

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE NORTHWEST

RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. DUTIES OF THE REGION

The primary duties of the Region are to:

- 1.1 Elect the Region's officers and members at large of the Region Board.
- 1.2 Review actions, policies and program of the Region as taken by its Officers, Board, committees, and staff during the previous biennium.
- 1.3 Provide constituency opinions, guidance and direction for the Region's staff, Officers, Board, and committees in policy areas.
- 1.4 Provide inspiration and guidance for the delegates of the Region's local congregations and areas.
- 1.5 Amend the Bylaws of the Region as necessary and appropriate.

2. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

2.1 **The PRESIDENT** shall:

- 2.1.1 Preside over the meetings of the biennial convention and special sessions of the Region.
- 2.1.2 Chair the Region Board and the Executive Committee.
- 2.1.3 Sign all legal documents as instructed by the Region Board and the Executive Committee.
- 2.1.4 Appoint the members of all committees not otherwise provided for, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. He/she shall serve as and ex officio member with vote on all committees, attending those he/she deems necessary.
- 2.1.5 Serve as the official representative of the Region where specified.

2.2 **The VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAM** shall:

- 2.2.1 Succeed the president in his/her absence or inability to fulfill the duties of his/her office.
- 2.2.2 Serve as vice chair of the Region Board and the Executive Committee.
- 2.2.3 Serve as chair of the Program Coordinating Committee.
- 2.2.4 Not automatically be a candidate for President.

2.3 **The VICE PRESIDENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE** shall:

- 2.3.1 Serve as chair of the Budget and Finance Committee.
- 2.3.2 Provide for the receiving and holding all monies and evidences of property owned by the Region and committed to his/her care by the Region Board and shall make appropriate reports.
- 2.3.3 Periodically review vouchers issued for the payment of funds.
- 2.3.4 Make a report to the region at each Biennial Convention.

2.4 **The SECRETARY (EXECUTIVE MINISTER)** shall:

- 2.4.1 Provide for the keeping of accurate minutes of the meetings of the biennial and special sessions of the Region.
 - 2.4.2 Prepare the minutes of the Region's Biennial Session for publication.
 - 2.4.3 Keep all records of the Region Board and of the Executive Committee.
 - 2.4.4 Retain and use the seal of the corporation as instructed by the Region Board or the Executive Committee.
 - 2.4.5 Sign all legal documents as instructed by the Region Board.
 - 2.4.6 Prepare notices for biennial and special sessions of the Region, and for meetings of the Region Board and of the Executive Committee.
 - 2.4.7 Inform persons of the appointment to the office and/or Board and committee membership.
 - 2.4.8 Act as the primary representative of the Region, deciding where the Region needs to be represented and see that persons are assigned to represent the Region.
- 2.5 The **PAST PRESIDENT** shall:
- 2.5.1 Serve as a member of the Region Board.
 - 2.5.2 Serve as chair of the Personnel and Nominating Committee.

3. The REGION BOARD

The Region Board:

- 3.1 Shall transact all of the business of the region, not otherwise provided for, between its stated sessions, and such business as may be referred to the Board by the Region when it is in session.
- 3.2 Shall appoint the search Committee for the Executive Minister when the need arises. This committee shall be representative of the Areas and constituency of the Region.
- 3.3 Shall call the Regional Executive Minister and other professional staff members. The Executive Minister shall be chosen in consultation with the General Secretary of the ABC/USA in keeping with an agreed upon covenant between ABC/NW and ABC/USA.
- 3.4 Shall be responsible for establishing the Region's priorities and policies for consideration by the Areas as they develop programs.
- 3.5 Shall adopt the Region's annual budget.
- 3.6 Shall have over-all responsibility for the Region's ecumenical relationships, except where delegated to the Areas.
- 3.7 Shall authorize any capital funds campaigns.
- 3.8 Shall fill any officer or at-large vacancies on the Board. Vacancies of Area Representative to the Region Board shall be filled by the Area Boards. A Board member missing two consecutive meetings without excuse shall automatically vacate his/her position. A Board member representing an Area shall automatically vacate his/her office upon moving from the Area he/she represents.
- 3.9 Shall set the date and place of its meetings.
- 3.10 May elect to excuse Region Staff and/or observers to discuss matters the Board deems to be of a sensitive nature.
- 3.11 In consultation with the Budget and Finance Committee, is authorized and empowered to purchase, acquire, receive in trust or otherwise, and to sell and dispose of, at public or private sale, mortgage or lease any and all real estate of this corporation now or

hereafter held at such time or times, upon such terms and conditions as it may determine, and acknowledge and deliver on behalf of this corporation deeds or other instruments to said real estate.

- 3.12 Shall have charge of the personal property and investable funds of the corporation: shall have power in consultation with the Budget and Finance Committee to invest, sell and reinvest from time to time as occasion may require or when in the judgment of the Board it may be for the interest of the corporation to change any of its investments.
- 3.13 Shall appoint a Biennial Program Committee to plan the Biennial Session of the Region. This committee shall be staffed by the Executive Minister and shall be responsible for planning the location, theme and program of the Biennial Session and coordinate with the host Area's local arrangement committee. In addition, they shall recommend to the Region Board initial plans for the theme of the next following Biennial Session so that speakers may be secured well in advance.
- 3.14 Shall fulfill the responsibilities listed in the following documents, and otherwise act in accordance with them:
 - 3.14.1 Bylaws of ABC/USA.
 - 3.14.2 Standing Rules of ABC/USA.
 - 3.14.3 The Covenant of Relationships and its Agreements Among the General, National and Regional Boards of the American Baptist Churches.

4. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall:

- 4.1 Function for the Region Board between regular sessions of the Board, except in the calling of the Region Executive Minister, subject to the approval of the Region Board.
- 4.2 Determine in consultation with the Region Staff how the responsibilities of the Executive Minister will be fulfilled by the appointment of an Interim or Acting Executive Minister and/or the realignment of Staff responsibilities, in case of the vacancy of the office of Executive Minister or his/her inability to serve.

5. STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE REGION BOARD

5.1 BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Budget and Finance Committee:

- 5.1.1 Shall prepare annually a proposed budget for the Region and submit it to the Region Board.
- 5.1.2 Is responsible for monitoring the financial resources of the Region.
- 5.1.3 Is responsible for encouraging the giving of bequests and annuities to the Region.
- 5.1.4 Is responsible for the acceptance of bequests and property gifts to the Region.
- 5.1.5 Is responsible for recommending to the Region Board the buying and selling of property, including ownership agreements with other bodies.
- 5.1.6 Is responsible for managing the budget of the Region.
- 5.1.7 Shall arrange for at least an annual audit of all Region accounts by a qualified person or firm.

5.2 PERSONNEL AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Personnel and Nominating Committee shall:

- 5.2.1 Recommend to the Region Board position descriptions for professional personnel.
- 5.2.2 Recommend to the Region Board Personnel Policies for the Region.
- 5.2.3 Recommend to the Budget and Finance Committee salary scales and fringe benefits for all personnel in consultation with the Executive Minister.
- 5.2.4 Develop the procedures for the biennial review of the performance of Professional Staff in the light of position descriptions and the adopted annual priorities of the Region and Areas. These procedures shall be recommended to the Region Board and on their adoption they shall be administered by the Executive Minister in evaluating all the Professional Staff annually. The Region Board, using the same procedures shall evaluate the Executive Minister annually. Every three (3) years the office of the General Secretary, ABC/USA will be invited to participate in the evaluation of the Executive Minister.
- 5.2.5 Nominate to the Biennial Session the persons to be elected to the Region Board and the Region's Officers.
- 5.2.6 Recommend to the Region Board personnel to fill vacancies on the Professional Staff, except wherein otherwise provided, with the approval of the Executive Minister, and in the case of the Area Ministers, in consultation with their respective Areas.
- 5.2.7 Approve the Search Committee for Professional Staff other than Educational Ministries according to Personnel Policies.
- 5.2.8 Elect a vice chair annually to fulfill the duties of the Past President (including serving as the chair of the Personnel and Nominating Committee and serve on the Executive Committee) in case he/she is unable to fulfill the duties of his/her office.

5.3 PROGRAM COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Program Coordinating Committee:

- 5.3.1 Shall be responsible for coordinating those programs which affect more than one Area within the Region.
- 5.3.2 May choose to function under sub-committees such as Educational Ministries, Program Development and Outreach, and World Mission Support.
- 5.3.3 Shall assist the appropriate Area departments and/or committees to fulfill their program responsibilities.
- 5.3.4 May request funding from the Region in order to fulfill its purposes, or may request an amount from the participating Areas for that purpose. Said purpose may include concentration of program within an Area beyond the Area's ability to fund the program.

6. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE REGION AND THE AREAS

6.1 The Region shall:

- 6.1.1 Be responsible primarily for making overall policies which relate to the entire Region.
- 6.1.2 Serve as an agency of coordination to assist the various Areas to work together on those programs which are deemed to be needed in more than one Area.
- 6.1.3 Be responsible for paying of all Region Staff salaries, benefits, travel expenses, and Region Board expenses according to the Region budget.
- 6.1.4 Form such Regional committees and task forces as are necessary in order to work effectively in relationship to ABC/USA.

6.2 The Areas shall:

- 6.2.1 Be primarily responsible for determining the programs which are necessary and/or beneficial for their constituencies and providing those programs.
- 6.2.2 Develop a proposed annual budget for the programs they seek to provide, encourage the churches of the Areas to provide financial support for those programs, and negotiate with one another through their Area Ministers to attain an equitable distribution of available program funds from the Region. The results of this negotiation will be presented to the Budget and Finance Committee for their recommendation and shall be acted upon by the Region Board. Budget requests must be submitted to the Budget and Finance Committee in care of the Region office by August 31.
- 6.2.3 Finance such programs as Aid to Churches, Program Expenses, Area Travel, Ecumenical Outreach, Campus Ministry, Office and Secretarial expenses (other than the region office and secretaries), any associate staff salaries and expenses, and any other programs as determined by the Area to be necessary and beneficial.
- 6.2.4 Have a balance from all sources in Area program funds no greater than a one-year budget unless they have negotiated that possibility with one another through the Area Ministers and this has been authorized by the Region Board upon recommendation of the Budget and Finance Committee.

7. OTHER STANDING RULES

7.1 Standing Rules relating to the Region at Convention

- 7.1.1 All motions, resolutions or recommendations shall be written, signed by the maker and given to the Secretary.
- 7.1.2 All members of Region churches may speak to the question, although only delegates are allowed to vote.
- 7.1.3 Ministers, missionaries and others who are not members of the Region, but who have been invited to attend, may speak to the question but may not vote.
- 7.1.4 Debate shall be limited to three minutes per speaker. No one may speak in debate more than twice on the same question in the same session, unless a specific ruling otherwise by the chair or appropriate action by the body in session makes other provisions.
- 7.1.5 No one may speak a second time on the same question if another who has not spoken requests the floor.
- 7.1.6 A Majority vote shall be required for election to office.

7.2 Standing Rules relating to membership in the Region.

- 7.2.1 Procedures to accept churches shall be contained in Appendix A to these Rules.
- 7.2.2 Procedures to dismiss churches shall be contained in Appendix B to these Rules.

7.3 Other Standing Rules of the Region

- 7.3.1 As an affiliate organization of the American Baptist Churches in the USA, this Region authorizes its Region Board to appoint such representatives of this Region as the American Baptist Churches in the USA shall request.
- 7.3.2 The Executive Minister, the bookkeeper and at least one other person shall be authorized to sign checks. Two signatures shall be required and at least three persons shall be authorized to sign checks at all times.
- 7.3.3 Whenever “ex officio” is used anywhere in these Rules of Procedure, or the Bylaws, it shall mean that the person has full right for both voice and vote unless it is specifically stated otherwise.
- 7.3.4 The terms of Region officers and Board members shall begin on January 1 following their election. All officers-elect and board members-elect shall be invited to the fall meeting of the Region Board for a time of welcome and orientation.

8. AMENDMENTS

These Rules of Procedure may be amended by a majority vote of the Region Board provided a written letter of intention to amend has been mailed to each Board member at least three weeks in advance of the time of the meeting where action is to take place.

(3/11/89)

(Amended by mail vote of Region Board, June 11, 1990)

(Amended by Region Board, April 29, 1995)

(Amended by Region Board, March 27, 1998)

(Amended by the adoption of “Procedure to Accept Churches” as Appendix A by Region Board, March 27, 1998)

(Amended [but not incorporated into the text of this document] by adoption of the document “First and Second Readings” by the Region Board, April 10, 1999)

(Amended by adoption of “Procedure to Accept Churches into the Region Membership” as Appendix A and “Procedure to Dismiss Churches from Region Membership” as Appendix B by the Region Board, March 18, 2000)

Rule of Procedure

1. First and Second Readings

1.1 Definition

1.1.1 When the Region Board acts as a legislative body in addressing issues of policy and other major matters affecting the life and relationships of the Region as a whole, such matters must be brought for a First Reading, followed by a Second Reading, at which time action may be taken.

1.1.2 First Reading. At a First Reading the Board receives and considers as a Report a proposed action submitted by a Board Committee, Board Task Force, Board member, or member congregation.

1.1.3 Second Reading. At a Second Reading the Board hears as an original main motion (for debate and vote):

- (a) the First Reading report exactly as previously submitted; or
- (b) the report modified within the scope and focus of its original intent, to reflect the Board's questions and comments during the First Reading and/or by amendments duly adopted.

1.2 Distribution. Proposed actions coming for First and second (possibly amended) Readings must be in writing, with sufficient copies for all Board members and staff. Copies must be distributed at least 30 days before the meeting at which the matter is to be addressed for the First or Second Reading. (Also see below)

1.2.1 If a proposed action is developed within a committee of the Board which is meeting in conjunction with a duly called meeting of the Board, the action can be addressed for a First Reading without the 30 day notice.

1.3 Legislative Procedure

1.3.1 First Reading

1.3.1.1 The sponsor of the proposal will clearly state its intent.

1.3.1.2 During the First Reading, Board members may only ask questions for clarification, point out areas of potential reservation, or suggest to the sponsor such modifications in writing which, though not amending the intent of the First Reading document, may tend to remove potential reservations at the time of the Second Reading.

1.3.2 Second Reading

1.3.2.1 Sufficient copies of the document as it is being presented for Second Reading (either in original form or modified within the scope and focus of its original intent) must be made available to Board members.

1.3.2.2 If, on request of the sponsor, the Board votes by a three-fourths (3/4) majority to schedule the Second Reading to take place later in the same meeting in which the First Reading occurred, the modified document shall be distributed or by other means make clear as to how the original has been modified, as early as possible before the beginning of the session in which the Second Reading will occur.

1.3.2.3 If one or more members of the Board question whether the modifications made to a First Reading document are within the scope and intent presented at its First Reading, the question may be formally presented to the Board for consideration. If a majority of the Board agree to receive a document for Second Reading it will be placed before them for their debate and action. If, on the other hand, a majority of the Board feel that the modifications to the first Reading document go beyond the scope and focus of its original intent presented at the First Reading, the sponsor may request a change of the agenda item from a Second Reading to another First Reading.

Adopted by the Region board of American Baptist Churches/NW
April 10, 1999

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE NORTHWEST PROCEDURE TO ACCEPT CHURCHES INTO REGION MEMBERSHIP

The Covenant of Relationships and Its Agreements among the General, National, and Regional Boards of the American Baptist Churches, states that one of the denominational responsibilities of Regional Boards is to “receive and dismiss local congregations as Cooperating Churches of the Regions and of the ABC/USA, according to the common criteria for a Cooperating Church”.

Following are the steps to be followed to accept into membership as a Cooperating Church of ABC/NW and ABC/USA, a church which is already established and has decided to join the American Baptist Churches in the USA. Whenever an Area or Area Board is mentioned in these procedures, it refers to the Area where the church in question is located. Each step in this process must be documented.

- I. Potential cooperating churches:
 - A. shall meet the responsibilities as stated in ABC/NW Bylaws, Article III, Section 3, and the Covenant of Relationships and Its Agreements.
 - B. may also be evaluated by other factors the Area decides might reasonably preclude membership in ABC/NW and ABC/USA.

- II. Who can initiate the procedure to accept a church?

The applying church must submit a letter to the appropriate Area Board, stating their desire to join with ABC/USA and their reasons for desiring to become a Cooperating Church. The letter shall also include their name; address; current pastor; pastor’s address and phone number; number of active members; name and address of current chief lay officer of the church (moderator, chair of deacons, and/or clerk); and list other affiliations, if any.

- III. Area Board Appoints a **Church Relations Committee (CRC)**

- A. Upon receipt of the application letter, the Area Board, with the guidance of the appropriate Area Committee and in accordance with Area Rules of Procedure, shall appoint a **Church Relations Committee** to be in contact with the pastor(s) and the applying church. Members of this committee shall include but not necessarily be limited to:
 1. Associate Executive Minister
 2. One Region Board Member
 3. One pastor from the cluster/association to which the applying church would relate
 4. One lay person from the cluster/association to which the applying church would relate
 5. At least one person from the appropriate Area Committee
- B. Within 45 days, the Church Relations Committee (CRC) shall meet with the pastor and officers of the applying church. At this meeting they shall go over the following documents with the applying church: the brochure “*We Are American Baptists*”, the ABC/USA Purpose Statement, the Region Bylaws and Purpose Statement, *The Covenant of Relationships and Its Agreements Among the General, National, and Regional Boards of the American Baptist Churches* (particularly the sections relating to Region Boards), and the qualifications/common criteria for a Cooperating Church. A copy of these Rules of Procedure shall be given to the applicant.

- C. CRC submits a report of its meeting with the applying church to the appropriate Area Committee.
- IV. Appropriate Area Committee brings a recommendation to the Area Board for vote on whether or not to **receive the application letter** from the applying church and **proceed** with the process to accept for membership.
- A. If the Area Board votes **NOT TO RECEIVE** the application, they shall send written notification of their decision and the basis for same, within 10 working days to the applying church and the Region Executive Minister.
 - B. If the Area Board votes **TO RECEIVE** the application, the letter of application and the Area Board's decision are presented as information at the next Area meeting (usually the Area Convention). Pastor(s) and members of the church should be introduced at this meeting, and the members of the Church Relations Committee shall be identified. This starts a one-year exploratory period to further develop the relationship between the applying church, the Region, and ABC/USA through the Area's CRC. The letter of application and the Area Board's decision to proceed with the process, including basis/reasons for the decision, shall also be sent to the Region Executive Minister.
- V. **One-Year Exploratory Period**
- A. During the year, the CRC shall seek to have at least three meetings with the applying church. In addition, there shall be at least one visit by the CRC (or persons the Committee designates) during a regular worship service of the applying church. Representation by the CRC at significant church events shall be arranged.
 - B. During the year, the CRC will be responsible to interpret and encourage participation in Area and Region conventions, and American Baptist Churches' programs, including the four annual offerings; in Area organizations like American Baptist Women's Ministries; and opportunities like the program of camping in the Area and Region. Further exploration of the documents introduced in Section III B above shall also occur during this period.
 - C. CRC shall keep Area Board and Region Executive Minister informed of their progress during this step of the procedure.
 - D. If neither party has elected to withdraw from the acceptance process, CRC submits report to the Area Board at their meeting prior to the Area Convention which will conclude the one-year exploratory period.
- VI. **Area Board** makes a determination and votes on whether or not to proceed with acceptance process. Decision by the Board requires 2/3 approval of total Area Board members.
- A. If vote is NO, Area President shall send written notification of this decision and the basis/reasons for the decision, to the applying church within 10 working days of the vote. A copy of the notification and all pertinent paperwork shall also be sent to the Region Executive Minister.
 - B. If vote is YES, Area Board will present a motion at next Area Convention to recommend that the Region Board accept the applying church as a member of the Region and ABC/USA.
 - C. Notification that a vote will be taken shall be sent to all Area churches at least 30 days prior to the meeting when the vote will be taken. Notification shall include reasons and pertinent information.
- VII **Area Convention Delegates Vote** on Whether or Not to Recommend Acceptance
- A. Approval requires affirmative vote of 2/3 of the duly authorized delegates present and voting at the Area Convention.

- B. Written notification of the result of the vote along with all pertinent paperwork, shall be mailed within 10 working days to the Region Executive Minister for action at the next appropriate Region Board meeting.

VIII. **Region Board Votes** on Acceptance into Membership

- A. Approval requires affirmative vote of 2/3 of total Region Board members.
- B. Written notification of result of vote shall be mailed by Region Executive Minister within 10 working days to applying church, the Area Board, and ABC/USA.
- C. Official recognition of the church as a part of the Region and ABC/USA shall take place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Region (usually in Biennial Convention).

IX. **APPEAL PROCESS**

A. **Appeal -- By Initiating Church -- of Area Board Decision**

1. Initiating church may appeal a decision of the Area Board not to proceed with the acceptance process. Appeal must be submitted in writing to Area President within 21 days of the date on their written notification of the Area Board decision.
2. Area President shall place the decision whether or not to proceed, on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Area Meeting/Convention.
3. If decision is to proceed, process is picked up at point where it had stopped. If decision is not to proceed, initiating church may not re-apply for membership for 24 months from date the vote was taken.
4. Decision voted is final, provided notice and quorum requirements have been met. Written notification of the result of the vote shall be mailed within 10 working days to the initiating church, and to the Region Executive Minister for information and/or required action at the next appropriate Region Board meeting.

B. **Appeal -- by Initiating Church -- Due Process Not Followed**

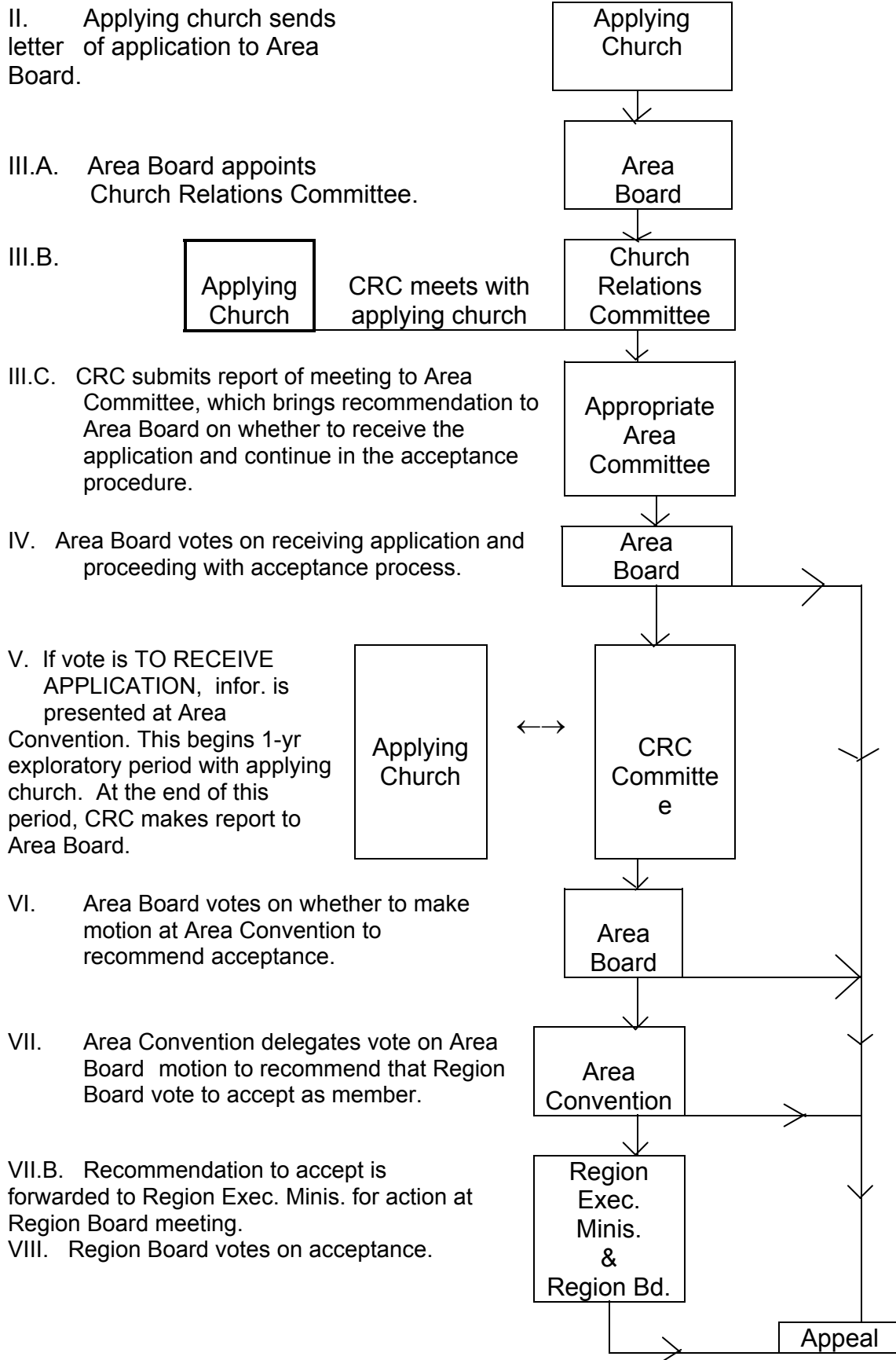
1. Initiating church may appeal a negative decision of the Area Board or Area Convention on the grounds that due process was not followed.
2. Appeal shall be in writing to the Region Office/Executive Minister within 30 days of the date on their written notification.
3. Region Executive Committee shall within 45 days review the process and reports which resulted in the negative decision that's being appealed.
4. If they decide the applying church has a **valid appeal**, they shall instruct the Area President to have the process picked up at the point where the problem(s) occurred. Written notification of this decision shall be sent within 10 working days to applying church and to the Area Board.
5. If they decide the **appeal is not valid**, written notification of this decision shall be sent within 10 working days to the applying church, the Area Board, and ABC/USA.

C. **Appeal -- by Initiating Church -- of Region Board Decision**

1. Applying church has the option of appealing the Region Board decision to ABC/USA. ABC/USA Standing Rule 5.3 delineates the procedure a church shall follow to appeal a Region decision.

2. Their written **intent to appeal** must be sent to the Region Executive Minister within 10 days of the date on their written notification of the Board decision.
3. Written notification of a Region Board decision shall be sent to all Area churches only after all appeal processes have been exhausted.

DIAGRAM OF PROCESS TO ACCEPT CHURCHES INTO REGION MEMBERSHIP



**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF THE NORTHWEST
PROCEDURE TO DISMISS CHURCHES FROM REGION MEMBERSHIP**

The Covenant of Relationships and Its Agreements among the General, National, and Regional Boards of the American Baptist Churches, states that one of the denominational responsibilities of Regional Boards is to “receive and dismiss local congregations as Cooperating Churches of the Regions and of the ABC/USA, according to the common criteria for a Cooperating Church”.

Following are the steps to be followed to dismiss a Cooperating Church from membership in ABC/NW and ABC/USA. Whenever an Area or Area Board is mentioned in these procedures, it refers to the Area where the church in question is located. Each step in this process must be documented.

- I. **The reasons for which a church may be dismissed:**
 - A. shall be in accordance with ABC/NW Bylaws, Article III, Section 3, and the Covenant of Relationships and Its Agreements.
 - B. may include consideration of factors relevant to the Common Criteria that the Area decides should preclude continued membership in ABC/NW and ABC/USA.

- II. **Who can initiate the procedure to have a member church dismissed?**
 - A. The Member Church, to withdraw itself
 - B. The Area Board
 - C. 20% of the Area Member Churches may join together
 - D. The Region Board

- III. A formal written request for dismissal (and any supporting documents) shall be sent by the initiating entity to the Area Board and to the church(es) being recommended for dismissal. The request shall:
 - A. Be in writing to the Area Board (forwarded by the Region office if received there).
 - B. State the date of the duly-called meeting at which the initiating entity took a vote to recommend dismissal, and the results of the vote (number for, against, and abstaining). In the case of multiple member churches being the initiating entity, each of the churches shall have held such a meeting and shall report their results in writing.
 - C. Contain the reason(s) for dismissal, along with facts to support the reason(s).
 - D. Contain a statement of the steps taken, if any, to communicate with the church(es) in question and to work towards a resolution to the perceived problem.

- IV. Area Board appoints a **Church Relations Committee (CRC)**
 - A. Prior to any formal written request for dismissal being acted upon, the Area Board shall, with the guidance of the appropriate Area Committee and in accordance with Area Rules of Procedure, appoint a **Church Relations Committee** to investigate the request and facilitate dialog between the initiating entity and the church(es) being recommended for dismissal, in an effort to work towards resolving the concerns being put forward. The members of this committee shall include but not be limited to:
 1. Associate Executive Minister
 2. One Region Board Member
 3. One Area pastor not from church(es) involved
 4. One lay person not from church(es) involved
 5. At least one person from the appropriate Area Committee
 6. One outside counselor/facilitator, if deemed necessary.All parties shall be provided with copies of these Rules of Procedure.

- B. Within 60 days, the Church Relations Committee shall bring a report and recommendation to the Area Board for consideration. Copies of the report, the recommendation and reasons for same, and any related paperwork shall be mailed to all Area Board members at least 30 days before the meeting at which the decision whether or not to proceed with the process will be considered and voted upon.
- V. The Area Board makes a determination and votes on whether or not to proceed with the dismissal process. Decision by the Board requires 2/3 approval of total Area Board members.
- A. Within 10 days of the vote, the Area President shall send written notification of the decision to the initiating entity, to the member church(es) in question, and to the Region Office/Executive Minister. Said notification shall include the reasons for the decision.
 - B. If the decision is that the reasons for dismissal **ARE NOT VALID**, the initiating entity may appeal (see Section IX. Appeal Process, para. A.).
 - C. If the decision is that the reasons for dismissal **ARE VALID**, said notification shall state that the question of dismissal will be put on the agenda of the next Area Convention meeting.
 - D. Sufficient time must be allowed for all pertinent paperwork regarding the decision to recommend dismissal to be mailed to all Area churches at least 30 days before the Area meeting when the vote will be taken.
- VI. Area Convention delegates vote on whether or not to make a recommendation for dismissal to the Region Board.
- A. Decision requires 2/3 approval of the voting delegates present, provided a quorum is present and proper notice (45 days) has been given to all Area churches of the intent to take the vote and the reasons why.
 - B. Within 10 days of the date the vote was taken, the Area President shall forward results of the vote to the Region Office/Executive Minister for appropriate action, including a copy of all pertinent paperwork relating to the decision by the Area.
- VII. Region Board or Executive Minister shall place the request to dismiss on the business agenda of the next regularly scheduled Region Board meeting that will allow at least 30 days' written notice to Board members that a vote to dismiss will be on the agenda. Said notice shall include reasons.
- A. Initiating entity and the church(es) being considered for dismissal shall be advised of the date of the Board meeting at which the vote will be taken.
 - B. Executive Minister shall invite the church(es) being considered for dismissal to send delegates to this Board meeting to participate in the discussion relating to the question, or to send a written statement for the Board to consider in their deliberations.
 - C. Region Board votes on dismissal. Vote to dismiss requires approval of 2/3 of the TOTAL REGION BOARD MEMBERS.
 - D. The Region Board shall send written notification of the result of the vote to the initiating entity, the church(es) in question, the Area Board, and ABC/USA within 10 working days.
 - E. Any party with **intent to appeal** shall notify Region Office/Executive Minister in writing within 10 working days of date of written notification of decision to be appealed.
 - F. Dismissal shall be effective, and all Region churches shall be notified of the decision, only after all appeal processes have been exhausted.
 - G. Dismissed church may not re-apply for membership for 24 months from the date their dismissal was effective.

IX. APPEAL PROCESS

A. Appeal -- By Initiating Entity -- of Area Board Decision

1. Initiating entity may appeal the decision of the Area Board not to proceed with the dismissal process. Appeal must be submitted in writing to Area President within 21 days of the date of the written notification of the Area Board decision.
2. Area President shall place the decision to dismiss on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Area Convention (see steps to follow beginning with Sect. VI above).

B. Appeal -- Due Process Not Followed

1. Either the initiating entity or the dismissed church(es) may appeal a Region Board decision to dismiss or not dismiss, on the grounds that due process was not followed.
2. Appeal must be submitted in writing to Region Office/Executive Minister within 60 days of the date on the written notification of the decision.
3. **Appeal Committee** to handle this type of appeal shall consist of four (4) Area Presidents, omitting the President of the Area in which the church(es) in question is/are located. Committee members shall determine the time and place of their meetings. The Executive Minister shall provide copies of all related documentation to all Committee members within 21 days of receiving the written appeal.
 - a. The Committee shall issue their decision in writing to the Executive Minister within 60 days after receiving the documentation.
 - b. Any decision by the Committee requires approval of 3/4 of the total Committee and shall be final.
 - c. If decision is that due process was NOT followed, church(es) in question shall remain members of the Region and ABC/USA.
4. The Executive Minister shall then send written notification of the decision of the Appeal Committee to all Region member churches and ABC/USA, within 21 days of receipt of the Committee's written decision.

C. Appeal -- If Area Decision Is Reversed by Region Board

1. Either the initiating entity or the church(es) in question can appeal a final decision of the Region Board to dismiss or not to dismiss, if the Region Board decision has reversed the Area decision. Appeal must be submitted in writing to Region Office/Executive Minister within 60 days of the date on the written notification of the decision.
2. Any such appeal shall be decided by the Region at a Region Biennial. Notice and Quorum requirements for the meeting at which the vote will take place shall be the same as for bylaws amendments (see ARTICLE VII Sections 3 and 4 of ABC/NW Bylaws). Approval requires affirmative vote of 2/3 of the accredited delegates present and voting. Decision shall be final.
3. Written notification of the result of the vote shall be sent out by the Region Executive Minister to all Region member churches and ABC/USA, within 21 days of the date the vote was taken.

- D. The parties agree that this Appeal process shall precede any appeal to ABC/USA. ABC/USA Standing Rule 5.3 delineates the procedure a church shall follow to appeal a Region decision.

DIAGRAM FOR PROCESS TO DISMISS CHURCHES FROM REGION MEMBERSHIP

