1.4 Membership:

11.1.4.1 Unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws or these Standing Rules, each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall have three or more members nominated by the President in consultation with the General Secretary and elected by the Board of General Ministries. Upon election, each committee or commission member shall serve during her or his current term as a Director.

11.1.4.2. Unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws or these Standing Rules, a vacancy in the membership of any committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board of General Ministries at any meeting on nomination of the President in consultation with the General Secretary.