

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

**BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRIES
MINUTES: November 8-10, 2012**

**Crowne Plaza
260 Mall Boulevard
King of Prussia, PA 19406**



**Ruth Clark, President
Donald Ng, Vice President
Jim Ratliff, Budget Review Officer
Frank Christine, Jr., Past President**

“American Baptists Serving as the Hands and Feet of Christ”

Scripture Focus: *“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.”*
Colossians 3:12-16

Those present: A roster of members of the Board of General Ministries is attached to the minutes.
Members not able to attend this meeting: Frank Christine, Jr., Danny Jack, Dennis Johnson, Mercy Johnson, Amaury Tañón -Santos, James Thomason

Thursday, November 8, 2012: 2:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., Independence North

BGM 51 BGM WORSHIP

BGM Chaplain Rev. Jeffery Savage led in a responsive call to worship and lit the Christ candle as a symbol of Christ’s presence. Jeff and President Ruth Clark read Colossians 3:12-17, as the board reflected in

silence on the following questions pertaining to the scripture reference: What? (What word or phrase strikes me most in the text at this moment?), So what? (What is going on “here and now” that is influencing my hearing?), and Now What? (What response is God the Spirit inviting?) Following a time of group sharing, the board read together, “Blessing: For A Leader.”

BGM 52 CALL TO ORDER

ABC president Ruth Clark called the meeting to order. She made several announcements and shared regrets from those not able to attend. Ruth expressed appreciation to June Totten for serving as parliamentarian for this meeting. She thanked Andy Arndt, ABC of Indiana and Kentucky, and Charity Matic, ABC of Los Angeles, for serving as Tellers. She also expressed thanks to Nancy O’Neill for sharing her gift of music with BGM during worship and during the plenary sessions.

BGM 53 CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Dianne Steelman, seconded by Mo Khan and it was by consensus

VOTED: To approve the November 8-10, 2012 Proposed Agenda, as modified (to include a proposed action on a personnel policy), and to approve the June 15-17, 2012 minutes of the Board of General Ministries (held in Green Lake, WI).

BGM 54 REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Election of At-Large Directors of the Board of General Ministries

The Board of General Ministries is composed of At-Large Directors, Special Directors and Ex Officio Directors. There are 33 At-Large Directors, one from each ABCUSA Region, elected by the Biennial Delegates. Any vacancy for an At-large Director “may be filled by a majority vote of the Board of General Ministries on nomination of the ABCUSA Nominating Committee.”

Upon motion and second, it was

VOTED: To elect the following At-Large Director as nominated to the Board of General Ministries: Rev. James Wolfe, pastor of First Baptist Church of Pontiac, IL (ABC of the Great Rivers Region), class of 2016

Presentation of Proposed Slate of ABC Officers for New Biennium

President Clark reported that due to the Nominating Committee not yet having had a chance to be in contact with those who were nominated as candidates for ABC Officers for the new biennium, but not selected, the announcement of the slate of ABC Officers for the 2014-2015 term will be delayed.

Appointment of the Chair of the Credentials and Caucus Committee

Standing Rule 11.1.5: Except where otherwise provided by the Bylaws or these Standing Rules, the chairperson of each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall be appointed from the membership of the respective committee or commission by the President in consultation with the General Secretary and shall serve until the expiration of the term of the appointing President.

President Clark announced her appointment of Dr. Wesley Roberts as chair of the Credentials and Caucus Committee.

BGM 55 REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

President Ruth Clark shared a synopsis of her work on behalf of ABC since the June 2012 meeting of the Board of General Ministries. She noted that one of the privileges in her role as ABC president is to serve on the General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, which met this past July in Santiago, Chili. Through seminars, plenary sessions and affinity group work, one quickly sees the breadth of Baptist work carried out in the world. One of the great joys of the General Council meetings was witnessing Rev. Rothang Chhange's installation as new head of Baptist World Aid.

Following the BWA meetings, Ruth spoke of her travel with others to Concepcion and her visit, hosted by IM missionaries Dwight and Barbara Bolick and two local pastors (Revs. Duran, father and son), to two fishing villages, Cerro Verde and Tubul, which experienced extensive damage in the 2010 earthquake and Tsunami. They expressed gratitude for the aid they received from the American Baptist family.

Ruth also reported on her representation of ABC at: ABC of the Central Region's board meeting in early September; the 100th anniversary celebration of a Kansas City congregation which has not been participating significantly in ABC life for the past several years; meetings, along with General Secretary Roy Medley and ABC Vice President Don Ng, with leadership of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), with the president and deans from Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), with the president of Mercer University and with several local pastors of the Atlanta area; the Annual Gathering of the ABC of the Central Region; First Baptist Church of Norfolk, NE as part of their month of mission emphasis; and the Mission America Coalition (U.S. Lausanne committee meeting), which focused on church planting.

Ruth has been asked to serve on a task force for the National Association of Evangelicals to draft a Code of Ethics for Churches and has recently been invited to serve on the BWA Freedom and Justice Commission on Peace for the remainder of this quinquennium. She met with Keith Herron, moderator of CBF and pastor of Holmeswood Baptist Church in Kansas City, MO, about ways in which ABC and CBF might continue to work together in mission and ministry. Ruth will attend the November 30-December 2, 2012 Baptist-Muslim National Dialogue (hosted by Andover Newton Theological School) and on December 9-18, 2012 she will travel as part of an ABC-COB delegation to the Middle East.

BGM 56 REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

General Secretary Roy Medley expressed appreciation to BGM for the many notes of support he and his wife Pat received during the time of his mother's illness and following her passing. He reported that Johnny Pierce, editor of *Baptists Today* and a life-long friend and neighbor of the Medley family, had written a wonderful tribute to his mother. Roy also expressed appreciation to staff for their efforts in preparing for this meeting in the wake of Hurricane Sandy and the loss of power for many, including the closure of the Mission Center for several days.

Roy described current ABC life as "energizing" as we work together to rebuild and reknit the denomination together. There is empowerment of the Spirit to do ministry together, a kairos moment. He emphasized the need for BGM to always lead with a big-picture, overarching emphasis for this denomination. *Transformed by the Spirit* is a real gift to the denomination, and ABC needs to continue sharing reports of renewal in our lives together. He also called upon BGM and ABCUSA staff to continue to examine services we offer to others, emphasizing that we need to be intentional about customer feedback (asking the questions: How are

we serving? How do we evaluate our services?) and sensitive to price points (thinking like small business owner).

Roy reported on some of the ways we have been sowing seeds in new areas: Bringing theologians and theological educators together through means of a pre-Mission Summit/Biennial event (the first conference was held prior to the 2011 Biennial meeting), working in cooperation with the Green Lake Conference Center and with the leadership of Brad Berglund and Jeff Savage, to organize a conference on contemplative life; continuing ecumenical and interfaith relations (planning a 2nd National Baptist-Muslim dialogue to be held at Andover Newton Theological School on Nov. 30-Dec. 2 with Suzan Johnson-Cook, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, and Rashad Hussain, Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, as main speakers; hosting Baptist-Muslim regional dialogues, with assistance of a Mission Initiative Fund grant; holding a meeting with the Islamic Society of North America in Washington DC related to violence in Nigeria; joining with Church of the Brethren leaders to organize a December 2012 ABC-COB trip to Palestine and Israel for further education and understanding of the Israel/Palestine conflict; planning a trip with several American Baptist Women's Ministries leaders to Lebanon and the Republic of Georgia in January 2013; working closely with the NCC in their restructuring efforts and in co-sponsoring a conference on statelessness in late February 2013, and this will be reported at the June meeting of BGM.

Roy also reported that on October 23, 2012 delegates to the 2012 Annual Gathering of the ABC of Oregon approved a proposal to change the name of their region to the American Baptist Churches of the Central Pacific Coast (ABCCPC). The new name is more reflective of the region, which has welcomed 24 Northern California congregations within the past several years.

More information about the 2013 Mission Summit/Biennial will be coming, both at this meeting and in the months to come. Further conversations will also be forthcoming related to the forming of a stronger relationship with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, as well as other Baptist denominations. Roy recounted his continued excitement about work and ministry being carried forth in ABC churches, in regions and in the denomination as a whole.

BGM 57 TEAM BUILDING—NEWS FROM CONGREGATIONS

Rev. Jeff Savage led the board in a time of sharing related to exciting ministry opportunities which are taking place in board directors' churches.

During this time, the Board also viewed a video account of the medical mission trip of First Chinese Baptist Church of Fresno, CA (Rev. Danny Jack's church) to establish an eye clinic in Thailand. It was noted that the church's video has been seen all over the world, both through a link on the church's website, www.fcfcfresno.org, and through YouTube (Thailand Medical Mission 2012). The church is receiving queries from Indonesia, Thailand, Italy, Malaysia, China, Japan and the United States related to how others might also organize a similar mission team.

BGM 58 BREAK-OUT SESSIONS: BGM RESPONSE GROUPS

At 4:00 p.m., President Ruth Clark recessed the full meeting of the Board of General Ministries. Immediately following, BGM met in Response Groups to focus its work in various areas.

(Members of Response Groups noted below include full membership; not all were able to be present for this meeting.)

- **Christian Unity & Interfaith Relations**

- June Totten, Ruth Clark, Ernest Jones, Mo Khan, Jonathan Malone, (Hopeton Scott)*
- **Congregational Renewal**
Don Ng, Jeff Woods, John Duckworth, Elisai Echevarria, Kay Farley, Bill Fredrickson, Nancy O’Neill, Dean Parker, Koreen Villers
 - **Finance**
Jim Ratliff, Alan Musoke, Paul Higgins, Beryl Hornberger, Charity Matic, Wesley Roberts
 - **Mission Resource Development**
Frank Christine Jr., Leo Thorne, Robin Crouch, Dennis Johnson, Vivian Martindale, Alan Rudnick, Elmore Warren
 - **Missional Response**
Duh Kam, Roy Medley, Perla Belo, Shirley Fair, Danny Jack, Ray Jepson, Jim Thomason, Tasha Wilson
 - **Professional Church Leadership**
Jeff Savage, Pat Hernandez, Andy Arndt, Julia Bebeau, Camille Brown, Felipe Candelaria, Mercy Johnson, Dianne Steelman, Wesley Sun, Amaury Tañón-Santos

Following Response Group work and a short break, dinner was served for BGM directors and staff at 6:00 p.m. in Independence South of the Crowne Plaza.

BGM 59 CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS

President Ruth Clark reconvened the meeting of BGM at 7:30 p.m. in Independence South of the Crowne Plaza. The Board shared in a time of celebrations & concerns.

BGM 60 BOARD DEVELOPMENT

The document, “Non-Profit Boards: Taking Governance Seriously”, by Dr. Reg Mills was posted on the BGM document page of ABCUSA’s website, for review prior to this meeting. Dr. Mills presented the paper, which he had prepared originally for the February 2012 MMBB Colloquium, with the goal of “priming the pump for thinking about governance responsibilities” and providing a means of self-assessment, encouraging directors to think of ways to “flesh out” commitment. Directors met in table group discussion to address questions posed in the document, followed by a time of sharing together with the full board.

Following this discussion President Clark recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries until Friday, November 9, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

Friday, November 9, 2012: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.; Independence North

BGM 61 RECONVENE/PRAYER & DEVOTION

Vice President Don Ng called the meeting of the Board of General Ministries to order at 9:00 a.m. Rev. Jeff Savage lit the Christ Candle, inviting directors to speak out words of gratefulness for God’s redemption and what that means to us, as the redeemed. The Board worshipped together in song.

BGM 62 REPORT OF THE BUDGET REVIEW OFFICER

ABCUSA 2013 Budget

Finance Committee Chair Jim Ratliff reported the ABCUSA 2013 Budget Highlights. UM is projected to decrease by 6.54% in 2013. Total 2013 UM is budgeted at \$9,500,000. Forming a balanced budget for 2013 was extremely challenging due to UM projections dropping below \$10 million in 2013 and going forward. The ABCUSA Finance Committee, which met by phone on November 7, 2012, expressed grave concern upon review of the 2013 adopted estimated income as it relates to distribution of UM funds. Using the current distribution process, the Committee predicts that by 2016 no money will be left to distribute to National Boards. There was agreement that action would need to be taken to thwart this.

The 2013 budget includes \$541,593 of income from the Building Proceeds Endowment, a drawdown of 4% for operations. The salary figure in the 2013 budget reflects a 2.2% increase in the salary pool, except for the General Secretary's salary. The General Secretary volunteered to forgo an increase in order to help balance the budget. Medical costs are budgeted with a 10% increase over 2012 costs and funding by ABCUSA for the Mission Summit increased to \$71,000 from \$50,000 in 2012. The Rep Process Budget includes money for two BGM meetings and half of the cost of the 2013 Mission Table meeting. Since the Mission Table is funded over a two-year period, the other half (2012) of the Mission Table meeting cost will be funded by an approved grant from the Mission Initiative Fund.

Following Jim's review of the budget highlights, there was a time for directors to ask questions. During this time of discussion, it was clarified that:

- 1) The rental income from Palmer Theological Seminary, \$20,000/mo., is payment to 588 Associates LLC, the partnership formed by ABC organizations to manage the Mission Center building. The rent ABC organizations pay is based on square footage and assists in underwriting the cost of building maintenance. A new chiller recently had to be purchased, at the cost of \$550,000, and due to Palmer's occupying space at the Mission Center, a new building access system was installed because of the incurred number of access cards needed.
- 2) It was once anticipated that a decision would be made by August 2012 as to where the Mission Center would be relocated. However, due to the economic environment, those plans remain on hold. In October, the Treasurers Council and NEC agreed to do a market analysis and based on these findings, determine how to move forward. An Advisory Council has been formed, with representatives from ABCUSA, ABHMS, IM and MMBB participating.

Following discussion, and upon motion by Jim Ratliff, on behalf of the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee, it was

VOTED: To approve the ABCUSA Budget for 2013.

Upon motion by Jim Ratliff, on behalf of the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee, it was

VOTED: To approve the ABCUSA Representative Process Budget for 2013.

Upon motion by Jim Ratliff, on behalf of the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee, it was

VOTED: To approve the ABCUSA Mission Resource Development Budget for 2013.

YTD Financials through September 30, 2012

Overall the year-to-date financials show a net deficit of \$118,617 primarily due to the deficits realized in the following areas: Denominational Emphasis, Mission Summit/Biennial and Women in Ministry.

The revenue for Denominational Emphasis is 32% lower than budget, however there is a reserve available of \$149,000 to offset losses incurred in 2012. Jim noted that this report is YTD through September 2012; in October 2012, the \$50,000 additional funds for *Transformed by the Spirit* will be received from MMBB and with the \$100,000 from reserves, as voted by BGM at its June 2012 meeting, we will realize a surplus of funds. Revenue for Women in Ministry is 38% lower than budget and expenses are higher due to salary and travel expenses. The deficit for the Mission Summit/Biennial will be eliminated at year end. The expenses represented in that account are for tracking purposes only and will not affect the profit and loss until 2013. Total revenue YTD compared to September 2011 is up approximately \$161,000. Expenses continue to be managed well.

BGM 63 REPORT OF ABFMS

At its January 2012 meeting the Board of General Ministries, in accordance with Standing Rule 14.4, confirmed Mercy Johnson as BGM Director to the Board of International Ministries. Because Mercy was not able to be at this meeting, her written report was transmitted to BGM directors for review prior to the meeting and is attached to the official set of minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

BGM 64 BREAK-OUT SESSIONS: RESPONSE GROUPS

Each of the six Response Groups met to continue their work from 10:30 a.m. until noon. Following this time the Board of General Ministries enjoyed a buffet lunch together at Stirlings.

BGM 65 REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President Ruth Clark convened the Board of General Ministries following lunch, at 2:00 p.m. She shared the following report of the BGM Executive Committee meeting, which was held on November 8:

Leadership Pool

The Executive Committee is requesting that each BGM director complete a Leadership Pool application and return the form to Marilyn Tyson (Marilyn.tyson@abc-usa.org) so their names can be added to the Leadership Pool.

Proposed Human Resource Non-Exempt Sick Leave Policy

The Executive Committee voted at its meeting to recommend to BGM the adoption of a revised sick leave policy for non-exempt staff. It was noted that, if this policy is adopted, there are two long-time employees who will be exempted from this change due to their years of longevity with ABCUSA.

Following discussion, and at the recommendation of the Executive Committee, it was by consensus

AGREED: To adopt the following Revised Sick Leave Policy for Non-Exempt Staff:

PAID SICK LEAVE (402)

Paid sick leave is given as an “insurance policy” to protect staff from loss of income due to illness. Sick time is to be used only when you are ill or to provide for paid coverage under the Family and Medical Leave policy. It is in

your best interest to accumulate sick time to prevent loss of income during times of illness.

Each regular employee will earn 7.15 hours (1 day) sick time eligibility for each 162.5 hours (21.6 days) for which he or she is paid. Sick time will be paid only after eligibility for it has been earned. Sick time may be taken in ¼ hour increments on time sheet reports.

While a Non-Exempt employee is on a qualified FMLA leave, you will be paid based on the number of sick days accumulated. Qualified FMLA leave will be provided up to a maximum of 12 weeks and therefore, sick time will only be accumulated up to a maximum of 450 hours to prevent loss of income during your time of illness under a qualified FMLA leave. Upon retirement, resignation or termination, your accrued sick-time will not be compensated.

Vick and Pathfinder Camp and Conference Ministries

ABC of New York State is in the process of moving their region camps into a separate, but related, corporation. The region has requested that this corporation come under ABCUSA's 501(c)3 umbrella until it receives its own non-profit status. The corporation has its own director and board of directors, separate from ABC of New York State's board, and sets its own policies. Legal Counsel David Knipel was advised by Morgan Lewis to consider fiscal sponsorship, meaning that ABCUSA would act as a sponsoring organization for a limited period of time by taking as a project the funding of this camp. The only funds used would be funds raised through the camp itself. This would enable the camp as our agent to raise funds. The terms of this fiscal agreement would require Vick and Pathfinder Camp and Conference Ministries to be in the process of obtaining their own exemption and such an agreement should be expected to last for one, but not more than two years.

Following a time of discussion, and at the recommendation of the Executive Committee, it was by consensus

AGREED: To approve a fiscal sponsorship agreement between ABCUSA and Vick and Pathfinder Camp and Conference Ministries, the new corporation for camping that has been established by ABC of New York State.

588 Associates Representation

At its meeting on November 8, the Executive Committee voted, "To approve at the request of 588 Associates, the following two members of BGM to serve on the 588 Associates Real Estate Advisory Council: Ruth Clark and Jim Ratliff."

Following discussion, a motion was made by Koreen Villers, seconded, and it was agreed by consensus to revise the BGM Executive Committee's vote to read:

VOTED: To approve, at the request of 588 Associates, the following two members of BGM to serve on the 588 Associates Real Estate Advisory Council: The ABC President and Budget Review Officer.

Development Officer

At its meeting in March 2012, the Executive Committee agreed that a search for an ABCUSA development officer would begin as of January 2013. Leo Thorne, Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development (MRD), provided an update, reporting that ABCUSA is working with a consultant to develop a “boiler-plate” job description, which MRD and Human Resources will adapt to our specific organization. The plan is to begin the search in the New Year and to have the person in place by the Mission Summit/Biennial in June. The development officer will be a full-time staff position, reporting directly to the General Secretary. Final figures for funding this position are currently being determined.

Following a time of discussion, a motion was made, seconded and it was by consensus

AGREED: To move forward with the job search for an ABCUSA Director of Development.

BGM Offering

The Executive Committee voted to designate the BGM Offering to be collected on November 9, 2012 for One Great Hour of Sharing, Hurricane Sandy relief efforts. (\$702.00 was received.)

BGM 66 UPDATES FROM THE INTERCAUCUS

Kenneth Kho, vice president of the Intercaucus, provided a thorough report of the work and ministry of the six American Baptist Caucuses—Asian, Black, Haitian, Hispanic, American Indian, and Portuguese-speaking.

Reports from each caucus were transmitted prior to the meeting or distributed as handouts at the meeting. All Caucus reports are attached to the official copy of the minutes filed in the General Secretary’s office.

BGM 67 REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS AND CAUCUS COMMITTEE

The Board of General Ministries received a report from the BGM Executive Committee, which convened as the Credentials and Caucus Committee at its meeting on November 8, 2012.

Report of Change of Relationships

Wesley Roberts, chair of the Credentials and Caucus Committee, presented the report of changed relationships. At the recommendation of the Credentials and Caucus Committee, it was

VOTED: To recognize the changed relationships of local churches as recorded in the Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches dated June 6, 2012 to November 5, 2012.

President Clark expressed appreciation to Marilyn Tyson, ABCUSA staff, for her diligent work in facilitating these reports.

Request from Women’s Caucus

At its June 15, 2012 meeting, the Credentials and Caucus Committee voted to provide the Advisory Committee of the Women’s Caucus with additional time to formulate their proposal for requested status as an ABC caucus by meeting with the Executive Committee on November 8, 2012.

Wesley Roberts reported that BGM director Julia Bebeau, who serves on the Advisory Committee of the Women's Caucus, joined the Credentials & Caucus Committee to share an update related to their request for Caucus status. She explained that the nature of the new ABC structure led the Women's Caucus to anticipate the need for their request. While in Puerto Rico, the Women's Caucus steering committee was formed. This group worked on bylaws in the winter of 2011 and application was made in January 2012 for consideration as a denominational Women's Caucus, one that would be broader in scope than the Women's Caucus of the General Board. The current goal of the transitional steering committee is to have a broader gathering of women in June 2013 to hear other voices and to further determine what this caucus might look like.

BGM 68 *TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT*

The Board of General Ministries viewed the new *Transformed by the Spirit* video. Following this viewing, General Secretary Roy Medley provided an update on the initiative. 26 of 33 regions are currently participating and several other regions have begun similar processes. During Phase I, discovery teams were formed and coaches were identified and trained. The Journey Team began working in collaboration with the NEC and The Mission Network consultants Alan Roxburgh and Craig Van Gelder to keep this process grounded in congregational life by asking the questions: How are we doing? How do we need to tweak the process? Phase II has involved the development of an implementation plan with the goal of institutionalizing what we have learned.

The first major *Transformed by the Spirit* gathering, held May 15-16, 2012 in Chicago, involved the reporting of adaptive challenges which had been named by the Adaptive Challenge Teams, and the transition to the formation of Action Learning Teams. On March 12-13, 2013 the American Baptist family will once again gather to hear reports of Action Learning Teams as they address their specific challenges. Sixteen distinct ministry challenges were identified by participating partner organizations. These challenges were confirmed by a survey of clergy conducted by the Ministers Council in the summer of 2012, which secured input and feedback from congregations across the denomination.

It is hoped that following the Mission Summit/Biennial, congregations will be linking with other congregations to work together to address challenges. And, in November 2013, ABC will transition from the Mission Summit to the Mission Table (a gathering of mission partners within the denomination which will address how to move forward with issues brought up at the Mission Summit). Jeff Woods, Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries, is working with staff to facilitate the Mission Table.

Fund raising continues. Roy expressed appreciation for the work of David Gnirk to help identify and contact donors. Roy recently engaged in traveling with David to meet with donors in St. Louis, in several locations in Arizona and in the Dakotas. He also shared appreciation for staff who continue to manage donor information/correspondence and for Rev. Alan Rudnick, pastor of First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa, NY, and a director of the Board of General Ministries, who has maintained contact with a possible future donor.

During this time, Alan shared his own personal testimony of how *Transformed by the Spirit* has empowered his congregation to reach out through ministry to its local community, to ask the hard questions. He emphasized that *Transformed by the Spirit* takes a church, old or new, and grows it as God wants it to grow.

Each director received a copy of the *Transformed by the Spirit* DVD to share with their pastor/congregation/region to aid them to better share the message of what is happening with this initiative. Also, each director received an envelope to facilitate their own personal financial contribution as a tangible expression to help the denomination grow churches.

BGM 69 REPORT OF MMBB

At its June 2012 meeting the Board of General Ministries, in accordance with Standing Rule 14.4, confirmed Bill Frederickson as BGM Director to the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board. Bill shared an oral report of the work of MMBB's Board of Director meetings. George Tooze, although he faces serious health issues, has had a somewhat better prognosis and has continued to lead in his role as president. On September 21, 2012, Executive Director Sumner Grant announced his retirement plans. He will continue to serve until a successor is in place; it is anticipated that a successor will be named in late January or early February 2013. Bill's full written report is attached to the official set of minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

BGM 70 PRAYER

BGM shared in a time of prayer for Dan Buttry and his family who received word, while Dan was on his way to Thailand, of his 19-year-old nephew's death in Afghanistan, and for two American Baptist IM missionaries who are home from the mission field due to cancer-related issues: Miriam Noyes, who has been serving in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mercedes Barnes, who has been serving in Mexico.

At 5:00 p.m., President Clark recessed the meeting of the Board of General Ministries and BGM shared dinner together in Independence South of the Crowne Plaza.

BGM 71 MISSION SUMMIT/BIENNIAL UPDATE

Following dinner, at 7:00 p.m., Rev. Dr. Reg Mills, Mission Summit/BPT Chair, shared appreciation for the other members of the planning team for the upcoming family gathering on June 21-23, 2013 in Overland Park, KS.

Reg reported that God's faithfulness will be celebrated by observing several major anniversaries: the 200th anniversary of Adoniram and Ann Judson's arrival in Burma to share the Good News of Christ; the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation; the 375th anniversary of the First Baptist Church in America, and the 90th anniversary of ABMen. The Mission Summit/Biennial will include daily themes—Transformed for Justice (with featured speaker Michelle Alexander), Transformed for Mission (with Burmese guests, including two 200-person choirs) and Transformed for Today (featured speaker Rev. Matt Sturtevant). There will also be business sessions and reports.

Reg presented the new registration policy for this Mission Summit/Biennial, a policy designed for the primary purpose of inviting churches to share the cost of the event with their own congregation and thus to help eliminate one of the factors (cost) that often has a tendency to impede attendance. Once a church has registered, an unlimited number of members from that church may register to attend at a much lower rate. (Churches with less than 100 in membership would pay \$200; 101-200 membership would pay \$350; 201-500 membership would pay \$500; churches with membership over 500 would pay \$650.) This new funding structure will not affect the number of delegates each church is eligible to send. Individuals from non-registering churches are still eligible to register for the full registration fee of \$150 for the entire event or \$50 for a single day.

Following Reg's report, President Clark shared praise for the group of young adults who worked diligently to recommend many of the ideas that have been put in place for the new registration process. During this

time, she also encouraged BGM directors to consider volunteering to assist the local arrangement committee with its work during the Mission Summit/Biennial.

This session ended with directors previewing the Mission Summit/Biennial promotional video.

BGM 72 BGM OFFERING AND COMMITMENT

In September 2012, President Clark sent a letter to the Board of General Ministries, asking each director to consider making a commitment to undergird the financial needs of American Baptist Churches USA. A commitment card was included with the letter, and directors were asked to bring their commitment card to this meeting to present as an offering to the Lord and as a tangible sign of support. Ruth encouraged 100% support among board directors and also asked directors to commit to assist their own congregations to better understand the ministries in which ABCUSA is involved. The Board of General Ministries shared in table group discussions about God's blessings, followed by a time of prayer.

The total committed and/or given in support of the work of ABCUSA was \$16,500, in addition to \$8,300 given to General Secretary's Circles and to *Transformed by the Spirit* previously.

BGM 73 CLOSING COMMUNION

Chaplain Jeff Savage led in a devotional from Psalm 127:1-2: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives sleep to his beloved." Jeff related the lack of sleep as being reminiscent of the lack of faith and trust, reminding all that as we complete the work of this day and prepare for sleep, our Lord continues to work.

General Secretary Roy Medley and President Ruth Clark came forward to lead the board as a grateful family to the communion table, a table of eternal sustenance. The board concluded this time by worshipping together and singing "Jesus Loves Me."

The meeting was recessed until Saturday morning, November 10.

Saturday, November 10, 2012: 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; Independence North

BGM 74 CALL TO ORDER/PRAAYER

ABC President Ruth Clark called to order the reconvened the meeting of the Board of General Ministries at 9:00 a.m. The meeting began with prayer.

BGM 75 RECESS/ RECOVENE: REPORT FROM ABHS

The Board of General Ministries recessed and reconvened as the corporate members of the American Baptist Historical Society. Trinetta V. McCray, President of the American Baptist Historical Society, provided a report on ABHS' Visioning and Strategic Plan, as voted on by their Board of Managers at its September 2012 meeting. This report came to the board for information only.

As part of her report, Trinette presented ABHS' need for an additional staff person, for volunteers, for help and support in sharing ABHS' story with others and the need for continued funding. She also expressed concern that so much information is now handled electronically that we may no longer retain needed historical information. ABHS is working intentionally to educate others as to how to handle this in the future. ABHS also continues working intensively on outreach to develop strategic partners.

Following her report, Wesley Roberts, who served for 12 years on the ABHS board, expressed appreciation to Trinette for her work in the relocation of ABHS' holdings to the Atlanta facility at Mercer University. President Clark noted that the Board of General Ministries Executive Committee held its September 2012 meeting in Atlanta, and were able to tour the ABHS facility at Mercer University at that time.

Following discussion a motion was made, seconded, and it was

VOTED: To receive and affirm ABHS' Visioning and Strategic Plan, as voted on by their Board of Managers in September 2012.

The meeting was adjourned and the Board of General Ministries was reconvened.

BGM 76 REPORT FROM ABHMS

At its January 2012 meeting the Board of General Ministries, in accordance with Standing Rule 14.4 confirmed Perla Belo as BGM Director to the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Perla shared an oral report of ABHMS' 2012 meetings. The theme for 2012 has been "Stretch Yourself for a Bright Future." In conjunction with their October meeting of the board, ABHMS hosted its first-ever "Circles of Hope ASK Luncheon", raising approximately \$175,000 in pledges. ABHMS has also begun to again commission American Baptist home missionaries. Perla's full written report is attached to the official set of minutes filed in the General Secretary's office.

BGM 77 SHARING OF RESPONSE GROUP WORK

The Board of General Ministries received oral reports and proposals from Response Groups, which met on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning.

During this time, the Missional Response Group brought a draft of a proposed letter (written under ABC president Ruth Clark's and General Secretary Roy Medley's signatures) to President Barack Obama for review and action by BGM.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Robin Crouch, seconded by Mo Khan, and it was

VOTED: To approve the following letter to be sent to President Barack Obama

Dear Mr. President:

As the Board of General Ministries of the American Baptist Churches USA, the most culturally diverse denomination in the United States and Puerto Rico with a membership of 1.3 million members and 5,200 congregations, we are writing to you regarding our deep concern for the people and country of Myanmar.

Our ties to Burma date back nearly two centuries to 1813 when Adoniram and Ann Judson landed in Rangoon as the first American missionaries in the country. Their pioneering work has left an enduring legacy. Baptists now constitute the largest Christian group in the country with 1.5 million members convened in 18 language and regional Baptist conventions. We continue to relate to the Myanmar Baptist Convention and support it financially and spiritually through our International Ministries division. Our General Secretary, along with other denominational leaders, has frequently visited Burma, Thailand and Malaysia. The denomination created a national Burma Refugees Task Force to coordinate our response to the Burmese diaspora including advocacy with the U.S. State Department and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. The congregations of our denomination have been actively participating in the resettlement of over 80,000 refugees from Burma since 2006.

While we are encouraged by some of the political reforms in Myanmar (particularly the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the increased diplomatic relationship between Ambassadors, the visit from President Thein Sein to the United States, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to Myanmar in 2011), we continue to be gravely concerned by human rights violations, particularly as they pertain to ethnic nationalities.

We hope, in your visit, you will address the following concerns with President Thein Sein, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and other political leaders to urge the new government of Myanmar to:

- End the armed attacks on civilians in the Kachin State and other parts of the country;*
- Cease the military use of rape, forced labor, torture, religious persecution, destruction of churches, razing and burning of villages, confiscation of land, forced displacement and killing of ethnic nationalities;*
- Declare a nationwide ceasefire, release remaining political prisoners, and pursue more vigorously a meaningful peace and political dialogue process with representatives of all the ethnic nationalities and the democracy movement led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other distinguished leaders;*
- Allow internally displaced people, as they desire, to return to their home villages and land with sufficient support and relief in order to re-establish their life with security. We are especially concerned that the land mines be cleared;*
- Allow those who are living as refugees outside of Burma, having fled from violence, to return as desired to their native land or be able to explore alternative living options in a third country.*

The minority people of Burma desire freedom, the right to self-determination and the right to live in peace within their country. Thus, any political and economic engagement without an end to the human rights abuses will be hollow. The minority citizens of Burma will continue to distrust the government.

We will keep you in our prayers as you travel to Myanmar and meet with its leaders. May God go ahead of you to prepare the way and give you wisdom.

Minutes from the Response Groups will be posted on the BGM page of the ABCUSA website for review by the full board and filed with the official minutes in the General Secretary's office.

BGM 78 DEMO OF NEW ABCUSA WEBSITE

Bridget Holmstrom, Web Manager and Communication Specialist, MRD, presented a demo of the new updated ABCUSA website, which continues to reside at www.abc-usa.org and is planned to go live on November 14. Time was provided for questions.

BGM 79 COMMISSIONING: ABC/COB TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST

A Commissioning was held for those who will participate in the December 9-18, 2012 ABC/COB trip to the Middle East: Ruth Clark, Kay Farley, Roy Medley, Alan Rudnick and June Totten. Leo Thorne led in a prayer for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to be upon their lives as they go out.

BGM 80 BENEDICTION/ADJOURNMENT

President Clark adjourned the meeting of the Board of General Ministries, to be reconvened on June 18-20, 2013 in Overland Park, KS (with June 19 being a joint meeting with IM and ABHMS.)

A lunch buffet was served at 12:30 p.m. in Stirling's Restaurant.

Submitted by,



Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley
General Secretary

ARM/cb

Documents attached:

Integrated Schedule

BGM Proposed Agenda

BGM Roster

BGM Minutes: June 15-17, 2012 (1001:6/12)

BGM EC Minutes: June 15, 2012 (1002:6/12)

BGM EC Minutes: November 8, 2012 (1002:11/12)

Report of the ABC President

"Non-Profit Boards: Taking Governance Seriously", by Reg Mills

Report of the ABCUSA Finance Committee and Report of the BGM Finance Committee (1501:11/12)

ABCUSA 2013 Budget

YTD Report through 9/30/12

Report of ABFMS, by Mercy Johnson, BGM Board Director to BIM

Report of ABHMS/WABHMS, by Perla Belo, BGM Board Director to ABHMS/WABHMS

Report of MMBB, by Bill Frederickson, BGM Board Director to MMBB

Vick and Pathfinder Camp and Conference Ministry Fiscal Sponsorship Form

Reports from the Intercaucus

Report of Changed Relationships of Local Churches (document 1205.1:11/12) dated June 6, 2012 to Nov. 5, 2012

Mission Summit Church Registration Form

President Ruth Clark's September 12, 2013 Letter to BGM

ABHS' Visioning and Strategic Plan
ABHS Primary Source-Vol. 10, No. 3&4, Summer & Fall 2012
Response Group Minutes
Regional Ministries Report, Jeff Woods & Marilyn Tyson, Nov. 2012
Copies of BIM/ABFMS 2012 Minutes
2011 Annual Reports: IM, ABHMS, ABWM, MMBB