

American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM) Proposal to BGM
November 2023

In November of 2022, ABW Ministries presented a proposal to ABCUSA to become a principle channel for distribution of One Great Hour of Sharing Funds through the ABCUSA World Relief Committee. A copy of this request is included in the November 2023 BGM online documents.

As a follow up to this request, ABCUSA president Jim Wolfe and ABCUSA General Secretary Jeff Woods met with ABW Ministries Executive Director Gina Jacobs-Strain and ABW Ministries president Chris Smith to dialogue about the request.

Following this meeting, Jim Wolfe and Jeff Woods invited Gina Jacobs-Strain and Chris Smith to meet with the BGM Executive Committee in March of 2023 to discuss the World Relief Committee proposal.

During the BGMEC conversation in March of 2023, it became apparent that ABW Ministries had larger concerns regarding the future role of ABW Ministries in the denomination. After a lengthy discussion, the BGM Executive Committee decided to recommend to the BGM that ABW Ministries become a national board.

Currently, according to ABCUSA bylaws, there are three national boards and two of these national boards are also program boards. This proposal to the BGM recommends that ABWM and MMBB become national boards along with ABHMS and IM and recommends abolishing the distinction of a national program boards, recognizing that all four of these boards are engaged in national programming among the American Baptist constituency.

This proposal would necessitate changes to the ABCUSA bylaws that can only be adopted at a Biennial Mission Summit meeting. Because the ABCUSA bylaw changes require a six month?? Notice, the deadline for BGM to take action on this proposal would be the November 2024 BGM in order for the bylaw changes to be voted upon at the 2025 Biennial.

In order for the BGM have input and prepare for a vote on this decision, the BGMEC is proposing that a BGM working group be formed to discuss the relevant ideas and implications related to this decision. BGM participants will have an opportunity at the November BGM meeting to share their hopes, concerns, and questions (via table groups) regarding the proposed action of ABW Ministries becoming an ABCUSA national board. The working group will receive notes from the table groups and bring back a report to the BGM at the following BGM meeting in June of 2024.