

Board for International Mission
May 28-29, 2021
St. Louis, MO

May 28, 2021
Hilton Airport

Board Members Present: Kristine Bruss, John Edson, Rev. Magdiel Fajardo, Terence Lung, Rev. Limakatso Nare, Rev. Dr. David Stechholz, James Wolf, and Rev. William Zwick. Excused: Rev. Bernhard Seter and Allan Voss.

Staff Members Present: Rev. Daniel McMiller, Deaconess Pamela Nielsen, Rev. Kevin Robson and Jeannie Smithson.

Call to Order: After a brief update on several board members, including new member Rev. Limakatso Nare, acting board chair John Edson called the meeting to order. Rev. William Zwick led morning devotions.

Adoption of Minutes: The minutes of the January 29, 2021 regular board meeting were approved.

President's Report: Rev. Dr. Matthew Harrison addressed the importance of theological education in our international mission work, noting highlights from several regions. At the end of his report, President Harrison introduced Chaplain (Col.) Jonathan Shaw, U.S. Army (Ret.), who will serve as director of Church Relations.

Chief Mission Officer Report: Rev. Kevin Robson provided updates on his reporting units, including the Office of National Mission, Mission Advancement, Communications, and Pastoral Education. Rev. Robson reported that the Board of Directors recently approved a 2022 budget of \$62.7 million; 42% of the budget is allocated to international mission. All of our network-supported missionaries are sufficiently funded.

Unit Executive Report (OIM): Rev. Dan McMiller shared current missionary numbers. We have 45 mature missionary pastors, 60 lay missionaries, and 40-50 alliance missionaries on the field, eight of whom were recently called and deployed by our partner church in Brazil. We work with 90 church bodies and 30 seminaries in 70 countries. Rev. McMiller noted a need to increase the number of ordained missionaries.

Break: The meeting adjourned for a short break at 10:00 a.m.

Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF) Calls: The board reconvened at 10:15 and entered executive session with Chaplain Craig Muehler to consider candidates for MAF calls. After exiting executive session, the board approved calls to the following:

- Rev. Kurtis Buelmann, Active Duty, U.S. Air Force
- Rev. David Wurdeman, Active Duty, U.S. Army

Missionary Calls and Appointments. After approving MAF calls, the board entered executive session to consider candidates for missionary calls and review call updates. After exiting executive session, the board extended calls to the following:

- Clarion Fritsche, Deaconess, Latin America and the Caribbean (career missionary call)
- Chelsea Irwin, Volunteer Coordinator, Eurasia (appointment)
- Rev. Dr. Cory Rajek, Pastor and Theological Educator, Eurasia (career missionary call)
- Hayden Rensner, TESOL Teacher, Eurasia (appointment)

The board also approved peaceful releases of the following missionaries:

- Joseph Asher, Eurasia
- Alyssa Anders, Eurasia
- Rick Sovitzky, Asia
- Andrew Schlund, Latin America and the Caribbean
- Michael Schempf, Africa

Unit Executive Report, Part II. Rev. McMiller continued his OIM report, recommending the book *Dead Aid* by Dambisa Moyo, a Zambian economist, for its useful perspective on strategic priorities. A key question to ask about missions: “What is worth dying for?”

St. Louis Operations Report. Christian Boehlke shared several changes in operations, including new expense management and accounting software and the engagement of an emergency response service with expertise in risk assessment, which will enhance efforts to ensure the safety and security of our missionaries.

Lunch: The board adjourned for lunch at 12:15 p.m.

4-04A Progress Report. The board reconvened at 1:15 and heard a progress report from members of the joint subcommittee of the BIM and BNM appointed to handle assignments related to the Synod’s triennial mission and ministry emphasis and priorities. The subcommittee highlighted next steps in the project, including proposed visits with districts by members of both boards. Board members were invited to share feedback with the subcommittee.

Governance Committee Update. At 2:15, the board heard an update from the Governance Committee, which was established to reexamine the nature and function of the mission boards (e.g., role, responsibilities, authority). The committee will be meeting in June with the Synod secretary, who will provide a primer on his understanding of the function of the boards. Board members are welcome to provide the Governance Committee with their thoughts on the matter.

Self-Governance Policy Review. After a brief break at 3:10, the board turned its attention to its self-governance document. The following revisions/updates were made and approved during the review.

- Regarding the first bullet under 2.3, the words “Witness, Mercy, Life Together” were changed to “The mission and ministry emphases as adopted by Synod in convention”.
- Regarding self-governance policy 2.3.3 (types of policies created by the board), the board noted an inconsistency between the policy statement, which specifies that the board makes policies of four types, and the policies actually listed, which include only ends policies and self-governance

policies. The board approved the following motion (recognizing that the policy might be revisited as part of the Governance Committee's reassessment of the board's function):

- To change "four" to "two" in the wording of self-governance policy 2.3.3 ("The board shall maintain written policies of **two** types ...").
- Regarding 2.4.4.2.4, the words "Witness, Mercy, and Life Together" were changed to "the mission and ministry emphases as adopted by Synod in convention".
- The board moved and approved the following motion with respect to self-governance policy 2.5, which calls for the Executive Committee to be constituted of the three officers and one additional board member:
 - To appoint Jim Wolf as the fourth member of the Executive Committee.

On the "to do" list: Rev. Robson and the and Synod secretary will clarify whether missionaries are called to the Office of International Mission or to a designated region. (See policy 2.8.4.)

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

May 29, 2021

Hilton St. Louis Airport Hotel

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Staff Members Present: Rev. Daniel McMiller, Rev. Kevin Robson and Jeannie Smithson.

Call to Order: Acting board chair Edson called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. Rev. Robson offered an opening prayer.

International Schools: The board devoted the morning to a discussion of the Synod's three international schools, entering executive session immediately following the opening prayer.

After the morning's discussion, Rev. William Zwick led the group through Daily Prayer from the *Lutheran Service Book*. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Bruss
Acting Secretary