



BGM Executive Committee
March 10-12, 2022

MINUTES

Meeting Site: Crowne Plaza Phoenix Airport
4300 E. Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85034

Officers: Jim Wolfe, President
Michelle Nickens, Vice President
Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer
Jeff Woods, General Secretary

Committee: Cedric Jones, PBA
Judith Christiansen, NYS
Karen Podsiadly, Past President

Chaplain: Cedric Jones, PBA

Parliamentarian: Bill Frederickson, NJ

Staff: Alan Musoke, Associate General Secretary/Treasurer/CFO
Kathy Jachowski, Administrator

Prior to the meeting, Raimundo Barreto sent his intent to remain on the Board of General Ministries, but no longer serves on the BGM Executive Committee.

Thursday, March 10, 2022, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.: Wren Four/Five

BGM EC 764 DEVOTIONS

Cedric Jones lit the Christ Candle in recognition of Christ's presence and shared a devotion, praying for the people of Ukraine.

BGM EC 765 CALL TO ORDER

ABCUSA President Jim Wolfe called the meeting to order.

BGM EC 766 CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Karen Podsiadly made a motion and seconded by Judith Christiansen to accept the agenda items dated March 10-12, 2022 and to approve the minutes of the November 4-5, 2021 meeting of the Executive Committee, held in King of Prussia, PA upon changing the wording of the minutes in section BGM EC 756 Credentials and Caucus to read, “Josué noted that the new churches in the Changed Relationship Report are more diverse, which led to a discussion on church giving and how we reach out to the new churches in the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA)...

Approved with no objections.

BGM EC 767 REPORT OF THE ABCUSA PRESIDENT

ABCUSA President, Jim Wolfe shared that in January and February he had the opportunity to meet with several committees planning future denominational events; as well as, beginning the process of searching for the next General Secretary. For more details on Jim Wolfe’s Report, please reference the Report of the ABCUSA President.

BGM EC 768 REPORT OF THE ABCUSA GENERAL SECRETARY

Jeff Woods reported on progress outlined in the “Intentional Interim Strategic Plan” and the “Role of the Office of the General Secretary” documents adopted by the Board of General Ministries (BGM) in November 2021. Jeff proceeded to share highlights of his work as General Secretary following the November BGM meeting, which are included in the document, “Report of the General Secretary.”

BGM EC 769 REPORT OF THE BUDGET REVIEW OFFICER

Paul Higgins, Budget Review Officer, deferred to Alan Musoke, Associate General Secretary for Finance/CFO/Treasurer to give the report. Alan noted that this was a healthy balance sheet and things are looking good.

The year-to-date financials show a surplus of \$551,000 with the Biennial and a net surplus without the Biennial is \$625,000. Alan noted that both years, 2020-2021, had surpluses after many years of deficits. Net revenue compared to last year is up \$573,000. Revenue is up primarily due to the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loan and the NetSuite Implementation grant. Expenses as compared to last year are higher by \$275,000 primarily due to the NetSuite implementation, NetSuite consulting fees, and legal fees from lawsuits.

ABCUSA received an additional PPP Loan in the amount of \$744,802 from the PPP Loan shown as a liability. This loan has been forgiven and will be moved to income in 2022. The PPP Loan received in 2020 in the amount of \$619,000 was forgiven and was moved to income in 2021.

With travel resuming for the Board of General Ministries (BGM) meetings and a full staff in the Office of the General Secretary, it will be difficult to meet budget without the PPP Loan in the future year budget and no United Mission giving increase to offset the expenses.

Alan mentioned that the legal fees from some of the lawsuits were paid and the insurance company will be able to return that money. Also, there will be a NetSuite buy-in feature to offset the expenses incurred from NetSuite.

Budget concerns for the future were discussed, noting that in the past we have been operating out of a different model and not the model that we want long term. The board needs to explore if there is any part of the last two years that has value to continue to operate without the budgetary impact that we had in the past. Need to look at options for possible virtual/In-person meetings.

ACTION: Schedule a 90-minute Executive Committee meeting by zoom before the June meeting to discuss future board scenarios of meeting. And then bring those ideas to the board to discuss at tables.

BGM EC 770 FUTURE BIENNIAL LOCATIONS/VENUES

Robin Stoops, on behalf of the American Baptist Churches of Nebraska, sent a letter inviting the ABCUSA Mission Summit to Omaha, NE in June of 2025. Steve Bils, on behalf of the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast, sent a letter inviting the ABCUSA Mission Summit to Sacramento, CA in June of 2027.

Suggestions for future venues included smaller convention centers and hotel conference centers while considering the cost for the attendees.

MOTION: Judith Christiansen made a motion and seconded by Paul Higgins to ask the Office of Travel and Conference Planning (OTCP) to begin looking at venue options in Omaha and Sacramento for the 2025 and 2027 Biennial Mission Summit as potential primary locations.

Approved with no objections.

BGM EC 771 COMMISSIONS AND TASK FORCES

Burma Refugee Commission

Florence Li is retiring from ABHMS and would like to continue serving on the Burma Refugee Commission as a volunteer.

MOTION: Judith Christiansen made a motion and seconded by Paul Higgins to elect Florence Li as a volunteer serving on the Burma Refugee Commission.

Approved with no objections.

Task Force/Commissions Grants

The Executive Committee reviewed the draft document “Task Force/Commissions Grants” that explains that the BGM may create task forces and commissions to report to it on matters assigned by the board. These ministries are permitted to raise funds for activities that fall beyond the BGM requests for the particular task force by applying to foundations and other funding sources for grants. This document includes a set of guidelines intended to clarify expectations regarding task force and commission grant applications and received funds.

It was noted the need for consistency with the overall guidelines when grants are applied for and recognizing that the board can say no if this is not work that is being expected under the ABC umbrella. In other words, If the board requests the task force to do something, then ABCUSA will fund the request. A recent grant request came from the Creation Justice Network.

Anti-Racism Convening Table

Marie Onwubuariri will be doing a press release giving an update on the Anti-Racism Convening Table which was the recommendation from ABC Past President Karen Podsiadly as a first step in beginning the establishment phase for an ABC Anti-Racism Commission, following a BGM vote in their November 2021 meeting approving a proposal by the 2020-2021 Anti-Racism Task Force to establish an Anti-Racism Commission. Jeff Woods extended an invitation to the National Executive Council (NEC) Members to consider participating in defining what a denomination-wide anti-racism effort can look like and to appoint a staff and/or board member to be a part of the convening table. It was recommended by NEC that the Regional Executive Ministers Council also be invited to appoint a representative. The first meeting was held on Friday, February 25 via Zoom.

Theologians Commission

The Theologians Commission submitted a report highlighting their previous accomplishments as well as future suggestions. Jeff Woods drafted a response to the Theologians Commission's request for support from ABCUSA. The responses regarding a database of ABC Theologians and grad students in theological fields, the Theologians Conference in conjunction with the ABCUSA Biennial, and synergy between the Theologians Commission and BGM, can be found in the "Response to Theologians Commission Report." Also included in the response is an invitation to identify two presenters on the topic of "Practicing the ordinances of baptism and the communion during a global pandemic" asking who would be willing to present during one of the upcoming "Everyday ABC Conversations"? Lastly, three board directors are needed to serve on the Theologians Commission.

MOTION: Jeff Woods made a motion and seconded by Cedric Jones to ask Lillian Ramos, Robert Jemerson, Michelle Nickens, and Thomas Gilmore to serve as BGM Directors on the Theologians Commission

Approved with no objections.

BGM EC 772 MINISTERS COUNCIL RELATIONSHIP

Pat Hernandez continues to assess the Ministers Council Relationship in the denomination as they look at options of becoming more formally related to the Office of the General Secretary rather than an Associated Ministries Organization (AMO).

BGM EC 773 CCUIR NOMINATIONS

In regards to voting on representatives to ecumenical bodies, the BGM Executive Committee can vote on representatives not serving on a governing board. One such example is CMEP can be voted on by the BGM Executive Committee. CCUIR can vote and make appointments. The board votes on those who serve on governing boards such as the World Relief Committee.

BGM EC 774 COVID WAIVER

A COVID Waiver was added to the registration for the Radical. Redeemed. Ready. Celebrating Ministering Women event. The Executive Committee discussed including this waiver on the

BGM registration. After discussion on the COVID Waiver, the Executive Committee discussed continuing to ask on the BGM registration about one's vaccination status for the purpose of assigning BGM roommates by vaccination status.

MOTION: Judith Christiansen made a motion and seconded by Karen Podsiadly to leave the COVID waiver in the BGM registration process through the end of 2023.

Approved with no objections.

MOTION: Paul Higgins made a motion and seconded by Cedric Jones to continue assigning roommates by vaccination status through the end of 2023.

Approved with no objections.

BGM EC 775 GENERAL SECRETARY SEARCH

The General Secretary Search Committee met in Tampa with Marcia Patton to learn about decision making by consensus. To date the committee has received 382 responses to the survey that went out to the congregations. The search committee plans to give periodic updates on the ABCUSA website. Jim will give a brief update on the search committee at the National Leadership Council (NLC) meeting in May and provide opportunity at table groups to give input.

BGM EC 776 SUGGESTED BYLAW CHANGE

Affiliated vs. Cooperating Congregations

The current wording of the ABCUSA Bylaws, Article V, Section 1. Qualifications, states:

Section 1. Qualifications. Every Baptist church in the United States (as defined in Article XVIII, Section 7) which cooperates in the work of the Denomination in accordance with the Criteria for Cooperating Churches, as defined in the Standing Rules, may become a Cooperating Church of ABCUSA ("Cooperating Church") for the purposes of these Bylaws. Upon their determination by the Board of General Ministries and the Regional Boards acting jointly, the Criteria for Cooperating Churches shall be incorporated into the Standing Rules by the Board of General Ministries.

The following wording is proposed as an addition to this section...

"Cooperating Churches are not 'affiliated' with ABCUSA in the legal sense because being affiliated implies an entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with another entity."

MOTION: Judith Christiansen made a motion and seconded by Paul Higgins to recommend to the Board of General Ministries that the following sentence be added to the paragraph in Article V, Section 1 of the ABCUSA Bylaws "Cooperating Churches are not 'affiliated' with ABCUSA in the legal sense because being affiliated implies an entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with another entity."

And The revised wording of the ABCUSA Bylaws, Article V, Section 1. Qualifications would read:

Section 1. Qualifications. Every Baptist church in the United States (as defined in Article XVIII, Section 7) which cooperates in the work of the Denomination in accordance with the Criteria for Cooperating Churches, as defined in the Standing Rules, may become a Cooperating Church of ABCUSA ("Cooperating Church") for the purposes of these Bylaws. Upon their determination by the Board of General Ministries and the Regional Boards acting jointly, the Criteria for Cooperating Churches shall be incorporated into the Standing Rules by the Board of General Ministries.

Cooperating Churches are not ‘affiliated’ with ABCUSA in the legal sense because being affiliated implies an entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with another entity

Approved with no objections.

BGM EC 777 SALARY GRADE MATRIX

Judith Christiansen reviewed the Salary Band Recommendations sheet. Recently the OGS staff was given a self-evaluation tool based on three goals and how those goals aligned with the goals of OGS. The process was a positive experience with positive feedback and gave staff an opportunity to think about how their job fits in with the work of OGS’ goals. The salary scales will need to be reviewed every four to five years to meet the needs of the office.

MOTION: Cedric Jones made a motion and seconded by Karen Podsiadly to accept the Salary Band Recommendations with changes to Band 3 to read “commensurate education” instead of college; and for Band 4 to read “commensurate education” instead of Bachelor’s Degree.

Approved with no objections.

BGM EC 778 RECESS/CREDENTIALS & CAUCUS/RECONVENE

Judith Christiansen called to order the meeting of the Credentials and Caucus Committee. The Credentials and Caucus Committee will no longer ask for budgets or reports. Also, the committee will not limit expenses only to administrative expenses. After discussion, the committee reached consensus on a proposal for new caucus funding guidelines, to be discussed with the caucuses and brought back for further review and adoption.

MOTION: Judith Christiansen made a motion and seconded by Cedric Jones to allocate the same funding for the caucuses as was budgeted in 2021 with a total budget for 2022 to be set at \$51,594

Approved with no objections.

Friday, March 11, 2022, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.: Wren Four/Five

Following a discussion on future meeting locations, the BGM Executive Committee gathered for lunch and fellowship with local clergy.

BGM EC 779 ADJOURNMENT

Judith Christiansen made a motion to adjourn and seconded by Cedric Jones.

Approved with no objections.

Submitted by,



Dr. C. Jeff Woods
General Secretary

CJW/kj

Documents attached

BGM EC Proposed Agenda (1101:03/22)

BGM EC Roster March 2022

Task Force Fundraising
Anti-Racism Convening Table
Theologians Commission Report
Response to Theologians Commission Report 3-7-22
ABCUSA Financial Report through December 2021
ABCUSA Nominating Committee Report
Caucus Allocations
Salary Band Recommendations
2023 Biennial Mission Summit Update
Welcome Letter to New Churches
Report of the ABCUSA General Secretary
2027 Mission Summit Invitation ABC CPC
2025 Mission Summit invitation ABC NE
ABCUSA President's Report
COVID Waiver
Suggested Bylaw Change affiliated vs cooperating congregations
March BGM EC Integrated Schedule
March 2022 BGM Executive Committee Roster
BGM Executive Committee Minutes: November 2021 (1002:11/21)