

November 4, 2022
From: Lisa Rothenberger
To: BGM Executive Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions. Having served as the World Relief Officer since 2004, I offer the following for your consideration.

Background: At the BGM Executive Committee meeting in September, the committee had some questions regarding the World Relief Committee. Questions raised include the following:

Question: In what ways does our former General Board structure continue to influence the current structure of the World Relief Committee?

Answer: 1) It determines the composition of the World Relief Committee, both the voting and non-voting members, and 2) it determines the policy that guides the work of the WRC, including the meeting schedule, etc.

Question: How does the current World Relief Committee function? What does it do well? What are the barriers to improved functioning?

Answer: What is does well: 1) The Committee members are very engaged. They come prepared to participate fully in the meetings. The work of the Committee engages the members appropriately and empowers them to do their work. I am told the service on the World Relief Committee continues to be a highlight of the Board experience of many. My opinion of that positive feedback is that it is the nature of the work---something that engages people directly in understanding more about ABC's deep mission history and work today---that earns those accolades. 2) Having voting members and staff from IM and ABHMS who have familiarity with IM and ABHMS ongoing ministries of disaster response, development, and ministry to displaced persons is very important---they know and understand more than what is on the agenda of the World Relief Committee at any one point in time---and it informs their input and approval of projects.

Barriers include 1) the rotation of members on and off the Committee. This makes it difficult to on-board members---we are a small committee and always on-boarding at least one of 7 voting members. 2) The opportunity to serve on the World Relief Committee seems to at times fall between the cracks in terms of nominations from IM/ABHMS to the BGM. It also continues to compete with other committee opportunities, but World Relief Committee meetings happens outside of other Board meetings, 3) post-COVID-19 OGHS giving instability makes the pre-pandemic meeting schedule (traditionally June and November) feel less ideal for making funding decisions. The largest undesignated giving months for the OGHS offering are June, July and August, which means that a good "read" on undesignated giving doesn't happen until mid-September. The Committee make commitments not on money already in the bank, but on funds anticipated in faith, therefore the June meeting no longer feels like the best timing to anticipate giving in a more unpredictable environment.

Question: How do potential projects for funding come before the WRC and what is the process for decision making regarding funding?

Answer: The World Relief Committee sets an annual budget for the use of the undesignated OGHS offering receipts. That budget includes development projects or funding support for those listed as Principal Channels in WRC Policy. IM and ABHMS receive an allocation for the funding of development projects. Note: This does not mean that the projects are limited to IM and ABHMS, but rather they come through either of the two national boards. My understanding of the historical reason for this is because the missional mandate for the ministries funded by OGHS---***disaster response, development, and ministry to displaced persons***---is charged to ABHMS in the US/PR and IM outside of the US. IM and ABHMS submit written applications to the World Relief Committee. Those applications are presented to the Committee by the relevant IM/ABHMS staff person at a Committee meeting, and then after discussion a formal vote is taken by the voting members of the Committee. Note: All applications include a question/response about the population to be served by the project. From that information we know how many women, men, and children will be served. Projects tend to lean toward those that serve women and children, vs. men, as women and children are often more vulnerable in their local context.

Question: How would the proposal of adding ABWM as a principal channel change the functioning of the WRC?

Answer: I can provide a bit of history about ABWM's participation in the World Relief Committee. Prior to the restructure of the General Board, it is my understanding that ABWM Board and Staff leadership participated (possibly as observers?) in the General Board meetings while also having their own Board. The World Relief Committee included two observers from ABWM that participated in the work of the Committee on a non-voting basis. At the time of the restructure of the General Board, the Chair and I sought to acknowledge the roll of ABWM in ABC life by advocating that ABWM be given one voting member on the Committee going forward. This request was granted and reflected in the ABC Standing Rules.

Impact of adding ABWM as a principal channel: 1) It would further divide the OGHS funds amongst the principal channels. See below for the annual undesignated OGHS offering received in the past decade and the attached spreadsheet for the past four years for the use of these funds, as set by the WRC.

Similar to the other 3 ABC annual offerings (America for Christ, World Mission Offering, and the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering), the undesignated gifts to OGHS have been in a slow but consistent state of decline. At the same time, those dollars provide for less than they did 10, 15, and 20 years ago. OGHS is not a growing source of funding, so adding any additional principal channels/partner will mean less available funding for current principal channels/partners. Simply put, to add any additional partners at this time will require that funding needs to be taken away from current

partners. 2) I anticipate that adding ABWM as a principal channel would lead to other entities requesting the same to gain direct access to funding (i.e., any of the Regions, ABMen), 3) if ABWM is added as a principal channel, it should be considered that they be given 2 voting members on the Committee.

I want to be clear that I do not oppose the adding of new entities as principal channels, and to add more parties to a shrinking pot of money doesn't provide more money for ministry, it dilutes it for all. All ABC entities are looking to diversify funding—I wonder what new ways of giving could be developed to meet these ministry needs instead of relying on older methods that are in a sustained state of decline? The annual offering methodology of fundraising was put in place many decades ago at a very different time in the life of the church and institutional trust. It is also a vehicle that more closely aligns with the white churches, less so with Black, Asian and Hispanic church traditions. What giving vehicles could be created today to meet the giving traditions of a multi-cultural church? If this is not the time to make those shifts, I wonder if giving ABWM permission to have their own Annual Offering would be a better way for them to connect with the churches to fund their ministry? That would be a more “apples to apples” response, as it provides the same opportunity to fundraise that is granted to the other members of the National Executive Council (MMBB has the RMMO offering, IM has the WMO offering, ABHMS has the AFC offering, and ABWM would have their own annual offering to promote.) I would again note that I don't believe that annual offerings have growth left in their model, but it would provide some equity amongst the members of the NEC.

Undesignated OGHS Giving (2011-present)

2011	\$1,323,018
2012	\$1,246,830
2013	\$1,213,829
2014	\$1,175,937
2015	\$1,164,763
2016	\$1,118,323
2017	\$1,145,785
2018	\$1,053,078
2019	\$ 967,514
2020	\$ 783,856
2021	\$ 905,720
2022	\$ 917,400 (projection, based on actuals through September 2022. Included in this amount is a one-time \$60,000 gift from the closing of a church)