

Special Director Language

My understanding of the original purpose of the Special Director clause was to ensure that the national boards of the American Baptist Churches remain American Baptist. It surfaced at the time that the national boards went through a restructuring that included a decoupling of the directors of the boards. Prior to the restructuring, the directors of the ABHMS and IM were all members of the General Board (The corporate board for the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary). With the guarantee of continued ABC connection absent due to the dismantling of the General Board, another tool was put into place to ensure the ABC connection of all national boards. The special director has the authority to call for a vote of the other national boards on a bylaws vote if a national board is voting on a bylaw that would alter that board's relationship with the ABC.

The recent conversation regarding questions about the Special Director seems to involve a much broader and welcomed conversation of fostering communication, mutuality, cooperation and building the beloved community. Such a discussion would of course need individual board discussion as well as inter-board discussion. ABCUSA Bylaw changes can only be made at the Biennial with advance notice, but observers can attend board meetings without bylaw changes which may be one temporary option until any desired bylaw changes can take place.

Special Director Language in the ABCUSA Bylaws

(c) One (1) Special Director appointed as follows: The Presidents of the National Boards shall appoint by majority vote one Special Director by giving written notice of such appointment to the President or Secretary of ABCUSA at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting of the Board of General Ministries at which the appointment will become effective. The Presidents of the National Boards shall fill any vacancy arising in the position of the Special Director by majority vote by giving written notice thereof to the President or Secretary of ABCUSA.