

BYLAWS
OF
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF OHIO

Introductory Note: The format of the Bylaws is designed to symbolize their correlation with the Region's Constitution and provides for the possibility of one or more standing rules for each Article of the Constitution: Rule 1 of the Bylaws corresponds to Article I of the Constitution, Rule 2 to Article II, etc.

Where the word "reserved" appears in the text of the Bylaws it means that no standing rule is currently called for regarding that section of the Constitution. The number position for a rule is simply being reserved for possible future use.

RULE 1: NAME AND AFFILIATION

Rule 1.1 (Reserved)

Rule 1.2.1. The Region shall pledge itself to promote the unity and efficiency of the denomination in its efforts for the evangelization of the world, to support the work of American Baptist Churches in the USA (hereinafter known as ABC/USA), to consult with the General Secretary on the credentials of its Executive Minister prior to the selection of such officer, and to submit its budget annually to the General Board.
The Region shall implement the Denominational Functions agreed to by ABC/USA and American Baptist Churches of Ohio. Within those functions, the Region shall implement American Baptist Policy Statements and Resolutions and shall design, carry out and report to the General Board on programs and projects to implement its Denominational Functions.

Rule 1.2.2 The relationship with ABC/USA shall be recorded in the Covenant of Relationships and the related Statements of Agreement, one of which shall be the Common Budget Covenant. The Board of Regional Ministries shall adopt, periodically review, and may amend the Covenant of Relationships and Statements of Agreements.

RULE 2: MISSION STATEMENT (Reserved)

RULE 3: CONSTITUENCY

Rule 3.1 (Reserved)

Rule 3.2.1 A church shall be received into the Region and ABC/USA; or upon request, into the Region solely; by recommendation of the association to which it has applied and duly been approved. Each association shall implement its own requirements regarding acceptance of a church into the fellowship of its member churches with counsel from the Region's professional staff and with reference to ABC/USA's "Common Criteria for a Cooperating Church" (see Appendix B of these Bylaws.) and/or ABC/OH's Common Criteria for an Affiliating Church"(see Appendix C of these Bylaws).

Rule 3.2.2. A church shall be dismissed from the Region, and thus the denomination, by recommendation of the association of which it is a member. Each association shall implement its own criteria for dismissal of member churches with counsel from the Region's professional staff and with reference to ABC/USA's "Common Criteria for a Cooperating Church" (see Appendix B of these Bylaws) and/or ABC/OH's Common Criteria for an Affiliating Church"(see Appendix C of these Bylaws).

Rule 3.3 (Reserved)

RULE 4: OFFICERS

Rule 4.1.1 The President shall be the chief elected corporate officer and shall preside at all meetings of the Region, the Board of Regional Ministries, and the Executive Committee. The President shall see that the policies and actions of the Board are implemented by the Executive Minister, staff, and appropriate volunteers. The President shall report to the Region and the Board on the condition and management of the affairs of the Region. The President shall be an ex officio member of all committees, task groups and working teams except a nominating committee. An annual report shall be compiled and published in a timely manner by the President for his/her presidential year. The President shall be assigned to the Administrative Ministries Team.

4.1.2 The Vice-President shall assume the duties of the President when the President is absent. The Vice-President shall hold responsibility for informally reviewing the Bylaws annually, monitoring the Region's Goals and Objectives, and shall have powers and be charged with such duties as the Board of Regional Ministries or as the President may delegate. The Vice-President shall be assigned to the United Ministries Team.

4.1.3 The immediate Past President shall serve on the Board of Regional Ministries and shall provide continuity within the Region. The Past President shall be assigned to the Local Church Ministries Team. (See Rule 4.1.1.)

4.1.4 The Secretary shall have the responsibility for maintaining the official non-financial records of the Region, the Board of Regional Ministries, and its Executive Committee, and shall perform all other duties usually pertaining to such office. The Secretary shall be assigned to the Local Church Ministries Team.

4.1.5 The Treasurer, under the direction of the Board of Regional Ministries, shall review the financial affairs of the Region. The Treasurer shall see that accurate records are kept of the funds of the Region and shall present a written financial report at each annual meeting and to the Board of Regional Ministries at such times as the Board may direct. The Treasurer shall give bond satisfactory to the Board. The Treasurer shall be assigned to the Administrative Ministries Team.

Rule 4.1.6 All officers of ABC/OH shall be members of ABC/USA Cooperating Churches.

Rule 4.2 (Reserved)

Rule 4.3 (Reserved)

RULE 5: BOARD OF REGIONAL MINISTRIES

Rule 5.1 The Board shall reflect the diversity in the Region with respect to age, sex, ethnic and language groups and desirable skills.

5.1.1.1 Clergy shall be defined as an ordained or licensed professional church leader or certified lay pastor.

5.1.1.2 Under extenuating circumstances, an association may petition the Board for a change in the rotation category.

5.1.1.3 The alternate's term shall be limited to that of the person he/she succeeds. Fulfillment of an unexpired term shall count as a full term with regards to re-election.

5.1.1.4 If any Board member shall become an officer, her/his term on the Board shall be completed by the elected alternate.

5.1.2 (Reserved)

5.1.3 (Reserved)

5.1.4 (Reserved)

5.1.5 (Reserved)

Rule 5.2 (Reserved)

Rule 5.3 (Reserved)

Rule 5.4 (Reserved)

Rule 5.5 (Reserved)

Rule 5.6 (Reserved)

Rule 5.7 A vacancy in the position of association representative on the Board shall be filled in consultation with the officers of the association.

Rule 5.8 (Reserved)

Rule 5.9 The Bylaws of the Region may be amended or revised by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board present at any duly called meeting of the Board, except for provisions relating to the Region's affiliation and relationship with ABC/USA, where a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Board belonging to churches affiliated with ABC/USA would be necessary, provided the amendment or revision has been recommended by the Executive Committee and a copy of any proposed amendment or revision has been sent to all members of the Board at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Rule 5.10.1 There shall be an Executive committee of the Board empowered to act on behalf of the Board between meetings in all matters except where such action is contrary to established Board policy. The Committee shall be accountable to the Board, and all actions shall be reported to the Board at its next meeting.

5.10.2 The Executive Committee shall give assistance to and supervise the work and ministry of the Executive Minister.

5.10.3 The Executive Committee shall serve as the coordinating and integrating committee for the total work of the Region to assure that there is a Region of the whole rather than a Region of its parts.

5.10.4 All matters pertaining to implementation of policy shall be cleared through the Executive Committee. Where differences may exist between groups within the Region organization, the Executive committee shall be empowered to render decisions, subject to the Board.

5.10.5 The Executive Committee shall be composed of twelve persons: five Officers, three Team Chairpersons, three Team members elected by the respective Team, and the Executive Minister who shall be the responsible staff person.

5.10.6 Except when in Executive Session, which may be called by the President, the Executive Minister, or requested by the Executive Committee, the Professional staff shall attend meetings of the Executive Committee. Their role shall be that of resource.

5.10.7 The Executive Committee shall meet at least two times a year or at the call of the President or the Executive Minister.

5.10.8 A majority of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

5.10.9 The Executive Committee shall evaluate the work of the Executive Minister every four (4) years in consultation with the General Secretary, ABC/USA.

5.10.10 The Constitution and Bylaws shall be reviewed every five years by a committee appointed by the Executive Committee for that purpose.

5.10.11 The Executive Committee shall appoint a parliamentarian from the Board to interpret the Constitution and Bylaws.

5.10.12 The Executive Committee shall be responsible for insuring that guidelines and purchases approved by the Teams are consistent with the specific mission statement of that Team, as well as, the Mission statement for ABC/OHIO. The Executive Committee may overturn any guideline previously approved by one of the Teams that is determined to be inconsistent with one of the appropriate mission statements. Such a decision may be appealed to the Board for final resolution.

Rule

5.11.1 The structure of the Board shall consist of three Teams:

a. United Ministries Team shall be responsible for overseeing and communicating the shared ministries of the Region, such as new church development, outdoor ministries, campus ministry, neighborhood action programs, the state advisory committee on ordination, etc.

b. Local Church Ministries Team shall be responsible for enabling ministries within the member churches such as Christian education, stewardship, Watchcare, etc.

c. Administrative Ministries Team shall be responsible for management of the Region's organizational structure and resources enabling accomplishment of the Region's ministries.

5.11.2 The Teams are primarily working groups rather than policy-making groups. Each Team, however, may establish guidelines necessary to carry out its mission as defined in section 5.11.1. Such guidelines must be consistent with their mission statement and the mission statement of ABC/OHIO and shall be reported to the Executive Committee for review.

5.11.3 Each Team also is responsible for insuring that guidelines and purchases approved by their related committees and task forces are consistent with the specific mission statement of that group as well as the mission statement for ABC/OHIO. A Team may overturn any guideline previously approved by one of its related committees or task forces that is determined to be inconsistent with one of the appropriate mission statements. Such a decision may be appealed to the Board's Executive Committee for final resolution.

5.11.4 The Board or a Team in consultation with the President and Executive Minister may appoint standing committees, committees, and task groups as needed to accomplish its goals, except the nominating committee. Such appointments shall be approved by the corresponding Team and/or the Board. Any group requiring funding must have its funding source approved by the Administrative Team. Each committee, task group, etc., shall be directly accountable to the appointing body and thus to the Board. Task groups shall be appointed for specific tasks for a specific period of time and then disbanded.

5.11.5 Appointment shall be on a rotating basis to provide continuity of leadership insofar as this does not conflict with other provisions of the Constitution or these Bylaws. Except as otherwise provided for in the Constitution or these Bylaws, all members of committees, task groups, etc. shall be appointed for terms of no more than three years. Persons shall

serve no more than six years as a member of any committee, task group, etc.

5.11.6 The Board shall be represented on each committee, task group, etc.

5.11.7 One half of the members of a committee, task group, etc., shall constitute a quorum.

5.11.8 Every committee and task force shall be responsible for:

- a. Carrying out ministries in accordance with the mission statement for its particular ministry. (Specific mission statements for all committees and task forces shall be on file in the Region office)
- b. Setting guidelines directly related to its mission statement. Such guidelines must be consistent with its mission statement and the mission statement of ABC/OHIO and shall be reported to the appropriate Team for review.
- c. Making financial decisions in accordance with its mission statement and the mission statement of ABC/OHIO. All such financial decisions must fall within the most recently approved ABC/OHIO annual budget.

Any proposed action that falls outside of the parameters listed in rule 5.11.8 b & c must be approved by the Board after being approved by the appropriate Team.

5.11.9 The committees are:

- a. The Outdoor Ministries Commission reporting to the United Ministries Team.
- b. The New Church Development Commission reporting to the United Ministries Team.
- c. The State Advisory Committee on Ordination reporting to the United Ministries Team.
- d. The Annual Meeting Program Committee reporting to the Administrative Ministries Team.
- e. The Lay Pastors Training Committee reporting to the Local Church Ministries Team.
- f. The Nominating Committee reporting to the Delegates in Annual Session.
- g. The Personnel Committee reporting financial decisions to the Administrative Ministries Team and personnel issues to the Executive Committee.

Rule 5.11.10 All committee members must be members of an ABC/USA Cooperating Church.

- Rule 5.12.1 The Board shall appoint a Search Committee to recommend a qualified person to fill the office of the Executive Minister when a vacancy occurs. The Committee shall be comprised of a Past President, five members-at-large elected by the Board, and the President. The Past President shall convene the committee which shall elect its own chairperson. The presidents of the auxiliary organizations may serve as ex officio members. The credentials of all persons to be considered for the office of Executive Minister shall be approved by the General Secretary of ABC/USA. The personnel of the Search Committee as originally comprised shall continue as members of the Committee until the office of Executive Minister has been filled.
- Rule 5.12.2 All Search Committee members for Executive Minister and staff must be members of an ABC/USA Cooperating Church.
- Rule 5.13 (Reserved)
- Rule 5.14 Teams of the Board shall submit budget or funding requests for ministry projects to the Administrative Team by July 1st of each year for consideration in the following year's budget. Any new or special ministries projects requiring region funding must be referred to the Administrative Team for identification of funding source, and then voted upon by the Board.
- Rule 5.15 (Reserved)
- Rule 5.16 In the interest of effective participation of Board members and of faithful stewardship of the Region's funds, it is expected that all members will attend all meetings of the Board and committees to which they are assigned, unless prevented by unavoidable reasons, and that they will arrive at all meetings on time and remain until adjournment of each meeting. A position will be considered vacant after three (3) consecutive unexcused absences. Authority to grant excuses shall be vested in the Executive Minister.
- Rule 5.17 (Reserved)

RULE 6: PROFESSIONAL STAFF

- Rule 6.1 In addition to the duties defined in the Constitution, the Executive Minister shall be responsible for relating the ministry and mission of the Region to ABC/USA, and the ministry and mission of ABC/USA to the Region; shall represent the Region on the General Executive Council and such other boards and committees as may be requested (within the

limitation of time and responsibility for the total ministry of the Region) and shall serve as chief negotiator between the Region and ABC/USA in matters of mutual concern and contract, such as finances and program commitments. In exercising these responsibilities, the Executive Minister shall always be subject to the policies and priorities established by the Region through its Board.

Rule 6.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Minister and the professional staff to assist and undergird local churches and associations in the fulfillment of their ministries relating them to the work and mission of the Region and the world mission of ABC/USA. Responsibilities also include the pastoral needs of the Region's professional church leadership.

6.3 Professional staff shall be assigned a resourcing responsibility for one of the Teams. Adjunct staff shall submit an annual written report in December to the appropriate Team.

RULE 7: ANNUAL MEETINGS

Rule 7.1.1 Registration fees established by the Board shall be assessed for delegates and visitors to the annual meetings of the Region. All persons who attend the annual meetings must register as delegates or as visitors except when invited as a special guest through the office of the Executive Minister, or providing that particular portions of the program are open sessions. Voting delegates shall submit registration forms duly authorized by the church, association, or organization they represent.

7.1.2 Minutes of an annual meeting and of special meetings of the Region shall be referred to the Board for approval, subject to correction at the next meeting of the Region.

7.1.3 There shall be a standing Program Committee to plan for the annual meetings of the Region. The committee shall be comprised of the following persons: American Baptist Churches of Ohio President, American Baptist Churches of Ohio Vice-President, President American Baptist church of Ohio Ministers Council, President American Baptist Men, President American Baptist Women's Ministries, and the Conference Facilitation Team.

Rule 7.2 No written document such as a resolution or statement of concern shall be introduced at any annual meeting session unless permission is first granted by the delegates in business session. Permission requires a two-thirds vote in favor.

A statement of concern shall not be acted on by delegates but may be presented at any annual meeting session by the Board.

Rule 7.3 (Reserved)

Rule 7.4.1 Only Voting delegates from ABC/USA affiliated churches may vote on matters concerning the Region's affiliation and relationship with ABC/USA.

Rule 7.5.1 The elected General Board representatives shall serve as the Nominating Committee. The Nominating committee shall elect its own chairperson.

7.5.2 The Board shall reflect the diversity in the Region with respect to age, sex, ethnic and language groups and desirable skills.

Rule 7.6 (Reserved)

RULE 8: FINANCES

Rule 8.1.1 Real property held by the Region shall be entrusted to the Baptist Foundation Inc., and shall be subject to its Constitution and Code of Regulations.

8.1.2 The Region shall cooperate with ABC/USA in the collection of mission contributions for the denomination in the Region.

8.1.3 The Board shall be responsible for the management of the Endowment Fund, and shall make an annual report to the Region.

Rule 8.2 (Reserved)

Rule 8.3 (Reserved)

Rule 8.4 (Reserved)

Rule 8.5 (Reserved)

Rule 8.6 (Reserved)

RULE 9: AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Rule 9.1 A group shall submit a written request to the President on behalf of the Board to apply to become a recognized auxiliary organization. Such request shall include the organization's statement of purpose, a current

budget, and plans to carry out the common criteria for a region auxiliary (see Rule 9.1.1 of these Bylaws.) The Board shall respond to the request.

- Rule 9.1.1 The common criteria for a region auxiliary are as follows:
- Publicize a purpose statement compatible with the purpose statement of American Baptist church in the USA (ABC/USA.) (See Appendix A.)
 - Support the Region (ABC/OHIO) mission, help promote the Region goals, and educate the auxiliary's constituency about American Baptist ministries.
 - Participate regularly in the programs and ministries of the Region and its member associations.
 - Use Region program resources appropriate for the auxiliary's needs and offer auxiliary resources to the Region for the good of its constituency.
 - Provide timely reports to the Region Board (see Rule 9.2 of the Bylaws.)
 - Enhance the relationship of the auxiliary's members with ABC/OHIO and ABC/USA.
- Rule 9.2 Each auxiliary organization shall annually submit a written report of program to the Board, and an audited financial report to the Administrative Team.
- Rule 9.3 The executive Committee shall review the status of each region auxiliary organization at least every six years relative to the "Common Criteria for a Region Auxiliary" (see Rule 9.1.1 of these Bylaws.)

RULE 10: DISSOLUTION OF ORGANIZATION

- Rule 10.1 (Reserved)

RULE 11: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

- Rule 11.1 (Reserved)

RULE 12: AMENDMENTS

- Rule 12.1 (Reserved)

APPENDIX A – Statement of Purpose of ABC/USA

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., as a manifestation of the church universal, bears witness to God's intention to bring redemption and wholeness to all creation. American Baptists believe that God's intention can be sought and followed in local congregations and other gatherings of Christians and in associational, regional, national and world bodies as they receive from one another mutual counsel and correction. Since Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, each body of Christians, seeking to order its life in accordance with the scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has a proper responsibility under God for maintaining its life of worship, witness, and ministry.

In every area of their common life American Baptists, acknowledging the importance of creative diversity, seek such a balance of freedom and order as will keep all parts of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and at the same time enable them to work responsibly to carry out the common task of mission and ministry in our time.

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. acknowledges that it shares a common faith in Christ with churches which may be quite different from it in history, polity and practice. Consequently, it seeks to share with them a common ministry and to express it faithfully.

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. acknowledges that God's will is also manifested in movements outside the formal structures of Christ's church, and that, therefore, it must respond faithfully to such disclosures.

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. further acknowledges and confirms its commitment to the objects stated in its Act of Incorporation as follows: "to give expression to the opinions of its constituency upon moral, religious and denominational matters and to promote denominational unity and efficiency in efforts for the evangelization of the world."

In the light of this affirmation, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. intends the following statement of purpose to implement and not to alter the objects stated in its Act of Incorporation:

- To bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world and to lead persons to Christ;
- To seek the mind of Christ on moral, spiritual, political, economic, social, denominational and ecumenical matters, and to express to the rest of society on behalf of American Baptists, their convictions as to the mind of Christ in these matters;
- To guide, unify, and assist American Baptists in their witness in the world, in preparing members for the work of ministry, and in serving both those within and outside the fellowship of Christ; and
- To promote closer relations among American Baptist Churches and groups, within the whole Body of Christ and to promote understanding with other religious bodies.

(By vote of the Annual Convention at Seattle, Washington, May 16, 1969.)

APPENDIX B – Common Criteria for a Cooperating Church

The following “common criteria” shall serve as the minimal qualifications for a Cooperating Church:

1. Accept and publicize the purpose statement of American Baptist Churches in the USA (ABC/USA) and of the regional mission organization in which the church is located.
2. Participate regularly in programs and the ministries of ABC/USA at both the national and regional levels.
3. Utilize ABC/USA resources appropriate to the congregation’s needs.
4. Support the mission of ABC/USA by contributing a fair share of the congregation’s income (exclusive of building payments) to American Baptist Mission Support.
5. Provide reports on the forms supplied by the regional mission organization and/or the ABC/USA.

From Standing Rules of ABC/USA: Rule 5.1 – Qualifications
(Voted by the General Board, December 1986)

APPENDIX C – ABC/OH’s Common Criteria for an Affiliating Church

The following “common criteria” shall serve as the minimal qualifications for an Affiliating Church:

1. Accept and publicize the purpose statement of the American Baptist Churches of Ohio (ABC/OH) and of the association in which the church is located.
 2. Participate regularly in the programs and the ministries of ABC/OH at both the regional and association levels.
 3. Utilize ABC/OH resources appropriate to the congregation’s needs.
 4. Support the mission of ABC/OH by contributing a fair share of the congregation’s income (exclusive of building payments) to American Baptist Mission Support or in other appropriate ways.
 5. Provide reports on the forms supplied by the ABC/OH.
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08/07/90 – Approved by P.R.A.Y. Committee
09/13/90 – Approved by Executive Committee
10/26/90 – Approved by Board
12/12/92 – Revision: Rule 7.5.1
12/11/97 – Revision approved by the Board
05/20/99 – Revision approved by the Board
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