



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

Office of the General Secretary

BOARD OF GENERAL MINISTRY | COMMISSIONS

BGM EC Item 7
Guidelines for Commissions

1. GENERAL GUIDELINES

According to Article XI. Section 4 of the ABCUSA Bylaws, the Board of General Ministries (BGM) may establish BGM Commissions. Commissions are designed to address long-term issues with the denomination of one to three years or longer in duration. Issues that can be addressed in a shorter time-frame should be established as a task force rather than a commission. A group originally established as a task force may appeal to the Board of General Ministries to become a Commission. The issue being addressed by the commission should be applicable to the entire denomination.

2. ESTABLISHMENT PHASE OF A COMMISSION

An American Baptist Commission may be established by a proper vote (see appendix) of the Board of General Ministries with the prior approval of the BGM Executive Committee.

During the first 12 months of the establishment of a commission, the Office of the General Secretary will provide both staffing assistance and seed money to launch the commission. The General Secretary will determine the appropriate staffing assistance and the Board of General Ministries will approve an appropriate funding amount.

According to SR 11.1.4.1 a commission must include three or more members nominated by the President in consultation with the General Secretary and elected by the Board of General Ministries. The commission may also include persons who are not members of BGM.

According to SR 11.1.1 the chairperson of each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall be appointed from the membership of the respective committee or commission by the President in consultation with the General Secretary and shall serve until the expiration of the term of the appointing President.

During this 12 month establishment period, commissions will be expected to recruit the necessary leadership and expertise capable of carrying out the goals of the commission beyond the 12 month period. Additionally, if the commission intends to raise funds for their work, the commission shall work with the Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development to develop a strategy for doing so.

During the establishment phase, a commission will provide a written quarterly report to the BGM that should include any decisions and goals for review of consistency by the Board of General Ministries. **The Board of General Ministries shall determine whether or not a commission shall move beyond the establishment phase.**

3. ONGOING WORK OF A COMMISSION

A commission may establish its own goals, voting procedures, officers, etc., so long as these decisions and practices are consistent with the bylaws and standing rules of the BGM. The BGM may also assign functions to the commission (SR 11.1.7.1)

A commission shall provide a written annual report to the BGM throughout its existence as a commission that should include an indication of progress on the established goals and a statement of impact regarding the ministry. These reports may also contain insights and recommendations to the Board of General Ministries.

A commission must be reviewed and re-approved by the Board of General Ministries every three years in order to maintain their status as a commission. The commission will submit a brief report detailing accomplishments and future goals for re-approval consideration.

Adopted June 2021 by the Board of General Ministries

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APPENDIX

ABCUSA BYLAWS

Article XI. Section 4. Board of General Ministries Commissions. The Board of General Ministries may create Board of General Ministries commissions to report to it on matters assigned by BGM. Each Board commission may consist of members of the Board of General Ministries, members of the staff of the ABCUSA or of a National or Regional Board, or other persons. Procedures for the appointment and organization of Board commissions and their powers and functions may be stated in the Standing Rules.

ABCUSA Standing Rules

Rule 11.1 General Rules

- 11.1.1 Procedures. Each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall fix its own rules of procedure, provided they are consistent with the Bylaws and these Standing Rules.
- 11.1.2 Meetings. Generally the meetings of Committees and Commissions shall be held at the time of the Board of General Ministries sessions. Additional meetings may be held at such other times as each chairperson in consultation with the General Secretary shall determine. Members may participate in any meeting by means of conference telephone or similar equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time, and such participation shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.
- 11.1.3 Action Without a Meeting. Any action required or permitted to be taken by any Board of General Ministries committee or commission may be taken without a meeting if all members of the committee or commission consent in writing to the adoption of a resolution authorizing the action. The resolution and the written consents thereto shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of General Ministries committee or commission.
- 11.1.4 Membership.
 - 11.1.4.1 Unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws or these Standing Rules, each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall have three or more members nominated by the President in consultation with the General Secretary and elected by the Board of General Ministries. Upon election, each committee or commission member shall serve during her or his current term as a Director.
 - 11.1.4.2 Unless otherwise provided in the Bylaws or these Standing Rules, a vacancy in the membership of any committee or commission of the Board of General

Ministries shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board of General Ministries at any meeting on nomination of the President in consultation with the General Secretary.

11.1.4.3 As provided in Article XV, Sections 2 and 3 of the Bylaws, the President and Vice-President, ex officio, shall be members of all committees and commissions of the Board of General Ministries.

11.1.5 Chair. Except where otherwise provided by the Bylaws or these Standing Rules, the chairperson of each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall be appointed from the membership of the respective committee or commission by the President in consultation with the General Secretary and shall serve until the expiration of the term of the appointing President. When the chairperson is not present, the committee shall elect an acting chairperson for that meeting to serve until the chairperson arrives.

11.1.6 Staffing. The General Secretary shall be responsible for arranging staff support for all committees and commissions of the Board of General Ministries.

11.1.7 Functions.

11.1.7.1 Each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall perform such functions as the Board of General Ministries, the Bylaws, or the Standing Rules may from time to time specify.

Except where otherwise provided by the Bylaws or these Standing Rules, each committee or commission of the Board of General Ministries shall report in writing to the Board of General Ministries at least annually.