

Special Task Force on American Baptist Women's Ministries (ABWM)

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As best as we could determine, ABWM's original request was made in 2019 and that request was for a non-voting staff seat on the World Relief Committee. That request was eventually approved at the June 2021 BGM meeting. (Extended time of approval was due to several factors)

In November 2021 ABWM raised the question of their being included as a partner to receive funding through One Great Hour of Sharing. Over the next two years numerous conversations took place. At some point ABWM asked for an additional seat on the World Relief Committee and that request was approved.

ABCUSA Standing Rule 14.7.1(a)(4) states the World Relief Committee includes one voting member nominated and elected from ABWM.

Standing Rule 14.7.1(b) states the World Relief Committee includes one non-voting member from the staff of ABWM.

In 2023 ABWM requested to be added as a third "principal channel" through which World Relief could be distributed, joining International Ministries (Foreign projects) and American Baptist Home Mission Societies (Domestic projects).

ABWM has applied for and received funding from the World Relief Committee through ABHMS. The opportunity for any Associated Ministry Organization (AMO), including ABWM, to receive funding is available through a well-established process. ABWM is the only AMO with a seat at the table where project funding decisions are made.

Round table discussions brought to light several points pro and con.

Pro:

Ability of ABW to raise more funds / More equitable, ABWM is also raising funds and at the NEC; NEC all treated the same / Empowers women to have an increased impact / More fair representation in decision making / Give them recognition of their accomplishments and goals

Con:

Potential impact on other AMO's asking for same thing or feeling alienated / Smaller slices for some somewhere / Increased administrative overhead(?) / Large bylaws changes and other changes / Is it gender confining? / Will it create controversy that is not helpful, whichever way it ends up

ABWM is represented on the World Relief Committee and the National Executive Counsel. The women are the only demographic represented solely on that criterion. ABWM is well represented in the leadership circle of ABCUSA.

ABWM did not ask to be a "national partner" or "national board", it asked to be able to direct funds from OGHS. The mechanism for ABWM to use OGHS funds is in place and appears to be working well.

ABCUSA By-laws VI F allows AMOs to fund raise – There is nothing preventing ABWM from performing fund raising activities.

There may well be legitimate reasons to make ABWM a national partner. ABWM functions different than any other AMO. If ABWM functions similarly to the other national boards, it might be reasonable to officially make them a national board.

Should the Board of General Ministries choose to move forward there are several steps in the process. Each step would require an affirmative action to warrant proceeding.

Following an affirmative vote by BGM the Standing Rules Committee would prepare by-law changes and Standing Rules changes to be taken to the 2025 Biennial for delegates to vote. The time line requiring the proposed changes be posted 90 days prior to the Biennial. Technically an affirmative vote at the biennial would make ABWM a national partner. Following that action a review of the Common Budget Covenant would need to take place as directed by the covenant in Section V E 1.