

*Email from Tina Kiernan*

I suggest these two areas in the ABC Bylaws be reviewed by the Executive Committee as total biennial attendance has continued to decline in the last decade.

Article IV, Section 2, (a) (page 11 of the copy of bylaws found on our website: <https://www.abc-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/abcByLaws03.08.2018.pdf>)

Since a small percentage of Cooperating Churches provide a complete Annual Report each year, it is nearly impossible to allot more than 2 Delegates for all churches. There is a statement repeated in (ii) through (iv) which states “(as reported in the most recent annual report received during the five-year period preceding the Biennial Meeting)” so churches who do provide this information are provided with additional delegates if appropriate.

My concern has been that if we rely on regions to provide this information and they are understaffed and cannot enter all of this data, some churches may be eligible for additional delegates but we do not know this. I also worry about the validity of the formula used in ABCIS to prepare the list of allotted delegates. One church, for example, has no up-to-date annual report information only provided \$1,600 through Institutional Support and Specifics in 2019, does not give to any of the offerings nor UM but received 877 Delegates to send to the 2021 Biennial. The next church on the list contributed \$1,600 to UM and \$100 to the four quarterly offerings but had provided an annual report with membership over 11,000 residents and received 114 delegates in 2021. A third example gave \$0 since 2016 and has no membership data but was allotted 111 delegates. I should also note that only 27 churches receive 15 or more delegates with the formula used so perhaps we just need to review how the larger numbers were determined if you think the criteria is still appropriate.

Additionally as this statement notes “(as reported in the most recent annual report received during the five-year period preceding the Biennial Meeting)” it would be helpful to have clarity for myself and ABCIS staff on what these dates are. Since we launch registration earlier than we had a decade ago, the calculations will occur in the fall before the biennial year. This year I will ask the ABCIS team for this information in September so should the formula look at 2021-2017 data or 2022-2018 even though we don’t have complete data for 2022? I understand from previous biennial discussions about this that the General Secretary can determine the date range. (per Susan Gillies, Interim General Secretary)

As we continue to be in a pandemic and some people are still hesitant to return to traveling, this is the most important section to review as it could be an issue for us in 2023:

Article IV, Section 3, (b)

The requirement that “at least one Delegate is registered from each of at least two hundred (200) Cooperating Churches which are located within the areas of at least ten (10) Regional Organizations” caused a lot of anxiety in 2021. I do not believe the number of regions represented needs to change but if possible, could the number of Cooperation Churches represented be decreased? When we used to have 1,800-2,000 attendees this was easily attainable. In 2021 when we had 1,000 paid attendees, 204 Cooperating Churches were represented by Delegates at the Business Session. This number included BGM Delegates, in previous biennials we did not research their church membership to include them in the Delegate counts.

Thank you for discussing this!

Tina