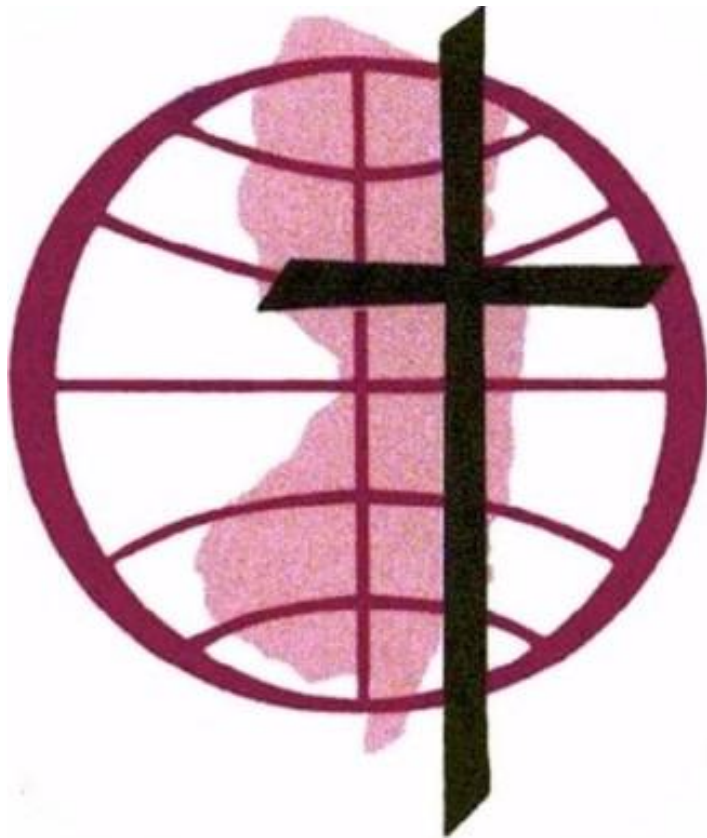


# AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW JERSEY



## **ABCNJ BY-LAWS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE ADOPTED MARCH 12, 2011**

**3752 NOTTINGHAM WAY, SUITE 101**

**TRENTON, NJ 08690**

**Telephone: (609) 587-8700**

**[www.abcnj.net](http://www.abcnj.net)**

**[www.facebook.com/abcnj](http://www.facebook.com/abcnj)**



**THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES  
OF NEW JERSEY**

**ABCNJ BY-LAWS**

**AND**

**RULES OF PROCEDURES**

**ADOPTED MARCH 12, 2011**

## BY-LAWS

### American Baptist Churches of New Jersey

#### Article I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be American Baptist Churches of New Jersey<sup>1</sup>.

#### Article II. MISSION

The American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, both as a state organization and through its member churches, exists to spread the Gospel in New Jersey and around the world.

#### Article III. MEMBERSHIP

**Section 3.01** This organization shall consist of those churches in New Jersey and beyond that share in its mission and support its purpose.

**Section 3.02** Upon the recommendation of an Association, the Council shall review applications and grant membership to any congregation seeking affiliation with the organization, providing it shall have given evidence of support for the organization's purpose and mission.

#### **Section 3.03** Remove or Withdraw From Membership

- (a) Upon the recommendation of an Association, a constituent congregation may be dismissed for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Council at any meeting, if 30 days' written notice of the proposed dismissal is given to all members of the Council and to the congregation under consideration of dismissal. This congregation shall have the right to answer the charges at said meeting. An affirmative vote of dismissal may be appealed to the Annual Session of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, or upon 30 days' written notice before any regular or special meeting of the voting members. A majority vote of voting members present at the meeting is required to reverse the decision of dismissal by the Council.
- (b) Upon written notice by a constituent congregation to withdraw their membership, the Council can remove said congregation from membership, after exploring the stated reason for withdrawal of membership.

**Section 3.04** The voting members of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey shall consist of:

- (a) Delegates from each constituent congregation on the basis of three for each congregation, plus one delegate for each one hundred members or major fraction thereof above the first two hundred as reported in the most current annual statistics report as found in the ABCNJ yearly Directory. Churches shall be entitled to only three delegates if they did not report in the previous year.

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<sup>1</sup> The American Baptist Churches of New Jersey can be referred to as "ABCNJ" within the By-Laws and Rules of Procedure.

- (b) Elected officers, members of the Council, and staff of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey.

**Article IV. ANNUAL SESSION**

**Section 4.01** Authority:

The final authority of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey rests with the voting members in session.

**Section 4.02** Time and Place:

Unless otherwise determined by the Council, the Annual Session shall be held in the week commencing upon the fourth Monday in September. The Council shall determine the place.

**Section 4.03** Function:

The primary functions of the Annual Session are as follows:

- (a) Election of officers and ratification of members of the Council and its committees.
- (b) Reviews, as desired, of the actions, policies, and programs of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey as taken by its officers, Council and staff in the previous year.
- (c) Request Council to establish special committees for review and/or study of special issues and concerns.
- (d) Receive reports from the task forces of the preceding year, and presentations of the plans and objectives of the task forces designated for the succeeding year.
- (e) Adoption of the proposed annual budget.
- (f) Provide inspiration and guidance for the voting members that will undergird their leadership role in the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey for the succeeding year.
- (g) Power to amend these By-Laws.
- (h) Such other functions as it shall reserve to itself.

**Section 4.04** Special Sessions:

Such special sessions as needed shall be called by the Council or upon written request of thirty-two (32) constituent congregations.

**Section 4.05** Quorum:

Fifty (50) accredited<sup>2</sup> delegates representing not less than one-half of the Associations shall constitute a quorum.

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<sup>2</sup> Accredited delegates are those delegates selected by constituent congregations and reported to American Baptist Churches of New Jersey by their church clerk or pastor.

**Article V. OFFICERS**

**Section 5.01** Positions:

The officers of this organization shall be a President, three Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and the Executive Minister.

**Section 5.02** Terms:

Terms of office shall be:

- (a) The President shall serve two-year terms and may not serve a second consecutive full term.
- (b) The three Vice-Presidents shall serve two-year terms. They may serve a second consecutive full term but may not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.
- (c) The President and the three Vice-Presidents are to come from different Associations.
- (d) The Secretary and the Treasurer shall serve three-year terms. Neither may serve in the same office for more than two consecutive terms.
- (e) The Executive Minister shall serve an indefinite term. The Executive Minister shall be chosen by the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey in a regular or special session at such time as a vacancy may occur in the office. The Council shall recommend a candidate to the organization, after consultation with the General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. The vote shall be a secret ballot, and election shall require a two-thirds majority of the voting members present and voting.
- (f) The term of the Executive Minister may be ended, upon recommendation of the Council by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present and voting at any regular or special session.

**Section 5.03** Duties:

Such duties as may be required of the officers are contained in the organization's Rules of Procedure.

**Article VI. COUNCIL OF ASSOCIATIONS AND REGIONAL MINISTRIES<sup>3</sup>**

**Section 6.01** Membership:

The Council shall consist of:

- (a) The seven officers of the organization<sup>4</sup>. The three Vice-Presidents represent the committees they chair (The Finance, Budget and Properties Committee, The Personnel Committee and The Committee on Professional Ministries and Church Relations).

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<sup>3</sup> The Council of Associations and Regional Ministries is referred to as "Council" throughout the By-Laws and Rules of Procedure.

<sup>4</sup> See By-Laws Article V., Section 5.01 for list of all officers.

- (b) The moderator or their associational representative from each Association who are ratified at the Annual Session of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey. No two members of the Council may come from the same congregation even if they represent different regional ministries, auxiliaries, or Associations.
- (c) The ABCNJ representatives serving on ABCUSA national boards.
- (d) The chairs or presidents of the following Regional Ministries, auxiliaries, and Council Committees:
  - (i) Nominating Committee
  - (ii) Camps, Conferences and Retreats Committee
  - (iii) New Church Development Committee
  - (iv) Public Mission Committee
  - (v) ABCNJ Go Global Ministries
  - (vi) ABCNJ Academy Ministries
  - (vii) Haitian Ministries
  - (viii) Latino Ministries
  - (ix) Asian Ministries
  - (x) ABCNJ Youth Ministries
  - (xi) ABCNJ Women in Ministry
  - (xii) American Baptist Women Ministries of New Jersey
  - (xiii) American Baptist Ministers Council of New Jersey
  - (xiv) American Baptist Latino Ministers Council of New Jersey

**Section 6.02** Adding and Removing Regional Ministries

New ministries may be awarded a seat on the Council if nominated by the Executive Committee and affirmed by 85% of the Council. All ministries are expected to promote the regional vision and abide by its policies. If a ministry fails to remain active for a period of one year, it may be removed from the Council upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee and the ratification vote of 85% of the Council.

**Section 6.03** Tenure:

- (a) Any person elected or appointed to the Council, except the Executive Minister, is limited to six consecutive years on the Council in any capacity.

- (b) Officers shall serve on the Council as long as they hold their position.
- (c) The term for moderator or their associational representative shall be one year and shall be elected each year prior to ratification at Annual Session. They shall serve on the Council as long as they hold their positions.
- (d) An Association moderator or their associational representative will lose their office if they move their membership to a church outside of their Association. If they are elected as an ABCNJ officer, they must give up their Association position. The Association, by methods approved by the ABCNJ Rules of Procedure, shall appoint a successor for the unexpired term.

**Section 6.04** Duties:

The Council will meet at least quarterly and shall have power to act on matters that appear before it. The duties of the Council working together with the Executive Minister are:

- (a) To articulate and further the ABCNJ regional ministry vision.
- (b) To develop and oversee ABCNJ policies.
- (c) To ratify and welcome new churches into regional membership.
- (d) To call paid members of the regional ministry team and hold them accountable in terms of performance and ethics.
- (e) To present a regional ministry budget to the ABCNJ Annual Session and receive the yearly audit.
- (f) To serve as a regional “think tank” on key ministry issues and opportunities.
- (g) To nominate regional representatives to national boards and appointments.
- (h) To work with the regional ministry team to promote healthy and faithful regional life and ministry.
- (i) To encourage churches, individuals and pastors to support the region financially.
- (j) To confirm the appointments to the ABCNJ Annual Session Planning Committee.
- (k) To fulfill the duties as listed in the Rules of Procedure<sup>5</sup>.

**Section 6.05** Quorum:

A quorum shall consist of fifty percent (50%) of the members of the Council.

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<sup>5</sup> The full list of duties from prior versions of the By-laws are now included in the Rules of Procedure, Article IV, Section 4.01.



## **Article VII. STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **Section 7.01** Standing Committees:

Standing Committees of the Council have specific duties assigned by the Council, By-Laws, or Rules of Procedure and report back to the Council through their chair.

- (a) The Executive Committee consists of the President, Three Vice-Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey. The Executive Minister shall serve as ex officio member of the Executive Committee.
- (b) The Finance, Budget and Properties Committee consists of five (5) people nominated by the Nominating Committee working together with the Executive Minister, affirmed by the Council, and ratified by the voting members at the ABCNJ Annual Session, including a Vice-President and Treasurer. The Vice-President will serve as the chair of the committee.
- (c) The Personnel Committee consists of five (5) people nominated by the Nominating Committee working together with the Executive Minister, affirmed by the Council, and ratified by the voting members at the ABCNJ Annual Session including a Vice-President. The Vice-President will serve as the chair of the committee.
- (d) The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations consists of one representative elected by each Association, plus a representative from ABCNJ Ministers Council and an ABCNJ Vice-President. The Vice-President will serve as the chair of the committee
- (e) The Nominating Committee consists of the moderators or their association representative who are currently serving on Council. The President shall name the chair of the Nominating Committee.
- (f) The Camps, Conferences and Retreats Committee consists of a chair named by the President and up to nine (9) members nominated by the Executive Committee and confirmed by the Council.
- (g) The Annual Session Planning Committee consists of a chair and at least (3) persons<sup>6</sup> appointed by the President working together with the Executive Minister and confirmed by the Council to plan the program for the ABCNJ Annual Session.

### **Section 7.02** Executive Minister and Full-Time Associate Regional Pastors

- (a) The Executive Minister shall be an ex officio member of each Standing Committee and other Committees of the Council.
- (b) The full-time Associate Regional Pastors shall be ex officio members of the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

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<sup>6</sup> The Rules of Procedure, Article IV, Section 4.03 states the procedure for appointments of additional committee members and Article V. Section 5.07 Annual Session Planning Committee, (a) is also a reference.

**Section 7.03** Tenure:

Members of the Standing Committees shall serve a one-year term. Committee members may serve a maximum of six consecutive terms.

**Section 7.04** Duties:

Such duties as may be required of the committees are contained in the Rules of Procedure.

**Section 7.05** Quorum:

A majority of the members in each committee shall constitute a quorum<sup>7</sup>.

**Article VIII. PROGRAM COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES**

A program committee or task force is a functioning body of members of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey that deals with a specific program or task designated by the Council for a stated period and is accountable to the Council. Program committees or task forces may be established at the Annual Session or by the Council at any time. Formation and functions of a program committee or task force will be determined according to processes contained in the Rules of Procedure.

**Article IX. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS**

The organization may have such auxiliary organizations as shall give evidence of supporting its purpose. The current list of auxiliary organizations is contained in the Rules of Procedure. Auxiliary organizations may be approved by the Council at any regular or special meeting.

**Article X. ASSOCIATIONS**

**Section 10.01** Associations:

- (a) The American Baptist Churches of New Jersey is to be organized into geographical Associations, with membership set forth by the Council in the Rules of Procedure. The Associations are to elect a moderator or their associational representative to Council and a representative to the Professional Ministry and Church Relations Committee.
- (b) Officers in each Association shall include at least a moderator and a secretary.
- (c) The moderator or their associational representative, and a representative to the Professional Ministry and Church Relations Committee, shall be elected at a meeting of the Association prior to the Annual Session of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey and serve until their successors are elected. Tenure of these positions shall be one year and may not be held for more than six consecutive years.
- (d) Associations, task forces, committees and their duties as may be required are described in the Rules of Procedure.

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<sup>7</sup> In counting for a quorum an ex-officio member shall be counted to determine a majority per RRONR XVI,49, Ex-Officio Board Members.

- (e) Upon the adoption of these By-Laws there will be a two year transition period for the Council, Associations, and churches to review the membership of each association.

**Article XI. CONDUCTING BUSINESS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY**

**Section 11.01** Use of Teleconferences and Videoconferences.

Teleconferences and Videoconferences can be used by Council committees, regional ministries, and task forces.

**Article XII. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

In all situations not specifically covered by these By-Laws and Rules of Procedure, the most recent revision of Robert's Rules of Order shall be used as a basis of parliamentary authority.

**Article XIII. AMENDMENTS**

These By-Laws may be amended at any session of the organization called for that purpose provided that:

**Section 13.01** Written notice to amend has been given at a previous meeting of the organization at least two months preceding; or

**Section 13.02** Such amendment is recommended by a majority of the Council and has been published in the official publication of the organization at least one issue preceding; and

**Section 13.03** Notice of such change shall be provided each constituent congregation by direct mailing at least one month in advance; and

**Section 13.04** There shall be a two-thirds affirmative vote of those voting members present and voting.

**Section 13.05** Previous versions will be superseded upon adoption of this amended By-Laws and Rules of Procedure.

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**  
**of the**  
**American Baptist Churches of New Jersey**

**Article I. OBJECTIVES**

**Personal Witness** - To be faithful witnesses by word and deed, so that persons respond to God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ in all of life.

**Social Witness** - To fulfill the Biblical mandates of love and justice for all people and God's creation.

**Discipleship** - To be mature disciples of Jesus Christ, obeying the biblical demands of living as the People of God in the world.

**Leadership** - To develop and support lay and professional leaders for ongoing emerging roles in our total mission.

**Congregational Growth** - To strengthen existing congregations and establish new congregations for their ministry in the world.

**Service** - To have a caring ministry to persons and institutions of special need.

**Stewardship** - To develop and manage our human and material resources for the maximum support of mission objectives.

**Cooperation** - To function responsibly as part of the whole Body of Christ, that the world might believe.

**Identity** - To celebrate our heritage, understand and be committed to the life and mission of the American Baptist Churches.

**Article II. SPECIAL SESSIONS**

**Section 2.01** Special sessions may be authorized per By-laws, Article IV, Section 4.04.

**Section 2.02** Notification of a special session including a description of the action to be taken shall be provided each constituent congregation at least sixty (60) days prior to the session.

**Article III. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

**Section 3.01** President

- (a) Preside over meetings of the organization's annual and special sessions.
- (b) Serve as chair of the Council.
- (c) Serve as chair of the Executive Committee.

- (d) Name the chair of the Nominating Committee.
- (e) Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Council.
- (f) Call the meetings of the Executive Committee at least five times a year between regularly scheduled Council Meetings.
- (g) Appoint select committee leaders and members, subject to Council confirmation, as spelled out in the By-Laws.
- (h) Be an ex-officio member of all committees of the organization except the Nominating Committee.

**Section 3.02** The Three Vice Presidents:

- (a) The Vice President of Finance, Budget and Properties Committee
  - (i) Serves as chair of the Finance, Budget and Properties Committee.
  - (ii) Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Council.
- (b) The Vice President of Personnel Committee
  - (i) Serves as chair of the Personnel Committee.
  - (ii) Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Council.
- (c) The Vice President of the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations
  - (i) Serves as chair of the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.
  - (ii) Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Council.

**Section 3.03** Secretary

- (a) Provide for the keeping of accurate minutes of the meetings of the annual and special sessions of the organization.
- (b) Prepare the minutes of the Annual Session for publication.
- (c) Provide for the keeping of accurate minutes of Council and Executive Committee meetings.
- (d) Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Council.

**Section 3.04** Treasurer

- (a) Be the custodian of the funds of the organization, both invested and current.
- (b) Provide for the receiving and disbursement of funds as directed by the voting members of the Council in the exercise of the powers given to them.

- (c) Keep separate accounts of the several funds of the organization and give complete reports at the regular meetings of the organization and the Council.
- (d) Give bond satisfactory to the Council.
- (e) Submit all financial accounts for audit annually by a certified public accountant.
- (f) Be an ex-officio member of the Finance, Budget and Properties Committee of the Council.
- (g) Be an ex-officio member of the Camps, Conferences and Retreats Committee.
- (h) Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Council.

**Article IV. COUNCIL**

**Section 4.01** Duties:

The Council shall be the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey ad interim<sup>8</sup> and shall have the power to act on matters that appear before it. The primary functions of the Council are as follows:

- (a) Develop organizational policy with the assistance of the appropriate task force.
- (b) Set organizational priorities and supervise their implementation.
- (c) Coordinate and evaluate programs according to the objectives chosen for a given year.
- (d) In advance of each Annual Session select appropriate tasks and program emphases, establish task group objectives for the succeeding program year, and establish procedures for maintaining accountability of task forces to the Council on a continuing basis.
- (e) Recommend the organizational proposed annual budget to the voting members in Annual Session.
- (f) Administer the investment and expenditure of all organizational funds and monies.
- (g) Have the care, management, and control of all real estate of the organization, and the power of the organization to lease, convey, and mortgage the same as may be necessary or appropriate.
- (h) Employ legal counsel as required.
- (i) Have overall responsibility for the organization's ecumenical relationships and responsibilities.

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<sup>8</sup> The term ad interim means that the Council can act as the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey between Annual Sessions and special meetings of the accredited delegates.

- (j) Employ professional staff upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee working together with the Executive Minister.
- (k) Recommend to the voting members in annual or special session a candidate for Executive Minister.
- (l) Fill any officer vacancies upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee until the next Annual Session.
- (m) Receive and remove congregations within an Association upon recommendation of the appropriate Association.
- (n) Remove congregations from membership in American Baptist Churches of New Jersey upon recommendation of the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.
- (o) To nominate regional representatives to national boards and appointments, in cooperation with the Office of the General Secretary of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., pursuant to procedures established by the national General Board.
- (p) Elect American Baptist Churches of New Jersey delegates to the Biennial Meeting of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.
- (q) Vote on whether to ratify actions taken by the General Board of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., as referred to it by the General Board.
- (r) The Council shall appoint representatives to ecumenical or other groups with which the organization is affiliated.
- (s) Fulfill such other responsibilities as are delegated by the voting members in annual or special session.
- (t) Make a report at the Annual Session on the organization.
- (u) In the absence of any officer, the Council will authorize a member to serve this function. In the event that an officer is incapacitated, the Council will determine if there needs to be a temporary replacement or if the office is vacant.

**Section 4.02** Members of Council

- (a) Each Council member shall be a member of a constituent congregation.
- (b) Each Association representative shall be elected by their Association and ratified by the voting members at ABCNJ's next Annual Session. This representative may either be the moderator or their associational representative.
- (c) Each Council member representing regional auxiliaries, committees or ministries shall be elected by their group unless otherwise stated in the By-Laws or Rules of Procedure and ratified by the voting members of ABCNJ's next Annual Session.

- (d) Absence of a Council member for three consecutive meetings of the Council shall constitute a vacancy. When a vacancy is determined, such vacancies shall be filled through normal procedures.
- (e) The terms of office for all Council members begin immediately at the close of the Annual Session in which ratification takes place.
- (f) Associations and regional ministries will be represented on the Council by an ABCNJ church member (clergy or lay person) who is currently not serving as a salaried ministry team member.

**Section 4.03** Council Committees:

Other committees, as designated by the organization in Annual Session or as deemed needed by the Council, may be created. The continuing need for all committees so created shall be subject to review by the Council at regular intervals, but no longer than every two years after its creation. Each Council Committee shall consist of a chair, and at least three members from three different constituent congregations and affirmed by the Council. Members of the Council Committees shall serve a one-year term. Members may serve a maximum of six consecutive terms. The chair shall be named annually and ratified by the voting members at the Annual Session. Each committee shall be able to add working members, with the right to vote in committee, if they are interested and available.

**Section 4.04** Regular meetings of the Council shall be held quarterly: on the last Saturday of January and on the second Saturday of November, May, and September, unless otherwise ordered. Special meetings may be called by the President or the Executive Minister and shall be scheduled upon written request of five members of the Council or by prior action of the Council in regular or special session.

**Article V. STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Section 5.01** The Executive Committee shall meet at least five times a year between regularly scheduled Council meetings. The Executive Committee is charged with:

- (a) Preparing the agenda for Council meetings, working together with the Executive Minister (or his or her designee) and the chairs of Regional Ministries and Council Committees.
- (b) Dealing with matters of regional import in between Council meetings working together with the Executive Minister.
- (c) Advising and instructing staff on the interpretation and implementation of policy when requested by staff. (Interpretation and implementation is to be given only in emergency situations requiring immediate action.)
- (d) Hearing reports as requested from officers, and from the chairs of Regional Ministries, Council Committees and task forces.



**Section 5.02** The Finance, Budget and Properties Committee shall prepare the annual proposed budget and present it to the Council by its September meeting for review and recommendation to the voting members at the annual meeting. This committee shall coordinate and review all investments and financial matters of the organization.

**Section 5.03** The Personnel Committee has the following duties:

- (a) Develop and periodically review executive job descriptions.
- (b) Prepare executive and office staff salary scales, benefits and procedures.
- (c) Determine the staff positions to be filled and assist the Executive Minister in screening candidates for such positions.
- (d) To recommend to the Council staff appointments or dismissals, after working together with the Executive Minister.
- (e) Express concern for the morale and effectiveness of the staff.
- (f) Conduct an annual review of staff performance.
- (g) Make appropriate reports to the Council.

**Section 5.04** The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations has the following duties:

- (a) Examine candidates for Regional recognized ordination.
- (b) Supervise the certified lay minister program.
- (c) Oversee the minimum salary and salary support programs.
- (d) Encourage continuing education of clergy.
- (e) Propose and implement the organization's policy on Ordination Standards and Procedures.
- (f) Interpret ABCNJ's policy on pastoral relations.
- (g) Monitor the process of receiving and dismissing member churches, and the covenant relationship between member churches and ABCNJ as it is administered within each Association.

**Section 5.05** Nominating Committee

- (a) In order to encourage the emergence of new leadership and secure people with the gifts necessary to advance the region's work, the committee will maintain a list of potential leaders.

- (b) Present to the annual session nominations for all positions except that of Executive Minister, for which the term has expired or is vacant.
- (c) Receive by September 1, the representatives named by each Association for the Council and each of the committees represented on Council in order to have a single slate for presentation.

**Section 5.06** Camps, Conferences and Retreats Committee

The Camps, Conferences and Retreats Committee has the following duties:

- (a) Establish policy and review the Baptist Conference Center property:
  - (i) Maintain property in a safe, attractive, and ecologically sound condition.
  - (ii) Develop, review, and implement rules and standards for use of property.
  - (iii) Review the needs and recommend development of the property in conjunction with the Finance, Budget and Properties Committee of the Council.
- (b) Establish policy and review the camping program and procedures in accordance with ABCNJ policy decisions:
  - (i) Initiate and review the camping program and procedures in accordance with ABCNJ policy decisions.
  - (ii) Recommend changes in camping policy to the Council.
  - (iii) Review curriculum planning and styles.
  - (iv) Develop and review guidelines for hiring, maintaining, and dismissing temporary personnel.
  - (v) Initiate and review programs that invite campers to develop continuing relationships and experiences.
  - (vi) Review rules, procedures, standards, rates, charges and fees.
- (c) Establish policy and review conferences and retreats:
  - (i) Initiate, plan and review conferences and retreats, including ones which are related in policy statements of ABCNJ.
  - (ii) Suggest and review conferences and retreat programs and opportunities for constituent congregations.
  - (iii) Cooperate with the New Jersey Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies in the planning of conferences and retreats.
  - (iv) Review rules, procedures, standards, rates, charges and fees.

- (d) Prepare and review the financial program and budget of the Baptist Conference Center and related programs for proposal to the Finance, Budget and Properties Committee of the ABCNJ.
- (e) Develop and implement plans for advising constituent congregations of camping, conferences and retreat programs, and for enlisting their participation.

**Section 5.07** Annual Session Planning Committee

- (a) The members of Annual Session Planning Committee will be appointed by the President working together with the Executive Minister.
- (b) The Annual Session Planning Committee has the following duties:
  - (i) Recommend date and place to the Council.
  - (ii) Prepare the program of the Annual Session.
  - (iii) Prepare any appropriate messages to the congregations for presentation at the Annual Session.
  - (iv) Supervise the arrangements including registration for all delegates and visitors.

**Article VI. PROGRAM COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES**

Members of the program committees and task forces shall be members of constituent congregations of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey and shall serve in accordance with their interest or ability at the appointment of the Council. Each program committee and task force shall determine the frequency of its meetings. Style of operation and further Rules of Procedure shall be determined by each program committee and task force for itself.

Program committees and task forces shall submit recommendations for action to the Council. The Council may request action by program committees or task forces in keeping with their areas of concern. A program committee or task force may make public statements in the name of the program committees or task force or may recommend public statements within their areas of concern to the Council.

**Section 6.01** The Scholar Award Committee

- (a) The President of the Council shall appoint three (3) or more members, one of whom shall act as a secretary. The committee can add additional members to aid it in its mission.
- (b) The Scholar Award Committee shall administer the Region's undergraduate and seminary scholarship program.

**Article VII. ASSOCIATIONS**

**Section 7.01** The purposes of the Associations are:

- (a) To foster, organize and promote meaningful relationships between the pastors and laypeople of the covenant churches. Fellowship dinners, regular pulpit exchanges, joint special services, pastors covenant groups, mission events and projects could characterize these relationships.
- (b) To serve as an ordination committee for candidates for ABCNJ recognized ordination, in accordance with the policies and procedures adopted by ABCNJ.
- (c) To encourage churches and pastors to enter fully into the regional life and ministry.
- (d) To serve as the “gateway” for new congregations to enter into ABCNJ and ABC-USA.
- (e) To elect and send a representative to The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.
- (f) To elect and send their moderator or an associational representative to Council.

**Section 7.02** Constituent Congregation Membership List.

A complete list of constituent congregations shall be published each year in the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey Directory. The Associations shall be comprised of congregations from the most current American Baptist Churches of New Jersey Directory. Churches listed under the New Church Development in the Directory are not members but are mentored to become members of the ABCNJ according to policies and procedures adopted by the Council.

**CAPITAL ASSOCIATION**

Allentown, First  
 Bordentown, First  
 Burlington Township, Blessed Redeemer  
 Ministries, Inc.  
 Chesterfield  
 Columbus  
 Groveville, New Horizon  
 Hamilton Square  
 Hightstown, First  
 Hopewell, Calvary  
 Imlaystown, Upper Freehold  
 Lambertville, First  
 Princeton, Christ Congregation  
 Princeton, First  
 Princeton, Next Gen Church  
 Princeton of Penns Neck  
 Trenton, Evangelical BC of Christ  
 Trenton, First  
 Trenton, Grace Community Church  
 Trenton, Macedonia  
 Trenton, Primera Iglesia Bautista  
 Trenton, Shiloh  
 Trenton, St. John's of Ewing Township  
 Trenton, Union  
 West Trenton, First International  
 Yardville, Memorial

**ESSEX ASSOCIATION**

Belleville, Grace  
 East Orange, Bethel Haitian  
 East Orange, Calvary  
 East Orange, Christ Resurrection Missionary  
 East Orange, Imani BC of Christ  
 East Orange, Eglise Baptiste Maranatha  
 East Orange, Mision Bautista Hispana: Faro De Vida  
 East Orange, New Bethany Haitian  
 East Orange, New Hope

Harrison, Fairview Latino Mission  
 Irvington, Bethany of the New Alliance  
 Irvington, Eglise Evangelique Beraca  
 Irvington, Eglise de la Nouvelle Jerusalem  
 Irvington, First  
 Newark, First Bethel  
 Irvington, Mont Horeb Church of God  
 Irvington, Mt. Hermon  
 Irvington, Premiere Eglise Baptiste Haitienne  
 Jersey City, Abundant Joy  
 Jersey City, Haitian Evangelical  
 Jersey City, North  
 Kearny, First BC of Arlington  
 Kearny, Igreja Batista Da Graca  
 Livingston, Federated  
 Maplewood, First Maplewood  
 Montclair, St. Paul  
 Montclair, Union  
 Newark, Berean  
 Newark, Bethany  
 Newark, Congregational  
 Newark, Evangelical Reform  
 Newark, First Baptist Peddie Memorial  
 Newark, Genesis Missionary  
 Newark, Gethsemane  
 Newark, Good Neighbor  
 Newark, Greater Abyssinian  
 Newark, Greater Bethel Missionary  
 Newark, Haitian BC at the Crossroads  
 Newark, Haitian Bethel  
 Newark, Haitian Philadelphia  
 Newark, High Hope Missionary  
 Newark, Hopewell  
 Newark, Humanity  
 Newark, Igreja Batista Do Calvario  
 Newark, Mt. Olivet  
 Newark, Mt. Pleasant  
 Newark, Mt. Pleasant Missionary

Newark, Mt. Zion  
Newark, New Light Missionary  
Newark, Paradise  
Newark, Providence Missionary  
Newark, Smyrna  
Newark, St. John  
Newark, Temple Baptiste de Salem  
Newark, Victory at Sunrise  
North Arlington, Evangelical  
of Bethel-Newark  
Nyack, NY, Premiere Eglise Haitienne  
de Rockland  
Orange, Union  
South Orange, First  
Union City, Betania  
Union City, Ebenezer Baptist Mission  
Union City, First Spanish  
Union City, Spanish American  
Union City, Second Baptist  
West New York, Ebenezer  
West New York, First Spanish

**GREATER DELAWARE VALLEY  
ASSOCIATION**

Berlin  
Beverly, First  
Browns Mills, First  
Burlington, First  
Camden, Baptist Temple  
Camden, Fairview Community  
Camden, Hope Memorial  
Camden, Kaighn Avenue  
Camden, Rosedale  
Camden, St. John  
Camden, Tenth Street  
Cherry Hill, First  
Cherry Hill, Kings Community  
Collingswood, First

Eastampton, First of Mt. Holly  
Gloucester City, First  
Haddonfield, First  
Haddonfield, First Asian  
Magnolia, New Mercies Deliverance  
Moorestown, First  
Moorestown, Second  
Moorestown, South Jersey Chinese Christian  
Church  
Mount Royal, Berkley  
Oaklyn  
Palmyra, Central /Riverton-Palmyra  
Paulsboro, Taylor Memorial  
Pennsauken, Calvary Community  
Pennsauken, First Spanish  
Pitman, First  
Riverside, Calvary Brazilian Mission  
Sewell, Community  
Vincentown, First  
Westmont, Grace  
Williamstown, Community Bible Fellowship  
Williamstown, First Haitian  
Willingboro, Alpha  
Willingboro, Parkway  
Willingboro, Unity Fellowship  
Woodbury, Central

**NORTH NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION**

Carlstadt  
Cliffside Park, First  
Cliffside Park, Igreja Batista El Shadday  
Clifton, Calvary  
Clifton, La Iglesia del Pueblo  
Clifton, Passaic Christian Fellowship  
Demarest  
Denville, Iglesia Bautista Familia de Dios, Inc.  
Englewood, First  
Fair Lawn, Van Riper-Ellis/Broadway  
Glenwood

Hackensack, Calvary  
Hackensack, New Hope  
Hackensack, Trinity  
Hamburg  
Hewitt, Greenwood  
Jersey City, Central  
Jersey City, First  
Jersey City, Monumental  
Jersey City, Salem  
Oakland, Ramapo Valley  
Palisades Park, Heavenswill Church  
Parsippany, First Baptist Community  
Passaic, First  
Passaic, Iglesia Bautista de Passaic  
Passaic, Mt. Pilgrim Missionary  
Passaic, Mt. Zion  
Passaic, Union  
Paterson, Calvary  
Paterson, Community Church of Love  
Paterson, Exodus  
Paterson, Family Circle  
Paterson, First  
Paterson, First Hispanic  
Paterson, Gosen  
Paterson, Mt. Zion  
Paterson, New Shiloh  
Paterson, Serenity  
Paterson, Union Avenue  
Ridgefield Park, First  
Ridgefield Park Hispanic Mission  
Ridgewood, Emmanuel  
Ridgewood, Mt. Bethel  
Rutherford, Mt. Ararat  
Sussex, First  
Teaneck, Evergreen  
Teaneck, First  
Teaneck, Premiere Eglise Baptiste  
Haitienne Macedoine

Wayne, Preakness  
West Milford, Echo Lake  
Westwood, Mt Zion

#### **NORTH SHORE ASSOCIATION**

Asbury Park, Mt. Pisgah  
Asbury Park, Second BC of Asbury Park  
Atlantic Highlands, Central  
Atlantic Highlands, St. Paul  
Belmar, Calvary  
Brick, First BC of Laurelton  
Freehold, First  
Freehold, Mision Bautista de Freehold  
Keyport, Second  
Lakewood, First  
Long Branch, First  
Long Branch, Second  
Manasquan, First  
Matawan, Second  
Middletown, Old First  
Osbornville  
Red Bank, Calvary  
Red Bank, First  
Red Bank, Pilgrim  
Toms River, East Dover  
Toms River, Living Word

#### **RARITAN ASSOCIATION**

Bayonne, Bergen Point Community  
Edison, Iglesia Bautista de Edison  
Edison, Stelton  
Elizabeth, Central  
Elizabeth, First BC of Cranford/Elizabeth  
Elizabeth, Haitian Bethany  
Elizabeth, Iglesia Bautista Hispanoamericana  
Elizabeth, Igreja Batista Getsêmani  
Elizabeth, Imani Temple  
Elizabeth, Shiloh

Hillside, First  
Kendall Park, Springs of Living Water  
Kenilworth, First  
Kenilworth, Union  
Perth Amboy, Concord Missionary  
Perth Amboy, First  
Perth Amboy, Iglesia Bautista Ebenezer  
Perth Amboy, Second, The Cathedral  
Piscataway, Christ Fellowship  
Piscataway, First of New Market  
Rahway, First  
Rahway, Second  
Roselle, Second  
South Amboy, Everlasting Ministries  
South Plainfield, First  
International Inc.  
South River, Union  
Springfield, Antioch  
Summit, Christ Church  
Summit, Fountain  
Westfield, Bethel  
Westfield, First

#### **WATCHUNG ASSOCIATION**

Baptistown  
Cherryville  
Dover, Primera Bautista Hispana de dover  
Flemington  
Flemington, First Hispanic Mission  
Ledgewood, First  
Ledgewood Hispanic Mission  
Madison, First  
Middlesex, Freedom in Christ  
Morristown,  
Morristown, First Hispanic  
Morristown, Union  
New Brunswick, Ebenezer  
New Brunswick, First

New Brunswick, Sharon  
North Brunswick, Georges Road  
North Plainfield, Primera Iglesia Bautista  
de Plainfield  
Plainfield, Calvary  
Plainfield, First Park  
Plainfield, Shiloh  
Scotch Plains  
Scotch Plains, St. John's  
Somerset, Community  
Somerset, First BC of Lincoln Gardens  
Somerset, Maranatha Baptist Fellowship  
Somerville, First  
Stockton, Sandy Ridge Community Church

#### **WEST NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION**

Alloway  
Bridgeton, Berean Temple  
Bridgeton, Cohansey BC of Roadstown  
Bridgeton, First  
Bridgeton Hispanic Mission  
Bridgeton, Pearl Street  
Bridgeton, Union Baptist Temple  
Cape May, Cape Island  
Cape May Court House, First BC of Cape May  
Linwood, Seaview  
Margate Community  
Matawan, First  
Millville, Central  
Ocean View, Calvary  
Pedricktown, First  
Salem, First  
Salem, Memorial  
Vineland, First  
Wildwood, First  
Woodbine, Gethsemane  
Woodstown, First



**Section 7.03** Association Nominating Committee

- (a) Each Association shall have a Nominating Committee of at least three (3) persons to prepare a slate of candidates as follows:
- (b) Association Nominees:
  - (i) Moderator or their associational representative to Council (1-year term).
  - (ii) Representative to the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations (1-year term).
- (c) Criteria for Association Nominees:
  - (i) No two nominees can come from the same constituent congregation.
  - (ii) The names of nominees should be publicized throughout the Association at least one month in advance of the annual meeting of the Association.

**Section 7.04** Association Duties

- (a) The Association shall create the necessary task forces to accomplish their program goals.
- (b) Associations shall develop program emphases that will be responsive to their felt needs.
- (c) Associations shall be responsible for coordinating ordination procedures within their Association churches following the policies adopted by the Council.
- (d) Associations shall be responsible for coordinating their By-Laws to comply with all parts of the By-Laws and Rules of Procedures of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey.

**Article VIII. STAFF**

**Section 8.01** Personnel matters shall be articulated in the ABCNJ Personnel Manual.

**Section 8.02** Age 65 shall be the normal retirement age for all employees of ABCNJ. However, no employee shall be required to retire for reasons of age, except where age is a bona fide occupational qualification reasonably necessary to the conduct of the organization's normal operation.

**Article IX. MISCELLANEOUS**

**Section 9.01** Procedures at the Annual Session.

- (a) All motions, resolutions or recommendations shall be written, signed by the maker and given to the Secretary.
- (b) No one may speak a second time on the same question, if another who has not spoken requests the floor.

(c) A majority vote shall be required for election to office, except for the Executive Minister.

**Section 9.02** The fiscal year of ABCNJ shall be the calendar year.

**Article X. MULTI-RACIAL AND MULTI-CULTURAL LEADERSHIP**

ABCNJ is committed to the election or appointment of persons as officers, staff, Council and committee members without regard to race or national origin, and such persons shall include male and female, lay and clergy.

**Article XI. AMENDMENTS**

These Rules of Procedure may be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the Council, provided a written letter of intention to amend has been mailed to each Council member at least three weeks in advance of the time of the meeting where action is to be taken.

Previous versions will be superseded upon adoption of this amended Rules of Procedure.

**COVENANT OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN  
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW JERSEY AND MEMBER CHURCHES**

American Baptists understand their relationship to God through Jesus Christ as a freely accepted covenant. We also believe and understand that the local body of believers is autonomous. It is fitting, therefore, that relationships of organizations created by Christians be bound together by mutually accepted covenants.

God has called us to be the covenant people of God, living in loving relationship with our Creator and Redeemer, and with one another. Our covenant relationships and responsibilities to each other are rooted in the unconditional love of God, who has called us to live a life that expresses the full dimensions of that love and who has sent us to witness to all people concerning God's grace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We as Christians believe that we have been led by the Spirit of God to give expression to our faith and purpose in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through the local church. We believe that this same Spirit calls us into a wider relationship as American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, in order that we may better accomplish common purposes related to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God.

We therefore covenant with one another and with God, to be associated as a fellowship of churches committed to a common purpose, and sharing in common activities and fellowship. As American Baptist Churches of New Jersey - both as a regional organization and as local churches - we trust that our relationship will surpass any list of expectations as we seek to be obedient to the mandate of sharing the gospel throughout the whole world. Our life and actions, both as persons and as churches, are to be consistent with the confession of faith we have made and the covenant vows we have taken. Through God's divine grace, we are called to be responsible to one another in our relationships within congregations and with each other in the wider fellowship.

**WHAT MEMBER CHURCHES CAN EXPECT FROM THE REGION**

American Baptist Churches of New Jersey and its member churches have responsibilities to each other. The member churches agree to maintain a regional organization which will make available resources, support and leadership for its member churches.

The following are presented as basic expectations that member churches can have in fellowship with the state organization:

**A. Opportunities for Wider Fellowship and Vision**

1. Hold Annual Session - inspiration and business.
2. Provide resource ideas, resource materials, and resource persons.

**B. Mission**

1. Serve as an agency for mission in New Jersey and elsewhere.
2. Serve as a channel for relating churches to the worldwide mission of American Baptist Churches in the USA.
3. Serve as a channel for other cooperative efforts in ministry and resources.

**C. Leadership Training**

1. Conduct training events for local churches in such areas as: evangelism, mission, stewardship, Christian education, youth work, current issues and public matters.

**D. Resources**

1. Provide counseling regarding pastoral selection.
2. Provide consultation for planning, problem solving, goal setting and new forms of ministry.
3. Provide counseling regarding an adequate Christian education program.
4. Provide counseling in meeting public and social needs.
5. Furnish literature designed to help the local church in its many aspects of ministry.
6. Provide financial counseling regarding budgets, property and investments.
7. Furnish information regarding American Baptist Churches in the USA and its wide variety of resources.

**E. Support**

1. Nurture fellowship among the associations of churches.
2. Provide staff to serve the local churches as needed.
3. Sponsor various programs designed to support pastors and church leaders.
4. Provide financial aid (where deemed good stewardship).

## **WHAT THE STATE ORGANIZATION CAN EXPECT FROM MEMBER CHURCHES**

Member churches have responsibilities to one another to share in the work of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey. These expectations are the foundation upon which each member church is expected to build in its pursuit of a genuine family relationship as a part of this body.

The following are basic expectations that the regional organization can have in fellowship with the member churches:

### **A. Participation in the Fellowship**

1. Consider goals and objectives of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey and American Baptist Churches in the USA.
2. Participate in the fellowship of American Baptists by encouraging participation and attendance at the Annual Session, and association meetings.
3. Cooperate in activities with sister churches by: (a) inviting sister churches to participate in events sponsored by the member church; and (b) accepting the invitation of sister churches to participate in their events.
4. Complete each year the annual report and send it to the office of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey.

### **B. Sharing the Mission**

1. Promote and contribute to American Baptist Mission Support. Consult with the staff of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey regarding giving goals that take into account several factors, including historical patterns of giving, size of congregation, growth record, other relationships and commitments. Each member church is to contribute to the American Baptist Mission Support not less than 2 percent of its total income, exclusive of building funds.
2. Conduct mission and stewardship education, which can include some of the following: use of mission speakers (missionaries, mission interpreters), use of ABC mission reading and viewing materials, interpreting needs of American Baptist institutions (colleges, seminaries, Christian centers, American Baptist Assembly, homes and hospitals).
3. Support the camps, conferences and retreats program of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey.
4. Cooperate in ministry with other Christian churches and religious bodies.

### **C. Taking Part in Leadership Training**

1. Make use of American Baptist Churches in the USA and ABCNJ resource materials in ministry settings.

2. Attend frequently leadership training events sponsored by American Baptist Churches of New Jersey in such areas as stewardship, evangelism, mission, creative arts and officers training.

**D. Making Use of Resources**

1. Receive periodic visitation from the staff of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey to discuss and consult on matters of mutual concern.
2. Consult with executive minister and/or associate regional pastors when facing critical problems.
3. When calling a pastor, consider only those ordained in American Baptist Churches in the USA, or whose ordination would be recognized by the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations, and are willing to cooperate in the work of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey and American Baptist Churches in the USA.
4. Encourage newly ordained pastors to be counseled by the Regional Ministry Team for a period of two years.

**E. Giving Support**

1. Encourage persons from the church to invest their energies and skills in giving leadership to the regional organization, and the association as officers and members of committees and task forces that are designed to fulfill the goals and objectives of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey and American Baptist Churches in the USA.

**CRITERIA FOR COVENANTING CHURCH**

In order to have a clear idea of which churches are active members in full relationship with American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, the regional organization shall keep a record of how churches are meeting the following criteria:

**Attendance:** Each member church shall be represented at the Annual Session of ABCNJ and at meetings of the Association.

**Mission Support:** Each member church shall support American Baptist mission by contributing annually a fair share of the congregation's total mission giving to American Baptist Mission Support, including United Mission, American for Christ or Region Offering. A fair share is understood to be not less than 2% of the church's income, exclusive of building funds.

**Reporting:** Each member church shall annually provide reports on forms supplied by ABCUSA and ABCNJ.

## **MONITORING OF COVENANT RELATIONSHIP**

The congregations which are party to this Covenant of Relationships shall monitor the performance of the regional body, American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, through their elected delegates to the Annual Session and special meetings of ABCNJ, and their elected representative on the Council. The region shall monitor the performance of member congregations through the Association to which they belong.

Each Association and staff members of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey shall maintain regular contact with member churches. Any church not participating in and contributing to American Baptist Churches for a period of two consecutive years will, by their lack of participation, be considered not desiring to continue in this covenant relationship with the rest of the body of ABCNJ.

The ABCNJ office shall send an annual report of a church's performance on meeting the criteria for a covenanting church to each member church and to the Association to which the church belongs. The Association shall have responsibility for visiting the church to discuss its relationship with American Baptist Churches and for dismissing that covenanting church. If a church resumes attendance, mission support and reporting, it shall be considered by the Association to be in full fellowship with American Baptist Churches of New Jersey.

If a church refuses to meet with representatives of the Association or to meet the criteria for a covenanting church, the Council may, upon recommendation of the Association to which that church belongs, vote to dismiss that church from membership in ABCNJ. Notice of such action shall be sent to the church prior to the meeting at which the Council is to vote, giving the church a chance to be heard during discussion on the matter. Any future reinstatement of membership in ABCNJ for a church that has been dismissed would be done through the process for receiving a new member church.

The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations of ABCNJ shall annually review the covenant relationship of member churches within each Association. If the Committee finds that any Association is delaying the process or acting unfairly or unjustly in dealing with any church, it shall arrange to meet with representatives of the Association to discuss the matter.





**THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES  
OF NEW JERSEY**

**ORDINATION  
STANDARDS AND  
PROCEDURES**

Revised by ABCNJ Council September 11, 2004

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Ordination is the act of the church by which, in the name of God, it delegates to a qualified person who has responded to the call of God a wide range of ministerial functions and responsibilities.

Baptists long have both celebrated the autonomy of the local church and joined in voluntary association with each other for mission endeavors best accomplished by the wider Christian community. Thus the local Baptist church retains the right to decide for itself but in matters of faith and polity, but also recognizes interdependence with other Baptist churches and organizations as beneficial to full ministry.

### Historical Perspective

One of the commonly held convictions of churches today is that all Christians are ministers who participate in Christ's own ministry. This is evidenced in the baptism of the individual Christian and in the doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers," where within faith communities individuals inspired by the Holy Spirit are both competent and responsible for approaching God on behalf of themselves and others.

Baptists further asserted that any member of the church could be called upon to exercise all ministerial functions and responsibilities, even though this did not ordinarily happen. When a radical doctrine of the priesthood of all believers was combined with a strictly independent concept of the local church, with each congregation directly responsible to Christ, and its officers having no standing outside its membership, there seemed to be little practical or doctrinal foundation for a special order of ministry, the ordained ministry.

But the actual situation was not that simple. Baptists long have possessed a "separate" or "set-apart" ministry that has served a constituency wider than the local congregation. Ordination has tended to be the setting apart (by the call of God and the action of the church) of one of the many ministers to perform special functions of ministry on behalf of the community of faith.

Ordination historically has been understood by many American Baptist congregations as affirming that an individual has had a call to this specialized ministry and has met the necessary qualifications for carrying it out. Although most often a local congregation has taken the

initiative in ordaining that individual, it did so in cooperation with other congregations. This participation of a group of churches in ordination has given the rite much more than merely local significance. In fact, if the ordination was carried out according to the standards of the American Baptist Churches, it represented a denominational recognition of the individual's call and qualifications for the ordained ministry of Christ's universal church.

In the primitive church, the rite of ordination climaxed in the act of "laying on of hands." This act indicated that the person so ordained was not only consecrated to God's service and thus made holy, but also was commissioned to serve on behalf of those who laid on hands (see Acts 6:6 and 13:3; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). In addition, the act and the accompanying prayer, which invoked God's grace upon the ordained, implied the ordinand's authority to share the functions and responsibilities of those who laid hands upon the individual.

This meaning has continued to be central to ordination. Today, the act of laying on of hands signifies and focuses in one person the ministry of many persons who in themselves represent the wider church of Jesus Christ.

## II. PREREQUISITES AND STANDARDS FOR ORDINATION

1. **Call from God to Ministry:** The most important prerequisite for ordination, the call of God to a specialized ministry, does not yield itself to particular standards which a denomination or local congregation might establish. This is why the call must be tested by other prerequisites or standards, especially those having to do with licensing as first step toward ordination, meeting educational standards, and a prior call to a specific place of service in which the candidate intends to serve as an ordained minister. In these three areas it is quite appropriate that the local and the wider church (in case of the denomination, American Baptist Churches in the USA) establish standards for ordination.
2. **Membership:** The candidate for ordination must be a member in good standing of an American Baptist church, preferably the ordaining church.
3. **Licensing:** A local church may grant a license to preach (or otherwise engage in representative ministry) to those who believe themselves (and are believed by others) to be called to the pastorate or other forms of ministry, but are not yet fully prepared to exercise that ministry. It confers no rights and imparts no authority, but is simply an approval by the church of the course which the person is pursuing, and expresses the conviction that the person possesses gifts and capabilities which indicate a call to representative ministry and a promise of

usefulness in it. A candidate seeking ordination should be licensed by their church at least six months prior to ordination.

**Significance of Being Licensed by a Local Church:** A local church, well acquainted with the candidate, is making public the fact that the individual apparently possesses the ability and the spiritual and emotional qualities necessary for ministry, and that the academic training required for ordination is being received. By receiving the candidate under their “watch care,” a local church is expected to give ongoing counsel in regard to vocation and professional training. The pastor, or appropriate board and committee of the church, should perform such counseling.

**Procedure for Licensing by a Local Church:** The candidate makes known the desire to be licensed to the pastor and the appropriate committee of the church where he or she is a member. The candidate then will be interviewed to determine eligibility for licensing. Upon affirmative vote of the local church, recognition as a licensed candidate for ordination will be granted to the candidate. The local church then notifies in writing the ABCNJ Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations of its action so that the person might be registered with both ABCNJ and ABCUSA.

4. **Candidacy Assessment:** Ordained ministry involves more than academic attainment; it calls for ongoing pastoral competence, emotional and spiritual maturity, and consistent Christian character. Following their licensing by the local church, candidates for ordination will complete a comprehensive career and candidacy assessment program sponsored by or in consultation with an American Baptist related Career Development Center. The Center’s evaluation shall be forwarded to the church and the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations. In cases where candidates have completed at least three years of full-time professional ministry experience in New Jersey, this requirement may be waived by the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

5. **Education and Experience:** The educational standard of four years of college and three years of seminary (the B.A. and M.Div. Degrees or their standard equivalents, such as a Ph.D. in Religion) are the normative educational prerequisites for the recognition of ordination by the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey.

- A. This will include functional knowledge of American Baptist history and polity. This can be satisfied by a seminary-level course on both the history and polity of American Baptists or by a regionally approved course of study.

- B. The candidate's professional ethics and intention of cooperation must be affirmed by signing the Covenant and Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches. All persons seeking ordination will have completed a course in professional ethics offered either by a seminary or ABCNJ. This course will consider areas such as professional boundary issues, relationships, confidentiality, ethics in financial matters, and other related issues, which can dramatically affect the relationship between pastor and people.
- C. At least six months practical experience in the Christian ministry (field education) as certified by the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations is required. The fieldwork of graduates of recognized seminaries fulfills this requirement.
- D. Exceptions to the educational prerequisite are not encouraged, but individuals may apply for the recognition of their ordination without having received their B.A. and/ or M.Div. degrees on the following condition. Experience as an equivalent to educational preparation may be granted on the basis of two years of satisfactory professional growth (such as a lay pastor program from a seminary or an ABC region) and ministerial service (minimum of twenty hours per week) for every one year of academic preparation that is lacking in the candidate's background, seven years of higher education being the norm.

*Example 1:* A candidate has a B.A. degree, and has completed a two year lay pastor program. She or he will need four years of ministerial service in order to be eligible for recognition of ordination.

*Example 2:* A candidate has a B.A. degree, but no lay pastor's program. She or her will need six years of ministerial service in order to be eligible for recognition of ordination.

*Example 3:* A candidate has two years of college credit and has completed a two year lay pastor program. He or she will need eight years of ministerial service to be eligible for recognition of ordination.

6. **Other Requirements:** Candidates who are avowed practicing homosexuals will not be recommended by the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

### III. PROGRESSING TOWARDS ORDINATION

**1. The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations:** When a licensed candidate for ordination has completed the above prerequisites and standards for ordination, his or her local church should notify in writing the ABCNJ Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations, indicating its support of the candidate's readiness for consideration for ordination. The licensed candidate should complete the committee's *Candidates for Ordination or Recognition of Non-American Baptist Ordination* application and forward all required prerequisites and standards documentation to the committee (via the regional office).

- A. On recommendation of the local church committee, the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations will meet with the candidate prior to ordination.
- B. The Committee will ascertain:
  1. Whether the candidate meets the standards for ordination.
  2. Whether the candidate understands the nature of an Ordination Council and will be prepared to meet with one.
  3. Whether the candidate has given proper attention to the preparation of the ordination paper.
  4. Whether the candidate understands and subscribes to the Covenant and Code of Ethics developed by the Ministers Council.
  5. Whether the candidate has a call to vocational ministry.
- C. The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations, if it judges it appropriate, will recommend that the candidate's church move forward with its Association toward calling an Ordination Council.
- D. The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations will make it clear to the candidate and the candidate's church that a date for the proposed ordination service will not be set until after the Ordination Council has met and voted to recommend the candidate for ordination.

#### **2. Types of Service**

Although examination for Ordination may occur, the act of ordination will not take place until the candidate has a specific call to a position in one of the following fields of service:

- parish ministry, including all staff who exercise ministerial functions;
- mission service on home or foreign field in which ministerial functions will be exercised;
- specialized ministries (e.g., institutional, military, academic chaplaincy, seminary faculty, pastoral counseling, or staff membership in a church-related institution, where preaching, teaching and/or pastoral work is required);
- staff service involving education or pastoral functions in an American Baptist agency, a council of churches, or some other ecumenical ministry appropriately related to the American Baptist Churches.

Any candidate whose proposed type of service does not fall into one of the above categories (e.g., a full-time evangelist) must consult with the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

### **3. Other Requirements**

Candidates who are avowed practicing homosexuals will not be recommended by the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

- 4. The Ordination Paper** - The candidate should confer with the Association committee and advisor about the ordination statement. The candidate is encouraged to develop this statement according to the following basic outline, or to prepare it in their own way, adding those elements felt to be important but being sure that all these areas are covered:

#### **Introduction**

- Christian Commitment and Growth
- Call to the Ministry
- Academic and Field Preparation
- Present Field of Service

#### **General Comprehension of Christian Doctrine**

- The Doctrine of God
- The Person and Work of Jesus Christ
- The Holy Spirit
- The Authority of Scripture
- The World to which the Gospel Speaks: Doctrine of Humanity and Sin
- The Nature of the Gospel and Salvation
- The Christian Hope: The Meaning of Death and Eternal Life
- Christian Eschatology

#### **General Comprehension of the Church**

- Definition of the Church
- The Place of the Church in History
- The Purpose and Place of the Church in the World
- The Ordinances
- The Church in its Ecumenical Relationships
- The Role of the Minister
- The Ministry of the Laity
- The Movement of the Gospel to the World
- Understanding of Mission and Evangelism
- Understanding of Justice in the Life of Society
- (Candidate should choose one or more social issues as example.)

**Denominational Commitment**

Reasons for seeking ordination within the ABC/USA

Relationship to the ABC/USA and to the Christian Church as a whole



## **5. The Association -- the Community of Churches Providing the Ordaining Council**

- A. There should be a standing committee to insure that, before the Ordaining Council is called to examine the candidate, all basic requirements have been met including a preliminary, informal conference based on the ordination paper, raising points for clarification, showing the candidate where there may be questions, pointing out deficiencies in the paper, and answering procedural questions. It shall report to the Moderator of the Association and the sponsoring church its recommendation concerning the candidate's readiness for examination.

The sponsoring church should arrange for distribution of the ordination paper to each congregation in the Association not less than two weeks prior to the meeting of the Ordaining Council.

- B. In those cases where the standing committee considers the candidate unprepared to face the Ordaining Council, it may take any of the following actions:
1. Delay its decision until the deficiencies have been removed, and invite the candidate to reappear before the committee.
  2. Decline to recommend the calling of the Ordaining Council, reporting to the candidate and the local church the reasons for such action.

In cases where the Association refuses to call an Ordaining Council and has given its reasons in writing to the candidate and the local church, the candidate and church can appeal that decision to the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

- C. The Association moderator shall be responsible for encouraging churches to send delegates to the Ordaining Council. The moderator shall either convene the Council or see that the proper chairman or chairwoman and secretary are secured, in keeping with procedures adopted by the Association.

## **6. The Ordaining Council**

- A. The Call

The call to convene the Ordaining Council shall come (preferably with at least 3 weeks notice) from the local church after favorable recommendation by the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations and the appropriate standing committee of the Association.

- B. Membership of the Ordaining Council

The membership should include the pastor and at least two lay persons from each of the Association churches and at least one officer or staff member from the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey. The number of representatives from each member church shall be determined by the Association.

- C. Quorum and Vote

The quorum shall be set by the Association. It is recommended that representation from at least two-fifths of the member churches be the quorum. It is also recommended that a two-thirds majority of those present and voting shall be required to vote affirmatively on the candidate's fitness and the recommendation to the church for ordination.

#### D. Agenda

1. Convening of the Ordaining Council by the chairperson of the Association or the person designated by Association procedures.
2. Invocation.
3. Reading of the letters from the local church, the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations, and the standing committee of the Association which authorizes the calling of the Ordaining Council.
4. Roll call of the churches.
5. Appointment of a chairman/chairwoman and secretary. The secretary of the Association shall be secretary of the Ordaining Council unless otherwise designated by Association procedure.
6. Examination of the Candidate
  - a. Presentation of prepared statements (See III D)
  - b. Questioning of the candidate (The purpose of the Ordaining Council is to ascertain the view of the candidate, not to change them.)
7. After excusing the candidate and others who are not members of the Council, the Ordaining Council goes into executive session to discuss the candidate's eligibility for ordination.
8. The Council votes to recommend to the local church that:
  - a. Ordination should proceed; or
  - b. Ordination should be deferred for stated reasons; or
  - c. Ordination should not take place for stated reasons.

#### E. Minutes and Records

The secretary shall keep minutes of the Ordaining Council meeting and shall file records of the Ordaining Council's action with the local church, with the Association and with the state Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations. Following the ordination, the secretary shall report the ordination to the office of American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, which in turn is responsible for the inclusion of ordained persons in the Registry of Ministerial Leaders of the ABCUSA.

- F. The Ordination Certificate: The American Baptist Churches of New Jersey will provide the ordination certificate. The Association Moderator, Area Minister and the Secretary of the Ordination Council are responsible for obtaining the necessary signatures.

### **7. Appeal Procedures**

In the event that the Ordaining Council recommends that a church should defer or not proceed with the ordination of a candidate, the following courses of action are open:

- A. The church may wait until the conditions which caused the adverse recommendation change sufficiently to warrant a renewal of the request for examination of the candidate.
- B. The church may appeal to the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations for a hearing if it considers the decision of the Ordaining Council to have been arbitrarily unfair. Upon receipt of such a request, the committee shall arrange for a meeting of its members to which shall be invited:

1. The chairman or chairwoman and secretary of the Ordaining Council in question;
2. The candidate, his or her sponsor and two delegates from his or her church;  
and
3. The Area Minister. Convened and presided over by the chairman or chairwoman of the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations, this group shall review the records of the Ordaining Council, receive reports relative to its action, and decide whether or not the evidence presented warrants the calling of a Council of Review.

## **8. The Council of Review**

### **A. Membership -- A Council of Review shall be composed of:**

1. One ordained minister and two lay delegates from each church in the Association;
2. The members of the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations; and
3. The Area Minister

### **B. The Call**

The meeting of the Council of Review shall be called by the state Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations. The above mentioned persons shall be voting delegates to examine the candidate and make recommendation to the church. A quorum shall consist of representation from at least two-fifths of the member churches, plus one representative from the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

### **C. Appropriate Actions**

Should the decision of the Council of Review be negative, any further action taken by this church to ordain its candidate shall be considered unilateral and without standing in the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey. When the decision of the Council of Review is favorable, a suitable service of ordination shall be held no sooner than two weeks after the date of the review proceedings.

## **IV. THE ORDINATION SERVICE**

1. The date of an ordination service will be publicly announced only after the ordination council has recommended that an ordination take place, and there has been a call to a specific place of service.
2. Churches of the association shall be invited to send representatives to the ordination. The staff of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey shall be represented by the Executive Minister or the appropriate Area Minister.
3. A recommended order of worship for the ordination service is given below. Sample vows and charges are available from the Ministerial Leadership Commission or ABCNJ.

### **RECOMMENDED ORDER OF SERVICE OF ORDINATION**

Prelude  
Doxology  
Invocation and Lord's Prayer  
Statement from the Ordination Council  
Hymn  
Reading from Scripture  
Special Music  
The Sermon  
The Vows of Ordination  
The Ordination Prayer with Laying on of Hands  
The Charge to the Minister  
The Charge to the Church  
The Presentation of the Certificate of Ordination  
Hymn of Consecration  
The Benediction  
Organ Postlude

## V. RECOGNITION OF AMERICAN BAPTIST ORDINATION

### 1. Recognition

Upon ordination, a report of the ordination service will be forwarded by the ordaining church to ABCNJ who will notify the Registry of Ministerial Leaders of the American Baptist Churches, USA

### 2. Change of Status

#### A. Voluntary Change

Any ministerial leader may request that recognition of his or her ordination be withdrawn by writing to the Executive Minister of ABCNJ, and/or the Registry of Ministerial Leaders of the ABCUSA.

Restoration of this person to active recognition may be accomplished only by the recommendation of the ABCNJ Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations, after examination and proof of the individual's continued call, skill and aptitude for ministry.

#### B. Withdrawal of Recognition

1. The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations of ABCNJ has responsibility for the recognition of ordination, as well as for the review and the withdrawal of recognition. A process for review and withdrawal has been adopted by ABCNJ. Request a copy of ABCNJ's Ecclesiastical Process for Review of Ministerial Standing.

2. Appeal: A person whose recognition of ordination has been suspended or withdrawn may appeal the decision to the executive committee of ABCNJ. If there is no action by the executive committee of ABCNJ within sixty (60) days, the person may appeal to the the Office of the General Secretary, ABCUSA, or to the body it designates, provided that the appeal is filed within one hundred twenty (120) days of the receipt of the notice of the decision. All appeals will be conducted to determine the appropriateness of the process used by ABCNJ to reach its final decision. An appeal is not to determine an individual's fitness for ministry; rather it is to determine if a fair and just process was used by ABCNJ. The decision of the executive committee of ABCNJ or the nationally designated body will be final.

3. Reinstatement: A person's ordination subsequently may be recognized again, if there is a desire to be reinstated. The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations will meet with the person to review the original action, subsequent history and present qualifications for ministry. In the event

that the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations is not the one which withdrew recognition, appropriate documentation may be secured about the prior action so that full information will be available to the department considering reinstatement.



C. Inactive List

1. When a person no longer is functioning in ministry in a recognized part of the American Baptist Churches mission and structure, the name of the individual will be placed on an inactive list in the Registry of Ministerial Leaders of the ABCUSA.

The person may be restored to active recognition within a five-year period upon appropriate review by the regional Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations after determining readiness for continuing ministry and after call to a place of service.

2. The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations should review the inactive list annually. If at the end of the five-year period the person still is unrelated to the structure and function of American Baptist ministry, his/her name will be removed from the published inactive list.

3. Restoration to active recognition in this event will take place only after thorough review by the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations to determine the person's qualifications for ministry in view of the prolonged period of inactivity.

## **VI. PROCEDURE FOR THE RECOGNITION OF NON-AMERICAN BAPTIST ORDINATIONS**

1. The congregation, agency or organization which desires to call a person who has been previously ordained by another denomination initiates the process by communicating with the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations of ABCNJ. The person, the agency, the congregation, or organization indicates its desire to have the person's previous ordination recognized.

2. For persons ordained by and in good standing with a member Convention or Union of the Baptist World Alliance:

The individual upon his/her own request, or the request of the local congregation or agency, appears before the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

The committee undertakes the following functions at this meeting:

A. A review is made of the "letter of ministerial standing" which the individual has secured from his/her present denomination.

B. The committee determines the adequacy of the person's understanding of Baptist history and American Baptist polity. If inadequate, the committee shall make specific recommendations to the individual in this regard.

C. The committee also should determine whether the candidate understands and subscribes to the Covenant and Code of Ethics for Professional Church Leaders of the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., developed by the Minister's Council.

D. Candidacy Assessment: Ordained ministry involves more than academic attainment; it calls for ongoing formation of pastoral competence, emotional and spiritual maturity, and Christian character. Therefore, candidates for ordination or recognition of non-ABC ordination shall complete a comprehensive career and candidacy assessment program sponsored by an American Baptist related Career Development Center within five years prior to examination by the regional committee on professional ministry and church relations. In cases where candidates have completed at least 3 years of full time or 5 years of part time professional experience, this requirement may be waived by the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

For persons not ordained by a member Convention or Union of the Baptist World Alliance:

A. A review is made of the "letter of ministerial standing" which the individual has secured from his/her present denomination.

B. A paper stating their reasons for desiring to enter ABC/USA ministry, and giving their statement on the subjects covered by a candidate's statement to an Ordaining Council (Ordination Standards and Procedures for ABCNJ).

C. The committee determines the adequacy of the person's understanding of Baptist history and polity. If no polity and history course has been completed, the committee shall make specific recommendations to the individual in this regard.

D. During the discussion the candidate should state his/her reasons for entering the ministry of the American Baptist Churches and his/her intention to participate in its life. The committee also should determine whether the candidate understands and subscribes to the Covenant and Code of Ethics for Professional Church Leaders of the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., developed by the Minister's Council.

E. All persons seeking ordination recognition will have completed a course in professional ethics offered either by a seminary or ABCNJ. This course will consider areas such as professional boundary issues, relationships, confidentiality, ethics in financial matters, and other related issues, which can dramatically affect the relationship between pastor and people.

F. All candidates shall participate in the Candidate Assessment Program of an ABC related Center for Career Development and Ministry, with a report to be made by the Center to the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

G. Receive from any candidate who has not experienced believer's baptism a written statement of their understanding of the meaning of baptism. This statement should also indicate whether the candidate is willing to consider the importance of personally experiencing believer's baptism, and their practice as a pastor with respect to the baptism of candidates for church membership.

The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations will use its office to strongly encourage the candidate who has not been baptized by immersion to carefully consider being immersed as a symbol of:

- I. Personal faith that Jesus is Lord.
- II. Identification with a Baptist congregation and the denomination's customary mode of baptism and
- III. Setting an example of the believing response to the Gospel which they will be inviting others to make.

3. Candidates who are avowed practicing homosexuals will not be recognized by the Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations.

4. If the vote of the Committee is positive, the chairman/ woman will inform both the candidate and the congregation that their ordination has been recognized, and recommend that an appropriate service of recognition, installation or welcome be held.
5. If the vote of the Committee is negative, the chairman/woman shall write a letter to both the candidate and congregation, stating the reasons.
6. ABCNJ forwards certification of the recognition of this ordination to the denominational office which has issued the notice of good standing.
7. The Committee on Professional Ministry and Church Relations provides the candidate with a letter signed by the Executive Minister stating that their previous ordination has been recognized and indicating the date of this action.
8. Following recognition, the person will be listed in the Registry of Professional Leaders in the ABCNJ by the appropriate symbol. An asterisk will be added if the person is recognized but not immersed.

## **VII. COMMISSIONED MISSIONARIES AND COMMISSIONED MINISTERS**

Commissioning in the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. will be recognized in the following two categories:

### **Commissioning of Missionaries**

In the act of commissioning of missionaries, men and women are validated for designated ministries across lines and barriers of culture, ideology, race, geography, or nation. In their service as missionaries they represent the ABC. The boards of National and International Ministries appoint missionaries on behalf of ABC. Under certain circumstances, the regional boards may desire to commission persons for missionary recognition. As a basis for denominational recognition, the definition and standards for missionary commissioning by any board should be those outlined.

### **Commissioned Ministers**

The recognition of commissioned ministers provides validation to lay men and women who respond to the call of God to serve in ministries other than those of a commissioned missionary. Such commissioning will apply to ministries of non-ordained persons expressly performed as assignments of regions and national boards in fulfillment of aspects of their Christian witness and mission. These boards commission ministers on behalf of the ABC. As a basis for denominational recognition, the definition and standards for commissioning by any board should be those outlined.

Commissioning recognized by the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. (herein the "ABC") may be conducted by national boards and regional boards (herein "commissioning boards") according to the following standards for commissioning:

#### **1. Qualities expected:**

- A. vital spiritual experience, a growing Christian faith, and commitment to the church's world mission;
- B. evidence of strength of character and personality;
- C. experience of a call to Christian service;
- D. membership in an American Baptist Church and support of the Statement of Purpose of the ABC.

## **2. Task requirements**

- A. The service for which the candidate is commissioned must be full-time employment in ABC-related work.
- B. The candidate will be commissioned for a specific task or type of service. Commissioning ends when the task or service is terminated.
- C. The candidate will be required, in the task, to be responsible for program administration and interpretation of the Christian faith.

## **3. Education requirements:**

- A.
  - 1. Graduation from a member seminary of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States or Canada, or
  - 2. Graduation from an accredited four-year college with a bachelor's degree, plus the specified level of graduate work required to qualify for the vocational task.
- B. A directed course of study in the areas of the theological disciplines is required for all candidates who do not have a recognized theological degree, applying under A-2 (above) prior to commissioning; such course is to be determined by the Commissioning Board.
- C. In the case of missionary appointees, when both husband and wife are commissioned, it is recognized that either husband or wife may fulfill the task description for which the couple is recruited. In such situations, college education is the normative minimum requirement for the spouse.

## **4. Additional qualifications as determined by the Commissioning Board.**

