


WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE POLICY

TO: Dr. Spitzer and the Board of General Ministries

FROM: Lisa Rothenberger, World Relief Officer, on behalf of the World Relief Committee 

DATE: May 23, 2018

Thank you for your time and consideration as the World Relief Committee works to update its' policy manual. You, and or your predecessors, began the work of the review of the updated policies a few years ago. Today I write to share with you the outstanding questions and responses to the open items.

1. QUESTION TO WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE:

Section 6.7 Equalization - We were not sure what this meant. Can it be explained?

RESPONSE FROM WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE:

Equalization refers to calculations such as the one currently in place for the distribution of United Mission funds.

Proposed Change: EQUALIZATION OF RECEIPTS IS PROHIBITED. OGHS funds are to be treated as specific contributions and, therefore, cannot be used to satisfy any ABCUSA Common Budget Covenant formula.

2. QUESTION TO WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE:

Section 6.9 Funding Denominational Salaries – Insert ABC so that it reads “Funding American Baptist Churches Denominational Salaries” to be clear that for example, if a partner group wishes to add a development staff person this would not be prohibited. But funding of ABC region and program board staff persons except for the World Relief Officer is not permitted.

RESPONSE FROM WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE:

Clarification as proposed below.

Proposed Change: FUNDING OF AMERICAN BAPTIST DENOMINATIONAL SALARIES IS PROHIBITED. The proceeds of the OGHS offering will not be used for American Baptist denominational salaries, except for those of the World Relief Office.

3. QUESTION TO WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE:

Section 10.2 Please add that ABCUSA may submit proposals as well. From time to time, ABCUSA has submitted proposals. The executive committee wishes for that to remain an option.

RESPONSE FROM WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE:

In response to the request of the General Secretary, it is acknowledged that he/she plays a significant pastoral role on behalf of the entire ABCUSA in times of crisis brought about by natural or human made disaster.

In addition, there is an annual allocation of OGHS funds for "Ecumenical Commitments". Those funds are currently allocated primarily to the ministries of Church World Service (primarily it's immigration and refugee ministry and its development and humanitarian assistance ministry), and to a much lesser extent the World Council of Churches (for their refugee and migration ministry), the ACT Alliance (for its relief and development ministries) and IMA World Health (for its public health ministries). The current annual allocation for Ecumenical Commitments is \$69,000 and provides for operating support for these orgs, not funding for specific projects.

Proposed Change: Policy 6.0 and Policy 6.5 to be as follows (addition highlighted in yellow):

6.0 BASIC FUNDING GUIDELINES. The World Relief Committee will set, and as needed adjust, the annual funding budget for undesignated OGHS funds. The budget will consider the inclusion of funding for ministries and channels outlined below.

6.5 PRINCIPLE CHANNELS. The principle channels for the programmatic work of "supporting, enabling and encouraging emergency relief, refugee work, and development assistance," are:

- the Board of International Ministries (IM);
- the Board of National Ministries (d.b.a. as "American Baptist Home Mission Societies"(ABHMS));
- the ABC/USA Regions;
- Baptist World Aid (BWAid);
- Church World Service (CWS); and
- the World Council of Churches (WCC).

In addition, the General Secretary of ABCUSA is a principal channel for pastoral support in response to times of crisis brought about by natural of human made disasters.

In using the ecumenical channels (BWAid, CWS and the WCC), while the World Relief Committee is committed to working with these ecumenical partners, it does so only in accordance with the philosophy and practice of mission of IM, ABHMS or ABCUSA. If, for

any given project, there are competing philosophies or practices of mission, then the philosophy and practice of mission that takes precedence is that of either IM, the ABHMS or ABCUSA, whichever is responsible for the geographical location or area where the project will be implemented.

Proposed Change: That the General Secretary makes the funding decisions related to the allocation for Ecumenical Commitments. These decisions are made on an annually.

4. QUESTION TO WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE:

Section 12.1 Suggest changing heading to Unused Funds. There was some confusion here by the executive committee. It looked within these policies for a statement as to how regions might retain funds and found none. Is there such a practice now? Also with the changes in sections 11.1 and 11.2, neither ABHMS nor IM would retain funds. So it is suggested to change the rest of paragraph to read, "Any Regional Office, ABHMS, IM or ABCUSA that receive funds given for a designated purpose shall furnish the World Relief Committee with a financial report on the disbursement of those funds." [The rest of that section remains the same]. The committee suggests you consider establishing a date certain for the return of unused funds with the option of the recipient agency making a case for retaining on a year-by-year basis after that deadline. Also, the observation was made that the ABC agencies are required to report but most often they are passing through the funds to other partners and agencies. Is there no requirement for these organizations to report their use of funds with unused funds being returned by them and that in turn being reported to the WRC by the ABC recipient agency?

Is it understood that these accountability requirements apply not just to development projects but to relief and refugee-related projects as well?

We would like to encourage the WRO and the committee to consider establishing a common reporting form based on best practices in faith-based relief and development ministries for projects funded by the WRC.

RESPONSE FROM WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE:

Response: Yes, funds are currently and routinely retained by Regions, IM and ABHMS. This has been allowed in practice for over 20 years. (Note: The World Relief Office maintains records on OGHS back to 1995. Those reports show that funds were being retained at that time.) The rationale is that this enables those closest to meeting an emergency need to have access to the funds given to them directly for the need. (i.e. a Region can only retain funds that are given by churches in their Region. In the case of Hurricane Sandy, ABCNJ was able to retain funds given by churches in NJ designated as OGHS-Hurricane Sandy.)

PROPOSED CHANGE: Policy 12.1 "Funds Retained by Others" to be amended as follows:

National Boards and Regions are allowed to retain designated OGHS funds and must report to the World Relief Committee what funds were expended and for what purposes. In addition, funds can be retained for up to 5 years. After that, the receiving entity must either return unused funds to the Office of the General Secretary's Treasurer's Office for the World Relief Committee to repurpose or provide a written request to the World Relief Committee to retain funds for additional, recurring two-year cycles. The request will stipulate how the retaining agency intends to use funds, honoring the original purpose for the funds.