

**CONSTITUTION**  
**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MAINE**

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this organization shall be American Baptist Churches of Maine.

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSE**

The member congregations of the American Baptist Churches of Maine, confessing the Lordship and Saviorhood of Jesus Christ and in obedience to their call to Mission, namely, to participate in the reconciling work of God through Jesus Christ, covenant to:

1. Bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world;
2. Assist each other in preparing members for mission in meeting spiritual and human needs;
3. Extend their influence through expanded program ministries and through good stewardship of ABCOM financial resources;
4. Seek improved relationship with other churches and community agencies;
5. Function as an affiliating unit of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. in recognition of our history and heritage.

**ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1. The membership of the American Baptist Churches of Maine shall consist of all congregations which meet the standards as set forth from time to time by the organization or its Board.
- Section 2. The American Baptist Churches of Maine affirms the Associational Principle; and thus seeks to strengthen the mission of local churches by recognizing their voluntary cooperation in groups of congregations within specified geographic boundaries.
- Section 3. The voting members of this organization shall be as follows:  
a. Local church delegates on the basis of one member for each church and one additional member for every 100 resident members or major fraction thereof, as listed in the "Directory of Associations" of that yearbook of the American Baptist Churches of Maine current on January 1 of the year in which their service is to occur;  
b. The pastor and other full-time professional staff of each congregation;  
c. The officers of the organization;  
d. Members of the Board;  
e. Members of the organization's staff and resident clergy in active, non-pastoral service as listed in the most recent American Baptist Churches of Maine yearbook.

**ARTICLE IV - POLITY**

- Section 1. The final authority for the American Baptist Churches of Maine rests with the voting members in Annual or Special meetings.
- Section 2. The primary functions of the Annual Meeting are as follows:  
a. Elect officers and ratify Association representatives to the Board and committees;  
b. Review, as desired, the action, policies, and program of the organization as taken by its officers, Board and staff;  
c. Provide direction, as desired, for the officers, Board, committees, and staff;  
d. Provide opportunities for inspiration, communication, and aspirations;  
e. Amend, as needed, this Constitution and the Bylaws;  
f. Such other functions as it shall reserve to itself.
- Section 3. Quorum for transacting business at Annual or Special meetings is 10% of the potential voting membership.

**ARTICLE V - GOVERNING RULES**

The governing rules of the organization concerning its mission, officers, Board, committees and other matters of administration are contained in the Bylaws.

**ARTICLE VI - AMENDMENTS**

The Constitution may be amended at any meeting of the organization called for that purpose provided that:

1. Written notice to amend has been given at a previous meeting of the organization at least ten months preceding; and
2. Such amendment has been published in at least one issue of the official publication of the organization three months preceding; and
3. Notice of such change has been sent by direct mailing to each constituent congregation at least two months in advance; and
4. There shall be a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting.

**BYLAWS**  
**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MAINE**

**ARTICLE I - AN AFFIRMATION OF MISSION**

Scriptures affirm the local church as the fundamental unit of mission; and our priority as a denomination is to affirm, support and challenge congregations as they live out their mission "in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8 NIV)

American Baptist member congregations are called by God, through Jesus Christ, to be communities of faith empowered by the Holy Spirit to live as witnesses and agents of God's love and justice in the church and in the world. We are

1. BIBLICAL - basing Christian faith and practice on the authority of the Bible.
2. CHRIST-CENTERED - focusing on the way, the truth, and the life revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. EVANGELISTIC - calling all persons to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
4. HISTORIC - continuing the mission and heritage of those persons who planted most of Maine Baptist churches, and supported the first American missionaries.
5. CURRENT - attempting to relate the eternal truth of the Christian Gospel to contemporary and critical issues.
6. INTERDEPENDENT - purposefully associating in the life and outreach of the wider American Baptist family.
7. AUTONOMOUS - self-governing congregations composed of regenerate members who have experienced believers' baptism.
8. COOPERATIVE - respecting diversity among God's people in carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ.
9. CARING - responding to human needs with deeds of love and reconciliation among all people.

**ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP**

- Section 1. Upon the favorable recommendation of five sponsoring member congregations through the appropriate Association, the Board shall review applications and grant membership as a cooperating church to any additional congregation seeking affiliation with the American Baptist Churches of Maine (ABCOM) providing it shall have given evidence of support for the purpose and program of the ABCOM.
- Section 2. The Board may, upon written application by a member congregation, dismiss said congregation from membership. A congregation seeking dismissal will be urged to first meet with a representative group of Board members, named by the President, to discuss grievances.
- Section 3. Upon the recommendation of five member congregations through the appropriate Association, a congregation may be dismissed for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Board at any meeting, provided that an earnest effort at reconciliation be made and that thirty days written notice of the proposed dismissal is given to all members of the Board and to the affected congregation. Said congregation shall have the right to answer the charges at said meeting. Such dismissal may be appealed to the Annual Meeting of the ABCOM, or upon thirty days written notice to any Special Meeting of the ABCOM. It shall take two-thirds vote of those present and voting to reverse the decision of the Board on dismissal.

**ARTICLE III - OFFICERS**

- Section 1. The officers of the ABCOM shall be a President, a First Vice-President, a Second Vice-President, a Treasurer and an Executive Minister.
- Section 2. The President and the two Vice-Presidents shall serve one year terms. None may serve a second consecutive full term. Each is to come from a different Association and shall rotate among laymen, laywomen, and clergy. The two Vice-Presidents shall be nominated for the next higher office at the next Annual Meeting unless the Board recommends otherwise.
- Section 3. The Treasurer and Executive Minister shall serve indefinite terms.
- Section 4. a. The Executive Minister shall be called by the ABCOM in an Annual or Special Meeting at such time as a vacancy may occur in this office. The Board shall recommend a candidate after consultation with the General Secretary of the American Baptist Churches/USA. The vote shall be a secret ballot, and election shall require a two-thirds affirmative vote by those present and voting. The relationship of the Executive Minister may be terminated upon recommendation of the Board, by a two-thirds affirmative vote by those present and voting in any Annual or Special Meeting.  
b. The Treasurer shall be elected by the ABCOM in Annual Session; or by the ABCOM Board with ratification following at the next ABCOM Annual Session. The ABCOM Nominating Committee shall recommend a candidate after consultation with the Executive Minister. The ratification will require a two-thirds affirmative vote by those Board members or delegates present and voting. The relationship of the Treasurer may be terminated upon recommendation of the Executive Minister or Board, by a two-thirds vote by those present and voting at any Annual or Special Meeting.
- Section 5. These officers, with the exception of the Treasurer and Executive Minister, shall take office immediately at the close of the Annual Meeting in which they were elected and shall serve until such later date when their successors are elected and qualified.

Section 6. Such duties as may be required of the officers are contained in the ABCOM's Rules of Procedure.

#### ARTICLE IV - THE BOARD

The Board shall consist of:

- a. The five officers of ABCOM;
- b. A representative from each recognized ABCOM and auxiliary organization;
- c. Representatives on the basis of one for each fifteen local church delegates from each Association.
- d. Representatives shall be elected by their respective Associations and ratified by the ABCOM at its next Annual Meeting. The Nominating Committee will alert annually the Associations concerning vacancies to be filled and the categories of representation needed to maintain a balance on the Board of even thirds among clergy, lay males, and lay females;
- e. Representatives of the American Baptist Churches of Maine to the General Board of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

Up to seven (7) members-at-large, elected by the ABCOM on nomination of the Nominating Committee.

Tenure of Board members shall be as follows:

- a. Officers shall serve as long as they hold their positions;
- b. ABCOM and Auxiliary organization representatives serve at the pleasure of their organization, but with a maximum limit for each individual of six consecutive years on the Board;
- c. Association representatives and at-large members shall serve three-year terms. One-third shall be elected each year. Each Association representative and at-large member is eligible for two consecutive terms with one year off the Board before again having eligibility. When an Association representative moves to a different Association or is elected as an officer of the ABCOM, that position is automatically vacated. The Association, by methods it approves, shall appoint a successor for the unexpired term;
- d. An individual, except the Treasurer and Executive Minister, is limited to nine consecutive years on the Board in any capacity.

Section 3. The Board shall be the American Baptist Churches of Maine between business sessions and shall have the power to act on matters which appear before it. The primary functions of the Board are as follows:

- a. Develop ABCOM policy;
- b. Establish ABCOM priorities and program;
- c. Evaluate the entire mission and ministry of the ABCOM;
- d. Adopt the ABCOM's budget;
- e. Appoint and establish conditions of employment for the professional staff (except Executive Minister) upon recommendation of the Executive Committee in consultation with the Executive Minister;
- f. Recommend to the voting members in Annual or Special Meeting a candidate for Executive Minister;
- g. Receive and dismiss congregations in accordance with Article II of Bylaws;
- h. Oversees the ABCOM's standards for membership;
- i. Have the care, management and control of all ABCOM's physical and financial assets;
- j. Employ legal counsel as required;
- k. Make a report at the Annual Meeting;
- l. Provide appropriate recognition for ministries which may from time to time be developed to enhance our common mission;
- m. Fulfill such other responsibilities as assigned by the voting members in Annual or Special Meeting.

#### ARTICLE V - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall consist of:

- a. The five officers of the ABCOM;
- b. One Board member from each Association elected by their Association and ratified by the Board at its next meeting.

The Executive Committee shall be chaired by the First Vice-President.

The primary functions of the Executive Committee are as follows:

- a. Serve on behalf of the ABCOM and the Board between their meetings, except in matters of staff appointments, which are reserved to the Board. Urgent financial decisions beyond the adopted budget may be made by the Executive Committee but shall require a three-quarter vote of the Committee and shall be subject to ratification by the Board at its next meeting;
- b. Coordinate the ABCOM's cooperative relationships and responsibilities;
- c. Serve as the personnel committee. The Executive Committee has the privilege of appointing a search committee in the event of staff vacancies;
- d. Serve as the committee for oversight and long-range planning;
- e. Fulfill such other functions as delegated by the ABCOM or the Board.

#### ARTICLE VI - OTHER COMMITTEES

The Committees of the Board are as follows:

THE CHRISTIAN NURTURE COMMITTEE consists of ten members, to be appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Minister and Executive Committee, at least three of whom are members of the Board. The chairperson will be a member of the Board.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE consists of the officers of the ABCOM (the first vice-president serves as chair), plus three members of the Board and two persons from the general constituency having skills in the areas of investment and money management to be appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Minister.

THE WORLD MISSION SUPPORT COMMITTEE consists of ten members, to be appointed by the President in consultation with the Executive Minister and Executive Committee, at least three of whom are members of the Board. The chairperson shall be a member of the Board. A Minister of World Mission Support will be assigned to work with this committee.

Other committees may be appointed by the Board from time to time as may be needed to fulfill its mission.

The Committees of the ABCOM are as follows:

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE consists of a chairperson named by the Executive Committee and one representative appointed by each of the Associations, and ratified by the ABCOM.

THE COMMITTEE ON THE MINISTRY consists of a chairperson named by the Executive Committee, one representative elected by each of the Associations, and ratified by the ABCOM, plus one member of the Ministers' Council. All members of this committee must be ordained members in good standing of an ABCOM church.

THE ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE consists of a chairperson named by the Executive Committee and one representative elected by each of the Associations, and ratified by the ABCOM. The host pastor(s) for the Annual Meeting is/are ex-officio member(s) during the year preceding the meeting in the host church(es).

THE NEW CHURCH COMMITTEE consists of a chairperson named by the Executive Committee and one representative elected by each of the Associations and ratified by the ABCOM.

THE SMALL CHURCH COMMITTEE consists of a chairperson named by the Executive Committee and one representative elected by each of the Associations and ratified by the ABCOM.

Other Committees may be appointed by the ABCOM from time to time as may be needed to fulfill its mission.

Members of the committees of the Board serve one year terms and may be reappointed as often as they meet the qualifications for the position. Vacancies may be filled as they occur.

Members of the ABCOM's committees shall serve three-year terms on a rotating basis, with a limit of one full term in consecutive service, except the Committee on the Ministry, where members are eligible for two consecutive terms. Vacancies will be filled through the normal nominating process. Such duties as may be required of the committees are contained in the Rules of Procedure.

#### ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

The Annual Meeting shall be held in October with the specific time and place to be fixed annually by the Board.

Such special meetings as needed shall be called by the Board or by votes of at least 15 % of member congregations, providing sixty days notice in writing has been given each congregation.

#### ARTICLE IX - AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

The ABCOM may have such auxiliary organizations as shall have been given evidence of supporting its purpose and having been recognized as such by the Board.

#### ARTICLE X - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

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

#### ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the American Baptist Churches of Maine called for that purpose provided that:

1. Written notice to amend has been given at a previous meeting of the ABCOM at least two months preceding; or
2. Such amendment is recommended by a majority of the Board and has been published in the official publication of the ABCOM at least one issue preceding; and
3. Notice of such change has been sent by direct mailing to each constituent congregation at least one month in advance; and
4. There shall be a two-thirds affirmative vote of those present and voting.

**RULES OF PROCEDURE**  
**AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MAINE**

**RULE I. EVALUATION OF MISSION**

ABCOM will evaluate its efforts in fulfilling its stated mission through the Executive Committee.

**RULE II. MEMBER RELATIONSHIPS**

Section 1. Minimal Standards for cooperating church membership

(1) Informed financial support of the American Baptist Mission.

(2) Participation in decision making (or fellowship) through delegates at Association meetings and the Annual Meeting.

(3) Utilization of appropriate American Baptist resources (persons and materials).

Section 2. Covenant Relations

Congregations, by virtue of their membership in the ABCOM, maintain a covenantal relationship before God and with the American Baptist Churches of Maine. These covenants, whether written or not, should include concern and support in the following ways:

(1) Intention of helping implement the ABCOM mission statement.

(2) Provision of leaders (lay and clergy).

(3) Financial support of the American Baptist Mission in its various expressions.

(4) Participation in decision-making through the representative system established.

(5) Attempts to keep informed on the issues of our ministry together.

**RULE III. DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS**

Section 1. President

a. Preside over Annual and Special Meetings of the ABCOM;

b. Preside over meetings of the Board;

c. Prepare the agenda for Board meetings in consultation with the Executive Minister;

d. Oversee election of Representatives to the Executive Committee;

e. Appoint committees of the Board subject to its confirmation; and name chairpersons in consultation with the Executive Minister;

f. Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Board;

Section 2. First Vice-President

a. Function for the President in his/her absence or disability, the latter to be determined by the Board;

b. Preside over meetings of the Executive Committee;

c. Preside over meetings of the Finance Committee;

d. Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Board;

Section 3. Second Vice-President

a. Function for the First Vice-President in his/her absence or disability, the latter to be determined by the Board;

b. Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Board;

Section 4. Treasurer

a. Be the custodian of the funds of the ABCOM, both invested and current;

b. Provide for the receiving and disbursement of funds as directed by the Board in the exercise of the powers to them given;

c. Keep separate accounts of the several funds of the ABCOM and give complete reports at the regular meetings of the ABCOM and the Board;

d. Give bond satisfactory to the Board, the expense of which shall be borne by the ABCOM;

e. Submit all financial records for internal review annually by a team which includes a certified public accountant, approved by the Board; and for external review at the Board's discretion by a certified public accountant, approved by the Board;

f. In keeping with the stipulation of ABCUSA Covenant of Relations, submit all mission accounts for audit annually by a certified public accountant, approved by the Board.

g. Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Board.

Section 5. Executive Minister

a. Be the chief administrative officer of the ABCOM, responsible for leading it aggressively in Mission;

b. Be a member, ex-officio, of all ABCOM committees, organizations, and Board;

c. Perform the usual duties of a corporate secretary, including the keeping of minutes from meetings of the membership, the Board and the Executive Committee;

d. Recommend staff appointments or dismissals to the Board in collaboration with the Executive Committee;

e. Represent staff to the Executive Committee. Provide an evaluation of staff prior to the Executive Committee evaluation of said staff;

f. Facilitate a collaborative style among the staff;

g. Have the power, subject to the approval of the Board, to execute on behalf of the American Baptist Churches of Maine, legal instruments of any nature whatsoever;

h. Act as primary representative of the ABCOM, but commit it only in accordance with policies determined by the voting membership of the Board;

i. Undertake such other responsibilities as designated by the Board.

**RULE IV. THE BOARD**

Section 1. Each representative shall be a member of a member congregation.

Section 2. Absence from three consecutive meetings of the Board shall constitute a vacancy. Such vacancies shall be filled at the next meeting of the Association or auxiliary organization being represented through its normal procedure and subject to ratification by the Board.

Section 3. The terms of office for Board members shall begin immediately at the close of the meeting in which ratification takes place.

Section 4. The annual report required of the Board shall be prepared by the Executive Minister for presentation to the Annual Meeting of the ABCOM.

Section 5. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held at least two times each year with sufficient time to perform its duties, the specific dates for which will be determined collaboratively by the President and the Executive Minister. Special meetings may be called by the President or the Executive Minister and shall be scheduled upon written request by six members of the Board.

**RULE V. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Section 1. Specific responsibilities in terms of personnel are:

a. Develop and periodically review staff job descriptions;

b. Prepare staff salary scales, benefits and procedures;

c. Process candidates for staff positions in cooperation with the Executive Minister;

d. Conduct annual review of staff performance;

e. Undergird the morale and effectiveness of the staff;

f. Interview each staff member on a regularly established basis in a private session. They shall evaluate all staff on a regular basis and act as arbiter for unresolved issues.

Section 2. Specific responsibilities in terms of oversight and growth:

a. Oversee with staff the effectiveness of the ABCOM's programs in fulfilling its stated mission identified in Article I of ABCOM's By-Laws;

b. Perform the tasks of long-range planning;

c. Report its findings and recommendations to the Board for consideration and appropriate implementation.

**RULE VI. OTHER COMMITTEES**

THE CHRISTIAN NURTURE COMMITTEE is responsible for developing, encouraging and coordinating ministries in the areas of evangelism and Christian education.

a. They shall seek to support and enhance evangelism and Christian education at the local church and associational levels through developing training and encouragement opportunities.

b. They shall provide support and encouragement to current region-wide evangelism and Christian nurture activities.

c. They will seek to develop new means of supporting evangelism and Christian education throughout the region as needs and opportunities arise.

THE FINANCE COMMITTEE is responsible for developing necessary projections of income and expenses. They will recommend to the ABCOM Board and oversee the implementation of an annual budget.

a. They shall manage the ABCOM's invested funds with power to make investments or to change investments as in its judgment will serve the best interests of the ABCOM.

b. They shall oversee the implementation of the ABCOM's budget covenant with The American Baptist Churches, USA; and shall remain in consultation with the Mission Support Committee in encouraging financial support of mission in the region.

c. They shall prepare an annual proposed budget for the next year and submit it to members of the Board one month in advance of the Board's fall meeting.

d. They shall meet at least quarterly, and shall make semi-annual reports to the Executive Committee.

THE MISSION SUPPORT COMMITTEE is responsible for coordinating efforts in stewardship education and mission support.

a. They will oversee the promotion and implementation of the annual offerings of our denomination among the churches;

b. They will aggressively promote among the churches the tithing program of our denomination;

c. They will lead the ABCOM in establishing and interpreting annual mission goals and programs;

d. They will seek to provide helpful resources and programs for our local churches to enable their mission;

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE is responsible for:

Receiving nominees from each Association for the Board (one of whom shall be designated for ABCOM Executive Committee), Committee on the Ministry, Nominating, Annual Meeting, New Church Committee and Small Church Committee;

- b. Certifying the eligibility of such nominees;
  - c. Nominating the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, and Treasurer of the ABCOM;
  - d. Presenting the names for election at the Annual Meeting.
- Section 5. THE COMMITTEE ON THE MINISTRY is responsible for:
- a. Implementing standards of recognition for ministerial leadership as determined by the ABCOM;
  - b. Reviewing the qualifications of those seeking to minister within the jurisdiction of the ABCOM and recommending appropriate action to the congregations to be served;
  - c. Referring to the ABCOM for adoption any proposed changes in standards or procedures;
  - d. Collaborating in furthering the effectiveness of ministers through training and discipline;
  - e. Appointing a Board of Review when needed to deal with appeals regarding the application of standards of recognition;
  - f. Annually review and affirm the Directory of Pastors and Professional Church Leaders;
  - g. Oversee the implementation of ABCOM's Ecclesiastical Process for Ministerial Review as needed.
- Section 6. THE ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE is responsible for:
- a. Providing an experience in fellowship and a setting in which mission priorities may be discussed, interpreted and given renewed emphasis;
  - b. Arranging the Annual Meeting program and serving as the committee on order of business;
  - c. Certifying the credentials of all delegates and supervising registration of all delegates and visitors;
  - d. Preparing any appropriate messages to the congregations or resolutions for presentation and debate at the Annual Meeting.
- Section 7. THE NEW CHURCH COMMITTEE is responsible for:
- a. Discovering and evaluating areas where a new American Baptist Church is needed;
  - b. Re-opening closed churches;
  - c. Establishing new churches and American Baptist fellowships;
  - d. Creating a new vision for planting;
  - e. Being a resource for Christian groups interested in opening churches;
  - f. Establishing a solid financial base which will enable churches to be well started.
- Section 8. THE SMALL CHURCH COMMITTEE is responsible for:
- a. Developing and recommending principles to evaluate the effectiveness of small churches;
  - b. Provide resources that will enhance the health and self-esteem of small congregations;
  - c. Oversee the development and implementation of the ABCOM Minimum Salary Program in consultation with the Treasurer and Executive Minister;
  - d. Aggressively address stewardship issues related to Small Church Ministry.

#### RULE VII. ASSOCIATIONS

- Section 1. Eleven associations are currently recognized by the Board. They are North Aroostook, South Aroostook, Bowdoinham, Cumberland, Damariscotta, East, Kennebec, Lincoln, Penquis, West and York.
- Section 2. Associations may organize to accomplish their responsibilities in providing representatives for the ABCOM Board and committees. They shall meet at least annually to elect a moderator and such other officers as they deem appropriate to carry on their mission.

#### RULE IX. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

Auxiliary organizations currently recognized by the Board include: American Baptist Women's Ministries, American Baptist Men of Maine, Ministers Council, Ministers Wives Fellowship, Baptist Youth Camp, Baptist Park, China Lake Camp, and AIM (Institute for Ministry).

#### RULE XI. MISCELLANEOUS

- Section 1. The fiscal year shall be the calendar year.
- Section 2. The corporate seal of the American Baptist Churches of Maine shall be in such form as the Board shall determine by resolution.
- Section 3. Procedures at Annual and Special Meetings shall be:
- a. All motions, prior to introduction on the floor, shall be written, signed by the maker and given to the ABCOM President one month prior to the March meeting of the ABCOM Board for inclusion in the business meeting of the Annual Meeting. Petition of agenda items must follow ABCOM Board policy.
  - 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 (requiring two-thirds affirmative vote by secret ballot);
  - d. A two-thirds affirmative vote by those present and voting in an Annual or Special Business Meeting shall be required to adopt a resolution.

#### RULE XII. AMENDMENTS

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

#### THE COVENANT AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR MINISTERIAL LEADERS OF AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES

*Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church, I covenant with God to serve Christ and the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit, to deepen my obedience to the Two Great Commandments; to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself.*

*In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all the public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.*

+ I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of our American Baptist Churches; I will not accept a position in the American Baptist family unless I am in accord with those traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate my congregation/constituents or any part thereof from its relationship and support of the denomination. If my convictions change, I will resign my position.

+ I will respect and recognize the variety of calls to ministry among my American Baptist colleagues, and other Christians.

+ I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.

+ I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession. I will help lay persons and colleagues to understand that ministerial leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when these constituents are helping pay their salaries.

+ I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my ministerial status.

+ I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayer and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for ministerial and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.

+ I will recognize my primary obligation to the church or employing group to which I have been called, and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry.

+ I will personally and publicly support my colleagues who experience discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, national origin, physical impairment or disability.

+ I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.

+ I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my ministerial leadership relations with my former constituents, and will not make ministerial contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without his/her request and /or consent.

+ I will hold in confidence and treat as confidential communication any information provided to me with the expectation of privacy. I will not disclose such information in private or public except when, in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that life-threatening or substantial harm will be caused.

+ I will not use my ministerial status, position or authority knowingly to abuse, misguide, negatively influence, manipulate, or take advantage of anyone, especially children.

+ I will report all instances of abuse as required by law to the appropriate agency. In any case involving persons working in ABC ministry, I will also report the circumstances to the appropriate regional and/or national denominational representative.

+ I will show my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ 10/23/09 ABCOM