



sparky's notes

to the

Proposed Revisions of the



## Constitutions and By-laws

Why are we doing this?

- A. The NRVC Board has made some decisions about our organizational structure as a result of a Strategic Management Planning process in which we have been engaged since 2012. These decisions require that we re-examine and re-work our Constitution and By-laws to set NRVC on a firmer foundation on which it can build for the future.
- B. Please be reminded that the *Constitutions* are designed to be more general items, broader in scope and require a vote of the entire NRVC membership to change. The By-laws are much more specific and are able to be changed by a vote of the National Board.

N.B. As in the accompanying formal document: the **black type** below indicates items that were substantially found in the old Constitutions and By-laws; the **red type** highlights substantive changes in the *Proposed NRVC Constitutions and By-laws Revisions*; the **green type** indicates feedback we have received from individual members; the **blue type** indicates the Board's suggested response to the members' suggestions.

### Substantive Changes in the Constitutions

- I. **Name** (p. 1) – *no changes*
- II. **Mission Statement** (p. 1) – *no changes*
- III. **Definition of Terms** (p. 2) – entirely new section; purpose is to define words that reoccur throughout, e.g. “religious”, “vocation minister”, “government unit”, “consensus”, “simple majority”
- IV. **Purpose** (p. 2) – only significant change is to reflect NRVC's role in the nation and larger Church advocating for both “religious life and religious vocations.”
- V. **Membership** (p. 3) – reflects changes that were approved at the Convocation in 2012 (e.g. Different types of membership changed to one kind: member and licenses for 5 members from the same governmental unit. The National Board sets membership fees and spells out the benefits of membership.)  
**Member suggested revision:** membership by governmental units with its own provincial superior is a challenge for some congregations. Unification/Merger and collaboration efforts are real, and such “single government unit” requirements make it cost prohibitive for many congregations to maintain their membership.

**Suggested Action by the Board:** Membership levels were discussed extensively in preparation for the last convocation. While no system will be meet all needs, the accepted membership levels was seen best o serve the majority of NRVC.

**VI. The National Organization (p. 3)**

- A. **The National Board** – align responsibilities with what the Board is actually doing (e.g. strategic planning, developing job descriptions, re-examining Regional configuration, etc.)
  - 1. **Composition of the National Board** (p. 5) – no real changes; moved specificity to By-laws.
  - 2. **Terms of Office/Selection of National Board Members** (p. 5) – no major changes on the Constitutional end; moved specificity to By-laws.
  - 3. **National Board Meetings** (p. 5) – goal is to meet at least twice a year, face-to-face; more often if necessary; electronic meetings also acceptable.
- B. **The Executive Committee** (p. 5) (formerly the Leadership Committee)
  - 1. now have titles for Executive Committee positions: Board Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary-Treasurer;
  - 2. terms found in the By-laws;
  - 3. Board suggestion: can meet if only two are available.  
**Member suggested revision:** All should need to be present to carry on business.  
**Suggested Action by the Board:** Accept the suggestion! ☑
- C. **The National Office** (p. 6) – reflects that the Executive Director hires and supervises a staff of persons (and is growing!)
- D. **The Executive Director** (p. 7) – no real changes; specific duties moved to the By-laws.
- E. **The NRVC Regional Structure** (p. 7) – to facilitate the promotion of “religious life and religious vocations.”  
**Member question:** What is the real benefit of belonging to a region? Is there any?  
**Suggested Action by the Board:** During 2015, the Board would like to engage the Regions in conversations about Regional restructuring and the purpose, frequency and content of Regional meetings/gatherings.
- F. **Membership in a Region** (p. 8) – may attend a meeting in another Region
- G. **Regional Coordinators** (p. 8) – no real changes; specifics moved to By-laws.
- H. **Regional Meetings** (p. 8) – goal: at least one meeting a year organized by NRVC’s Regional Coordinators
- I. **Resignations or Grounds for Removal from Office** (p. 9) – processes put in place to remove a person from office for grave reason(s); details found in the By-laws
  - 1. Removal of a National Board Member: By-laws III (B);
  - 2. Removal of the Executive Director: By-laws IV (C);
  - 3. Removal of a Regional Coordinator: By-laws IV (J)).

**VII. Finances (p. 9)**

- A. Fiscal year to be determined by the Board; exact dates found in the By-laws
- B. NRVC support – from dues, donations, contributions, appeals, programs and services, grants, foundations, trusts and bequests.
- C. Dues are paid to the National Office; fees may be collected at the Regional level and held at the National Office

**VIII. Parliamentary Authority (p. 9) – no changes**

**IX. Interpretation and Amendment (p. 10) – no changes**

- X. **Constitutional Amendment Procedure** (p. 10) – **Revision:** a person would need five (5) supporters to have a proposal brought to the entire membership for a vote to change the Constitution.
- XI. **Decision-making** (p. 10) – *by consensus; no changes*
- XII. **Dissolution** (p. 11) – *no changes*
- XIII. **Operation Limitations** (p. 11) – *no changes*

## Substantive Changes in the By-laws

- I. **The NRVC National Board** (p. 13)
  - A. **Board Terms** - some changes being proposed
    - 1. From three, two-year terms to two, three-year terms; reason: consistency;
    - 2. A person can return after being away for one complete term.
  - B. **Duties of Board Members** – added responsibility for finances
  - C. Nomination forms for the National Board will be sent out in the winter; due back by January 31; appointments by March 31; join the Board at the autumn (October) meeting.
- II. **The Executive Committee** (p. 15)
  - A. Responsibilities:
    - 1. Executive counsel for the Executive Director
    - 2. May appoint committees, especially when necessary to search for new Executive Director
  - B. **Election of the Executive Committee** (p. 15)
    - 1. Still three members elected by the entire Board
    - 2. Officers: Board Chair, Vice-Chair and a Secretary-Treasurer, chosen by the entire Board
    - 3. A Board Member may not be elected to Exec. Comm. in first year on National Board
    - 4. An Exec. Comm. Member may only serve one term as Board Chair.
    - 5. Process for election carefully delineated.
- III. **Replacing a Member of the National Board through Removal / Resignation** (p. 17) – The process is now presented in much greater detail.
- IV. **The Executive Director** (p. 18) – no major changes; more to reflect our reality and desire for the type of person we want in the position: a visionary leader
  - A. We as a Board have developed a Succession Plan and an Emergency Succession Plan. (p. 19)
  - B. We have painstakingly planned processes to advertise for, to select, and to hire a new Executive Director, should we need them. (pp. 19-20)
  - C. We have also proposed how we would remove an Executive Director should the need arise. (p. 20)
- V. **The NRVC Regional Structures** (p. 21) – We know that one of our greatest strengths is in our members. We need to revitalize our regions and to acknowledge our role in promoting religious life and religious vocations.
  - A. First, we restructured the former Associate Director of Programs and Projects job description to an upgraded position of Director of Member Relations and Services.
  - B. At this time we are NOT recommending a new Regional Configuration. Rather, we are going to enter into conversation with all Regions throughout the coming year (2015) to determine the best way to re-configure NRVC. (p. 22) (*Revised, September 2014.*)

- C. We re-examined and kept most of the Regional Coordinators role and the processes in place there; *but, we emphasized the connection/communication between the National Organization and the Regions.*
- D. **Membership in and Organization of Regions** (p. 23)
  - 1. Each member may attend meetings in more than one Region.
  - 2. Regions may have their own set of By-laws.
  - 3. Each Region may charge fees to cover its activities; funds still held at National Office.
- E. **Removal of a Regional Coordinator** (p. 25) – We also put in place a process to remove a Regional Coordinator should the situation arise. *(It's in keeping with our processes for other persons of responsibility.)*
- VI. **Benefits of Membership in NRVC** (p. 26)
  - A. Added all the web activities;
  - B. Added access to possible grants from the new National Fund for Catholic Religious Vocations.
- VII. **Membership Year** (p. 27) – no major changes; *but moved from the Constitutions*
- VIII. **Fiscal Year** (p. 27) – no major changes; *but moved from the Constitutions*
- IX. **Management Committees, Advisory Committees and Task Forces** (p. 27) – no major changes; *but moved from the Constitutions*
- X. **Finances** (p. 29) – no major changes; *but moved from the Constitutions*
- XI. **By-law Amendment Procedures** (p. 29)
  - A. Changes may be proposed to the National Board by members who secure the support of five additional members.
  - B. Changes to the By-laws may be made by approval of the National Board. No vote of the membership is required.