

**Missional Response Group
Board of General Ministries**

**Sheraton Overland Park Hotel
6100 College Blvd.
Overland Park, KS 66211**

Missional Response Group Breakout Sessions

Tuesday, June 18, 2013 (4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. in Hospitality Room 1024)

Wednesday, June 19, 2013 (11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in Hospitality Room 1024)

Response Group: Duh Kam, Roy Medley—Leaders
Perla Belo, Shirley Fair, Danny Jack, Ray Jepson, Jim Thomason, Tasha Wilson,
Danny Jack (Guest: Saw Ler Htoo; Recorder: Cathy Brubaker)

NOTES FROM SESSIONS

Documents transmitted to Response Group prior to meeting: Minutes from the Response Group's November 2012 meeting; ABC Standing Rules 17 (AMOs) & 6.1 (orienting & accepting new regions); ABC Bylaws Article V (cooperating churches) & Art. XVII (AMOs); information regarding The Coalition to Transform Advanced Care (C-TAC))

Relationship –Chin/Karen and Other Conventions in the U.S. to ABCUSA

Roy read a letter from Duh Kam, Executive Minister of the Chin Baptist Convention USA, expressing CBC/USA's desire as an independent organization to establish a special relationship with the American Baptist Churches USA. Saw Ler Htoo, Executive Secretary of the Karen Baptist Convention USA, also expressed KBC/USA's desire, while remaining as an independent organization, to be in strong partnership with ABCUSA. The Response Group reviewed the ABC Bylaws and Standing Rules in regard to current options for relationship:

1--Associate Ministry Organization (AMO) status: Includes separate organizations that have their own boards but want to have an established relationship with ABCUSA. Prior to 1970s ABC had a category of such organizations--Swedish Baptist Churches; German Baptists, Ukrainian, etc.--which all came under an affiliated category. In 1970s there was a reorganization that did away with this affiliated status and instead, the AMO status was established by Standing Rule.

2—Special Relationship: ABC has in the past established special relationships, through board action, with some organizations, such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. There are some aspects of this type of relationship, however, that might not fit for this particular situation.

3—Region status: How it would look for the KBC/USA and CBC/USA conventions to become a region? Would an issue develop due to current ABC regions losing ethnicity? The new ABC bylaws do allow for the establishment of a new region without geographic requirement. Guidelines for regions are spelled out.

Would need a high percentage vote. Would a 2-step process be more effective? Come in as an AMO with intention of expressing interest in exploring region status?

Question: If none of these options seem quite adequate for these particular relationships, what would be a good fit? It was noted that Bylaw changes require a Biennial delegate vote. Changes to the Standing Rules would require a vote by the Board of General Ministries. Duh Kam reported that CBC/USA is not interested in AMO status; they would be interested in region status. Ler Htoo emphasized the need for ABC/USA, KBC/USA and CBC/USA leaders to meet together, face-to-face for further discussion regarding relationship. A meeting will be planned in the near future.

Reports of update

Ler Htoo made a trip in June to Burma and Thailand and shared an update that included news of the continued violence and human right abuses toward the people in the Kachin State in Burma. He also reported on the Karen National Union's new leader, General Baw Kyaw and the focus on political agreement with government and refugee camp on Thai border to bring refugees back to Burma. He noted that most refugees don't want to go back to Burma since they have no home or land to return to.

Duh Kam visited Burma in April. He noted that it is now more peaceful and free to visit, with no checkpoint in some areas where their used to be. One can visit certain areas without special permission although not in rural areas. The Chin National Front, which fought against the government for 22 years also has a peace organization. There is also more freedom for journalists to write/report. There is much need to change the laws of Burma. The country is so poor economically. The Burmese government expects the road on the border of India to become the gateway to India and money is being spent on that. However, Duh reported that there is great concern related to the problems faced in the Mizoram State of India, with forced labor and physical abuse of the Chin people. He also spoke of religious liberty issues and the Burmese government's forced assimilation under the guise of development, i.e. establishment of schools for free education with forced compliance to Buddhism.

The military continues to be very aggressive. General Secretary Roy Medley spoke of his sending a letter to President Obama prior to the President's last visit to Burma in which he addressed concern for the ongoing human rights violations in Burma perpetrated by the military. There have also been several State Department visits, and Burmese leaders are always included in these visits. There are continuing efforts to keep the situation "in front" of U.S. leaders.

Questions: Is anything happening with micro loans to help establish farms, businesses? Are any of the conventions working to set up these loans for development?

Some conventions have their own plan. When Roy visits in December, a time can be set up to talk to leaders about micro loans. Every convention has programs to help poor in rural areas. In Burma these programs are administered through the various conventions. A process could be set up for a representation on behalf of the conventions to make a proposal to ABC's World Relief Committee. In Thailand, several AB missionaries have been involved in economic development, i.e, coffee beans, which Starbucks is now purchasing.

Next BGM Meeting: It was decided that the Missional Response Group might want to have Shirley Fair report on One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) and its important work on economic development (support for schools, micro loans, etc.) to the Response Group or to the full BGM. Administrative cost is very low. The World Relief Committee is a committee of the denomination, housed through IM. It would also be good for Shirley and Stan Murray, IM, to meet with general secretaries of the conventions at the Biennial in June.

Prayer: Danny Jack led in prayer for our Burmese Baptist brothers and sisters.

C-TAC (Coalition to Transform Advanced Care)

Roy reported on a recent call from Rev. Dr. Tyrone Pitts, Progressive National Baptist Convention, inquiring as to whether ABC might be interested in becoming a sponsoring organization of the Coalition to Transform Advanced Care (C-TAC).

C-TAC focuses on bringing together the faith-based and medical communities to help provide all Americans, especially the sickest and most vulnerable, with comprehensive, high quality, person- and family-centered care that is consistent with their goals and values and honors their dignity. C-TAC is housed at Seton Hall University where research is carried out by graduate students.

The only other denomination right now listed as a supporter of C-TAC is the PNBC, and the question addressed in this conversation was whether this is something ABC & PNBC might work on together

The Missional Response Group agreed to inquire as to whether a C-TAC representative (s) might attend its meeting in November to provide a forum for discussion and questions, with the possibility of the Response Group bringing a recommendation to the full BGM.

It was agreed that:

The Response Group invite a representative (s) to meet with them at its November meeting, sending materials in advance of the meeting for review. These materials should include a list of affiliates and the rules associated with such sponsors.

The focus must be on what makes the end-of-life process valuable, not on the industry itself, which is often defined by health care profits. Are there alternative motives?

It is important to identify potential areas of conflicts of interest where American Baptists would have boundaries. i.e., euthanasia

The connection with C-TAC might best fit with Homes & Hospitals, but C-TAC would want the denomination to put its name on it.

There is a need to provide extended time (more than just an hour at a time) on the BGM agenda for Response Group work.