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THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE NORTHWEST BYLAWS

ARTICLE 1 – NAME

This organization shall be called AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE NORTHWEST, hereafter referred to as the Region or “ABC/NW”. The Region includes the American Baptist Churches of Idaho, Montana, Utah, and Washington, and such other churches as may apply and be accepted.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The Region, as an expression of the Church of Jesus Christ, shall equip its Areas to serve local congregations. It shall be a channel through which American Baptist Churches in the USA (hereinafter referred to as “ABC/USA”) relates to the Areas of the Region. The Region shall provide a channel through which American Baptist congregations and the Areas shall discharge their wider mission to all the world.

The following goals are the thrust for the mission of the Region:

1. American Baptist Churches of the Northwest will be a caring people, as Christ cares for the world.
2. American Baptist Churches of the Northwest will be a people of God, growing in faithfulness to the Gospel.
3. American Baptist Churches of the Northwest will be a people celebrating who we are and who we are called to become in Christ.

For publicity purposes, the goal statements could be shortened to:

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| ABC/NW will be | - caring, as Christ cares |
| | - growing in all dimensions |
| | - celebrating who we are |

ARTICLE III – THE REGION

Section 1. DUTIES OF THE REGION

The ultimate authority for the Region rests with the delegates in its Biennial Session. Such duties as may be required of the Region are contained in the Region’s Rules of Procedures. The business of the Region is transacted by a Region Board between Region meetings.

Section 2. MEETINGS OF THE REGION

- 2.1 Biennial Session
The Region shall meet biennially in even-numbered years, at a time and place determined by the Region Board.
- 2.2 Special Session shall be called
 - (a) upon the favorable vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the total Region Board members.
 - (b) Upon written request of forty (40) member congregations.
- 2.3 Quorum for Region meetings shall be one hundred (100) accredited delegates. Majority rules unless otherwise stipulated in these Bylaws.
- 2.4 Delegates to Region Meetings
 - (a) Local Congregations. Each local member congregation shall have two (2) delegates, one of whom may be its pastor. Congregations with more than 150 resident members shall be entitled to one additional delegate for each additional 150 resident members or major fraction thereof. Term shall be for two years.
 - (b) Area Delegates. Each Area of the Region shall be entitled to ten (10) delegates. These delegates may be elected by the Area at its Area Annual Convention, or this

- function may be assigned to the Area Board, whichever method is stipulated by the Area Rules of Procedures. Terms shall be for two years.
- (c) Region Board. All members of the Region Board shall be ex officio delegates.
 - (d) Each delegate shall have one vote.
 - (e) An alternate may be appointed for each delegate.
 - (f) A delegate can represent only one constituent group.
 - (g) The congregations and Areas are urged to pay a fair proportion of their delegates' expenses.

Section 3. MEMBERS OF THE REGION

3.1 Constituency The membership of the ABC/NW Region shall be congregations and auxiliary or related organizations that cooperate in the mission of ABC/NW Region and that have applied and been accepted into membership. Member congregations shall be categorized as either "Cooperating Churches" or "Affiliated Churches" according to the following criteria:

- (a) Cooperating churches shall be those member congregations that cooperate in the mission of ABC/NW, as stated in Article II, abide by the "Duties of Member Congregations", Article III, Section 3.2 and are also Cooperating Churches of ABC-USA. Only voting delegates from Cooperating Churches of ABC-USA and the Board of Directors shall be able to vote on matters relating to the Covenant of Relationships between ABC/NW and ABC-USA or the election of ABC-USA General Board members.
- (b) Affiliated Churches shall be those member congregations that cooperate in the mission of ABC/NW as stated in Article II, abide by the "Duties of Member Congregations", Article III, Section 3.2 except that affiliated churches have expressed a desire to unite with ABC/NW Region without being a member of the ABC-USA. As such they shall have all of the rights and privileges of Cooperating Churches in the ABC/NW except they shall not be entitled to representation on the General Board or to the ABC-USA or at conventions of the ABC-USA. Affiliating Churches shall not be able to participate in the voting process on matters relating to the Covenant of Relationships between ABC/NW and ABC-USA.

3.2 Duties of Member Congregations. Member congregations of the Region shall:

- (a) share in the ministry vision of the ABC/NW Region and in the biblical focus on mission of the associated churches,
- (b) provide opportunities for communicating the mission priorities of the ABC/NW.
- (c) support Regional mission and ministries by giving an appropriate share of the church's income to the support of the ABC/NW Region and ABC-USA with the exception that affiliated churches will not be expected to contribute to ABC-USA.
- (d) participate with laity and clergy in Regional and Area events.
- (e) elect delegates and support leadership serving in their Area and the Region.
- (f) utilize Regional staff personnel in pastoral search process.
- (g) if aligned with more than one denomination, share the congregation's mission funds proportionately with these denominations.
- (h) provide an annual statistical report on the form provided by the Region.

3.3 Becoming a Member of the Region

- (a) Local Congregations: A church applying for membership with the ABC/NW Region shall be received into the fellowship as either a "Cooperating Church" or "Affiliated Church" upon the recommendation of the Area with which it is associated in ministry and with whom there is evidence of a supportive relationship along with demonstration of compliance with "Duties of Member Congregations", Article III,

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Section 3.2. and upon approval of a majority of the total members of the Region Board.

- (b) A member congregation may change from a Cooperating Church to an Affiliated Church (or the reverse) through a congregational vote by reapplying for membership with the new status, subject to the approval of the majority of the total members of the Region Board. Affiliated status will be discussed only with those churches expressing an interest in having a relationship with ABC/NW, but not with ABC-USA, or considering breaking membership with both ABC-USA and ABC/NW.
- (c) Auxiliary/Related Organizations. The Region Board may approve auxiliary and related organizations which are regional in scope, such as campus foundations, homes for the aging, and hospitals, which give tangible evidence of supporting the Region's purposes and programs. These organizations normally will be separate corporate bodies. The Region Board may appoint a representative to be on the boards of such related organizations.

The Region Board shall have the authority to review applications and grant membership to any auxiliary/related organization which is regional in scope seeking affiliation with the Region, provided that such organization shall have given evidence of support of the Region's purposes and programs. Approval must be by a majority of the total members of the Region Board.

3.4 Dismissal of a Member Congregation

The Region Board can dismiss member congregations:

- (a) at the written request of the congregation and recommendation of the appropriate Area.
- (b) if the member congregation has not demonstrated for a period of two (2) years its support of and participation in the Region as required in Para. 3.2 above, Duties of Member Congregations. Prior to taking a vote for dismissal, the Region board shall consult with the appropriate Area Board regarding the outcome of any attempts on the Area's part to reactivate the congregation in the work and programs of the Region. Dismissal requires approval of 2/3 of the total Region Board members.

Section 4. OFFICERS OF THE REGION

4.1 Officers of the Region shall be:

- (a) President.
- (b) Vice President of Program, who shall be chairperson of the Program Coordinating Committee.
- (c) Immediate Past President, who shall serve as chairperson of the Personnel/Nominating Committee.
- (d) Secretary, who is the Executive Minister of the Region. The Executive Minister may delegate the taking of minutes.
- (e) Vice President of Budget and Finance, who shall be chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee

4.2 Terms of Office

- (a) President, Vice President of Program, and Vice President of Budget and Finance shall be elected at the Biennial session for two-year terms, or until their successors are elected. The President and Vice President of Program may NOT serve consecutive terms in the same office. The Vice President of Budget and Finance may NOT serve more than two consecutive terms.
- (b) The Executive Minister, who serves as Secretary, serves an indefinite term in accordance with the procedure established by the Region Board and shall have full power of voice and vote.

4.3 Duties of the Officers of the Region.

179 Duties required of the Officers are contained in the Region's Rules of Procedure.
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183 **ARTICLE IV – REGION BOARD**

184 **Section 1. DUTIES OF THE REGION BOARD**

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187 The Region Board shall be the Board of Directors of the American Baptist Churches of the
188 Northwest and shall transact all business of the Region between Region meetings (unless
189 otherwise provided for in these Bylaws), and such business as may be referred to the Board by
190 the Region when it is in session. Such duties as may be required of the Region Board shall be
191 contained in the Region's Rules of Procedure, and in The Covenant of Relationships and Its
192 Agreements Among the General, National and Regional Boards of the American Baptist
193 Churches.
194

195 **Section 2. MEMBERS OF THE REGION BOARD**

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197 It shall be the policy of the Region to seek a balance of laymen, laywomen, and professional
198 church leaders as Officers and Members of the Region Board. The members of the Region
199 Board shall consist of:

- 200
201 2.1 Officers of the Region (5) The Officers of the Region shall also be the officers of the Region
202 Board.
203
204 2.2 Area Representatives (10)
205 (a) Each Area shall elect two (2) representatives from among the members of its churches. In
206 order to maintain the balance, Areas are urged to seek an adequate balance between women
207 and men in their selection.
208 (b) Area Representatives serve on the Region Board for a three-year (3) term, staggered to
209 facilitate continuity.
210 (c) An Area Representative may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. Any person
211 serving two or more years of a three-year term would be considered to have served one term.
212
213 2.3 Three Members-at-Large (3)
214 (a) Members-at-Large shall be elected at each Biennial Session. This provision is to assure
215 balanced representation of the constituency. Terms are staggered, with no more than two
216 being voted upon at one time.
217 (b) Members-at-Large serve on the Region Board for a four-year term and may not succeed
218 themselves.
219
220 2.4 Representatives to the General Board of ABC/USA
221 All Regionally Nominated Representatives (RNR) and Nationally Nominated Representatives
222 (NNR) to the General Board of ABC/USA who are members of an ABC/NW church, are
223 automatically members of the Region Board.
224
225 2.5 Any officer of the American Baptist Churches in the USA who is a member of an ABC/NW church,
226 is automatically a member of the Region Board.
227
228 2.6 All members listed above in this section are expected to attend Region Board meetings and will
229 have full voting rights.
230

231 **Section 3. MEETINGS OF THE REGION BOARD**

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234 3.1 The Region Board shall meet at least twice annually (once in the spring and once in the fall). All
235 meetings shall be open to observers who are members of constituent churches.
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Notice of all Region Board meetings shall be sent by the Region Secretary at least 25 days in advance to all officers, board members, attendees, and professional staff.

Quorum of Region Board meetings shall be two-thirds (2/3) of the total Board members. Majority rules unless otherwise stipulated in these Bylaws.

Other Attendees at Board Meetings. The following persons are urged to attend Region Board meetings and participate in discussions, but will have no vote:

- (a) One representative from the Region Commission on Ministry.
- (b) Chairperson of the local arrangement committee for the Region Biennial.
- (c) One Representative of the American Baptist Commission on Outdoor Ministries.
- (d) One Representative of the American Baptist Women's Ministries.
- (e) Representatives of other Auxiliary/Related Organizations.
- (f) Region Professional Staff.

Section 4. COMMITTEES OF THE REGION BOARD

4.1 Executive Committee

- (a) consists of the Officers of the Region
- (b) meets only at the call of the Region President and/or the Executive Minister
- (c) has a quorum of four members

4.2 Standing Committees. Members of Standing Committees are appointed for one-year terms and may succeed themselves. Standing Committees shall meet in conjunction with all regular Region Board meetings, and at the call of the committee chair, Region President, or Executive Minister.

The following standing committees shall be appointed by the Region President:

- (a) Budget/Finance Committee. Shall consist of six (6) Region Board members, including the Region Vice President of Budget and Finance (who shall serve as Chairperson). There must be one member from each Area.
- (b) Personnel/Nominating Committee. Shall consist of five (5) Region Board members, including the Past President, who shall serve as Chairman. There must be one member from 4 of the 5 Areas.
- (c) Program Coordinating Committee. The remaining Region Board members shall be assigned to this committee, with the chairperson being the Vice President of Program. This committee may choose to function under the following sub-committees: Educational Ministries, Program Development and Outreach, and World Mission Support.

4.3 Other Committees. The Region Board may create task forces and ad hoc committees within the Board or outside it, as it deems necessary.

ARTICLE V – AREAS

Section 1. NAME/DEFINITION

The Region shall be divided into Areas, the geographical boundaries of which shall be determined by the Region Board. Each Area shall select its own name. Areas shall have such powers as are delegated by the Region.

Section 2. PURPOSE

Each Area shall implement the Region's goals and purposes within that Area through the setting of priorities, and the development and use of program resources which will assist its local congregations to achieve individually and corporately their part of the Region's goals and purposes given in Article II.

Section 3. MEETINGS OF THE AREA

295 The Area shall meet annually at an Area Convention. Time and place of the meeting shall be
296 determined by the Area Board. The business to be conducted at the Area Convention shall be
297 contained in the Area Rules of Procedure.
298

299 **Section 4. OFFICERS OF THE AREA**

300 The officers of the Area shall be a President, and such other officers as the Area shall determine
301 in their Area Rules of Procedure (see Article V, Section 6.3 Area Rules of Procedure).
302

303 **Section 5. MEMBERS OF THE AREA**

304
305 5.1 Area Local Congregations

306 Those local congregations that are members of the Region shall be members of the Area within
307 whose geographical boundaries they are located, as determined by the Region Board.
308

309 5.2 Organizations in the Area

310 American Baptist Women's Ministries, AB Men, AB Youth, and Ministers' Council which have
311 demonstrated interest in and support of the Area's program and purpose will be considered
312 "related organizations" by action of the Area Board. A representative of a related organization
313 may be invited to attend Area Board meetings and participate in discussion, but shall have no
314 vote unless the Area Rules of Procedure provide otherwise.
315

316 **Section 6. ORGANIZATION OF THE AREA**

317
318 6.1 Annual Convention

319 The ultimate authority for the Area rests with the delegates in its Annual Convention. The method
320 of electing these delegates, and the business to be conducted at the Area Annual Convention
321 shall be contained in the Area's Rules of Procedure.
322

323 6.2 Area Board

324 The business of the Area shall be conducted by the Area Board between Annual Conventions.
325

- 326 (a) Members of the Area Board shall include the Area President, the Two Area Representatives
327 who will serve on the Region Board, and any other members or officers the Area has
328 determined are required to perform its duties and who have been provided for in the Area
329 Rules of Procedure.
330 (b) Duties of the Area Board shall include the setting and implementation of Area-wide priorities
331 and projects, including the Area budget, and the implementation of the Region's goals and
332 purpose. Such duties as may be required of the Area Board shall be contained in the Area's
333 Rules of Procedure.
334 (c) Meetings of the Area Board shall be as often as required to perform its duties, with time and
335 date set by the Board.
336

337 6.3 Area Rules of Procedure

338 Each Area shall enact its own Rules of Procedure, which shall be consistent with the Bylaws of
339 the Region and with those provisions of the Region's Rules of Procedure which apply to Areas.
340 Initial enactment shall be by two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting at an Annual
341 Convention of the Area. Provisions for subsequent amendments to the Area Rules of Procedure
342 shall be included in the Area Rules of Procedure.
343

344 Area Rules of Procedure shall include, among other things, provisions for establishing the
345 following:
346

- 347 (a) Officers of the Area, including a President, together with the terms, duties, qualifications, and
348 manner of election of each.
349 (b) Area Board Members. Method of determining the composition of the Board in addition to the
350 Area Officers and the two Area Representatives to the Region Board; and a description of
351 Area Board members' duties, manner of election or selection, length of terms of office, and
352 the number of consecutive terms that can be served.
353 (c) Quorum for conducting business at Area meetings
354 (d) Duties of the Area Board, and the business to be conducted at the Area Annual Convention.

- 355 (e) Delegates to the Area Annual Convention, including the formula to determine how many
356 delegates each local church may elect, and that used by the Area Board to elect/select at-
357 large delegates.
358 (f) Method of selecting/electing ten (10) Area delegates for the Region Biennial meeting. These
359 delegates serve until the next Biennial and thus would automatically be delegates for any
360 Region Special session(s) that may be called during their term. [Refer to Article III Section
361 2.4(b)].
362 (g) Method of election of Two (2) Area Representatives who will serve a three-year staggered
363 term on the Region Board, with a maximum of two consecutive terms. These representatives
364 will automatically be members of the Area Board.
365 (h) Method to deal at the Area level with Educational Ministries, Program Development and
366 Outreach, and World Mission Support.
367 (i) Method of appointing standing and ad hoc committees within the Area Board or outside of it,
368 for the performance of its duties.
369 (j) Method of selecting ecumenical representatives for which they may have requests.
370 (k) Method for amending/revising the Area Rules of Procedure.
371

372 6.4 Associations/Clusters

373 The Areas shall have the authority to establish among its members, subgroups of Associations or
374 Clusters as it deems appropriate or necessary to facilitate fellowship and/or training among its
375 members.
376

377 6.5 Financing of Area Programs

- 378
379 (a) Financing of the Area programs shall be through participation in the Region's Return
380 Percentage of its contribution to ABC/USA United Mission as determined by a formula agreed
381 upon by the Areas and the Region. Areas should encourage their members to supplement
382 the Region support with their own contributions to Area needs, within agreed upon
383 covenants. Areas are not expected to contribute to the expenses of the Region professional
384 and support staff; such expenses are paid for by the Region.
385 (b) Area programs to be funded may include such Area ministries as aid to churches, program
386 expenses, Area travel, ecumenical outreach, campus ministry, office and secretarial
387 expenses, associate staff salaries and expenses, and any other expenses as determined by
388 the Area to be necessary and beneficial.
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394 **ARTICLE VI – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

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396 In all situations not specifically covered by the Bylaws and Rules of Procedure of the Region, the rules contained
397 in *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, current edition, shall govern this organization.
398

399 **ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS**

400
401 These Bylaws may only be amended or revised at a Biennial Session of the Region, or at a Special Session
402 called for that purpose.
403

- 404 **Section 1.** Suggestions for amendments or revisions of these Bylaws must be made by one of the following
405 methods:
406 (a) Recommendations of the Region Board or its duly appointed bylaws committee. Such
407 recommendation requires approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Region Board
408 present and voting.
409 (b) Recommendation of an Area, which is the result of a 2/3 approval vote of the duly authorized
410 delegates present and voting at an Area convention or Area special meeting called for that
411 purpose. Notice of the meeting at which the vote will be taken must be mailed to all Area
412 constituent churches at least 30 days prior to the meeting and must contain the date, time,
413 place, and purpose of the meeting, and must give the text of the change(s) proposed. Area
414 shall forward its recommendation to the Region Board.

- 415 (c) Recommendation of any member congregation that has approved the recommended
416 change(s) and has obtained approval of 11 more of the Region's member congregations, all
417 of which have voted on the proposed change(s) at a duly authorized congregational meeting
418 and who have submitted in writing the date of their meeting and the results of that vote (total
419 for, against, and abstaining) to the congregation that originated the recommendation. A copy
420 of these written approvals must be attached to the recommendation and forwarded to the
421 Region Board by the originating congregation.
422
- 423 **Section 2.** Each proposed amendment or revision resulting from any of the methods listed in Section 1
424 above, shall be provided in writing to all members of the Region Board at least 90 days before the
425 Biennial Session or Special Session of the Region when the changes will be voted upon.
426
- 427 **Section 3.** Notice of the meeting of the Region at which the changes are to be voted upon must be printed in
428 two separate official publications of the Region, or via a direct mailing by the Region Secretary to
429 all member congregations, at least forty-five (45) days before the date of the meeting. Such
430 notice shall contain the date, time, place and the purpose of the meeting, and must give the text
431 of the changes proposed.
432
- 433 **Section 4.** Quorum to vote on Bylaws changes shall be 100 accredited delegates, and a two-thirds
434 affirmative vote of the accredited delegates present and voting is required for approval.
435

436 These Bylaws of the American Baptist Churches of the Northwest were adopted by the delegates at the
437 constituency convention of the Region, March 1, 1969, at the First Baptist Church, Walla Walla, Washington, and
438 were further amended as follows:
439

- 440 - March 17, 1973, at the Second Biennial Region Convention in Missoula MT.
441 - April 21, 1978, at the Fifth Biennial Region Convention in Salt Lake City, UT.
442 - June 17, 1982, at the Eighth Biennial Region Convention in Billings MT.
443 - June 13, 1984, at the Ninth Biennial Region Convention in Spokane WA.
444 - June 19, 1986, at the Tenth Biennial Region Convention in Everett WA
445 - May 13, 1988, at the Eleventh Biennial Region Convention in Yakima WA.
446 - May 13, 1994, at the Fourteenth Biennial Region Convention in Great Falls MT.
447 - May 16, 1998, at the Sixteenth Biennial Region Convention in Spokane WA.
448 - May 20, 2006, at the Twentieth Biennial Region Convention in Everett, WA.