

# Constitution of the Missouri Baptist Convention

## Article I--Name

This body shall be called the "Missouri Baptist Convention" (hereafter Convention).

## Article II--Statement of Purpose

Missouri Baptists—serving together to grow Great Commission churches for the glory of God.

## Article III--Time and Place of Meeting

The Convention shall meet annually during October or November at such time and place as the Convention or, in case of emergency, the Executive Board may decide.

## Article IV--Membership

This Convention shall consist of messengers named by affiliated churches under the following conditions:

**Section 1.** Any Southern Baptist church singly aligned with the Convention and desiring to cooperate with the Convention in her program of single alignment with the Southern Baptist Convention and any Baptist church meeting the qualifications stated in Section 2 shall be entitled to one messenger for every one hundred members or fraction thereof, or for every \$2,500.00 given to the Convention through the Cooperative Program in the previous reporting year, provided that no church shall be entitled to have more than fifteen messengers.

**Section 2.** In accordance with the agreement in the year 1919, Missouri Baptists shall continue in fellowship with the multiple aligned churches who were affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention as of 1961.

**Section 3.** Should the seating of any messenger or messengers from any church applying for membership in the Convention be challenged, the matter shall be referred to the credentials committee. The committee shall report to the Convention at the next session after the challenge and, if the committee's ruling is appealed, the Convention shall make the final decision about the challenged messenger or messengers.

**Section 4.** Nothing in this article shall be construed to prohibit cooperation with the Convention by those Baptist churches with racial, ethnic, or cultural relations or other organizations, conventions, associations and affiliations so long as no part of those relations is contrary to this Convention's Constitution, Bylaws and Business and Financial Plan and do not violate accepted Southern Baptist faith, polity and practice.

## Article V--Relationship Between the Convention and Churches and Associations

**Section 1.** The doctrinal guidelines for this Convention

and its work shall be the Baptist Faith and Message as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention on June 14, 2000, understanding that any Southern Baptist church affiliated with the Convention has the right to affirm any historic Baptist confession of faith.

**Section 2.** The relation between the Convention and the churches and associations shall be fraternal and cooperative. The Convention shall never exercise any authority over the churches or do anything that would in any way interfere with their complete autonomy and independence as New Testament churches to limit the exercise of their freedom.

**Section 3.** The Convention shall always have the right to sit in judgment upon the qualification of its own members and may at any time decline to accept or continue cooperation with a church or to seat as a messenger any person who may be considered by the Convention disqualified on personal grounds or by reason of the character or attitude of the church from which such messenger or messengers shall come.

## Article VI--Officers

**Section 1.** The officers of the Convention shall be president, first vice-president, second vice-president and recording secretary. These officers shall be chosen at each annual meeting. Officers shall serve from the close of the annual meeting of the Convention at which they were elected until the close of the next annual meeting of the Convention except, however, that the recording secretary shall be responsible for the preparation of minutes of the annual meeting at which he functioned.

**Section 2.** The president of the Convention may be elected for only two consecutive terms of office and shall not be eligible for reelection until one year has elapsed from the time a successor assumes the office.

**Section 3.** Each officer shall be a member of a church affiliated with this Convention. No salaried employee (nor a spouse of such salaried employee) of the Executive Board or of an agency owned or controlled by this Convention or to which the Convention makes direct appropriations and no person receiving supplemental aid from the Convention (nor a spouse of such person) shall be eligible to be an officer.

**Section 4.** Candidates for offices of this Convention shall be nominated from the floor, and officers shall be elected by ballots, cast by registered messengers at the annual meeting, provided, however, that a majority of votes cast is required for election to any office and provided further, that the vote may be taken via voice if there is only one nominee for any office. If a runoff election is necessary, only the names of the two persons receiving the most votes on the first ballot shall appear on the second ballot.

## Article VII--Duties of Officers

**Section 1.** Duties of the president shall include presiding over the meetings of the Convention, keeping order, taking the vote on all questions properly brought up, and performing all other duties usually performed by a presiding officer.

**Section 2.** In case of the inability of the president to serve, the order of succession shall be first vice-president, second vice-president, and recording secretary. The president may request the first or the second vice-president to preside at any session or part thereof of the annual meeting.

**Section 3.** In case of death, resignation, disability or ineligibility of the secretary, first vice president and/or the second vice president, or of the succession of either to the office of president, the resulting vacancy or vacancies shall be filled by the Executive Board for the unexpired term. At the first Executive Board meeting after death, resignation, disability or ineligibility of the first vice president, the second vice president, and/or secretary, the Executive Board shall receive nominations from the floor with a simple majority being required for election.

**Section 4.** Duties of the recording secretary shall include keeping correct minutes of all the proceedings of Convention meetings and preparing minutes for publication. Assisted by the Executive Board's administrative staff, the recording secretary shall arrange for such statistics and data necessary for faithfully and accurately reporting the Convention's work to be collected, digested, tabulated and printed in the Convention's Annual as supplements to the Convention's minutes or printed in the *Book of Reports* available to messengers at each annual meeting. The recording secretary may appoint such assistants necessary to perform duties of the office at Convention meetings.

**Section 5.** Convention officers shall serve as ex officio members of the Executive Board with all rights of members. The president shall serve as an ex officio member without vote of all Convention committees, provided however, that the president shall not serve on the Convention Nominating Committee.

## **Article VIII--Executive Board**

**Section 1.** The corporate powers of the Convention shall be reposed in the Executive Board of the Convention. The Board shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of Missouri and shall be responsible for the faithful observance of all legal requirements. This Board shall have charge of the missionary, educational, and benevolent work of the Convention.

### **Section 2.**

**a.** The Executive Board shall be composed of Convention officers as at large members and three members from each of eight areas of the state, as defined in the Bylaws, which has a resident membership of affiliated churches of at least 16,000. For each additional

10,000 resident members or major fraction thereof above the basic 16,000, one additional board member will be chosen, up to, but not to exceed, a total of nine Board members from each area. Each church in the area shall be invited to present names of prospective Board members to the area representatives of the Convention Nominating Committee no later than July 10, in the manner specified in the Bylaws.

**b.** Board members shall be elected to three-year terms, approximately one third of the members from each area being elected each year. Terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which elected, or as provided in Article VIII, Section 2, d. All terms shall expire as scheduled. An area member may serve two successive three-year terms, but may be eligible for re-election after two years have transpired, provided, however, that one elected to a term expiring within one year may be eligible for two successive three-year terms. An area member who has not served two successive three-year terms may be eligible for re-election after one year has transpired. Only one person from an affiliated church may serve as an area member at a given time on the Board. An area member who moves out of the area, but within the State, may remain on the Board for the remainder of the current Convention year.

**c.** The Board shall declare vacant any position from which a member has been absent for two consecutive regular meetings of the full Board without an acceptable reason formally submitted to the Board chairman.

**d.** If a vacancy on the Board occurs between annual meetings of the Convention, the chairman of the Board shall promptly notify the chairman of the Convention Nominating Committee, and the Nominating Committee shall, within sixty days, from the list for that area offered by the last committee, fill the position until the next annual meeting of the Convention.

**e.** No salaried employee (nor a spouse of such salaried employee) of the Executive Board or of any agency owned or controlled by this Convention or to which the Convention makes direct appropriations shall be eligible for membership on the Board during the period of employment.

### **Section 3.**

**a.** The Convention officers shall serve as officers of the Board without pay as follows: the president as chairman, the first vice president as first vice chairman, the second vice president as second vice chairman and the recording secretary as secretary. The Board shall adopt all regulations necessary for the conduct of its business; appoint such committees as it or the Convention may deem wise; and report annually to the Convention. The Board may from time to time report its work to Convention constituents in ways calculated to inform them.

**b.** The Board shall have full power and authority to act for the Convention between annual meetings of the Convention in any and all matters pertaining to the Conventions business; but the Board shall not have power to reverse any action of the Convention, to do anything contrary to this Convention's Constitution, Bylaws, and Business and Financial Plan, or to violate accepted Baptist faith, polity, and practice.

**c.** The Board shall present to the Convention in its annual meeting a Cooperative Program allocations budget for the succeeding calendar year, including both Convention and Southern Baptist Convention objects, for the Convention's consideration and adoption. All undesignated contributions to this Convention shall be faithfully distributed among the objects included in the budget upon the basis of the percentage or amount fixed for each object, and distribution shall be made in accordance with the Convention's Business and Financial Plan.

**d.** The Board shall elect and determine the compensation of an executive director, who shall have general supervision of all work directed by the Board. The Board shall employ and determine the compensation of other persons necessary for directing the Board's work.

**e.** The Board shall, consistent with Article IX, have general oversight over all educational and benevolent agencies owned, operated, or maintained in whole or in part by the Convention. It shall keep itself fully informed as to the conditions and the needs of all agencies, approve arrangements for all campaigns for funds, and conduct a continual campaign for enlightenment as to the claims and the needs of these agencies.

**f.** The treasurer of the Board shall be the executive director, who shall receive, maintain custody over, and disburse all funds as directed by the Convention or the Board. The treasurer shall maintain proper financial records, which shall be properly audited. The Board shall provide for bonding the treasurer adequately to protect the Convention's and the Board's interests.

#### **Article IX--Agencies**

**Section 1.** This Convention shall own, operate, or in covenant relationship contribute to such educational, benevolent, or other agencies approved by the Convention.

**Section 2.** All charters and charter changes shall be approved by the Convention upon recommendation by the Executive Board.

**Section 3.** The Convention shall elect or approve members of the governing board of each agency. Each board shall have full authority over the internal operation of the agency but shall be required to make a report of its operation and financial condition to the annual meeting of the Convention in accordance with the Business and Financial Plan.

**Section 4.** Before an agency can borrow money for which the Convention is responsible, it shall secure formal approval in writing of the Executive Board.

#### **Article X--Committees**

**Section 1.** The Committee on Convention Committees consisting of eight persons--one from each area--shall be appointed by the president not fewer than ninety days prior to the annual meeting of the Convention. The names of committee members shall be published in the official news journal of the Missouri Baptist Convention. This committee shall nominate all standing committees of the Convention, except the Nominating Committee, according to provisions of Convention Bylaws.

**Section 2.** The Nominating Committee shall consist of twenty-four members, serving terms of three years each, eight of whom shall be nominated by the president in consultation with other Convention officers and elected by the Convention at each annual meeting. Terms shall begin at the close of the annual meeting at which elected, or as otherwise provided in this Section. Three members from each of the eight geographical areas shall make up the committee. One half of the committee shall be lay persons and one half ministers. This committee shall nominate persons to serve on the Executive Board, on the governing board of each agency, and on each commission. The area representatives on the Nominating Committee shall be responsible for inviting nominations from the churches for the Executive Board. The committee shall be guided by such rules and procedures as the Convention may adopt from time to time. The Nominating Committee shall declare vacant any position from which a member has been absent for two consecutive meetings without an acceptable reason or any position occupied by a member who moves out of the geographical area from which elected. The Convention president shall appoint a person to fill such vacancies until the next annual meeting of the Convention, at which time the position shall be filled for the remainder of the term.

**Section 3.** The Tellers Committee, consisting of an adequate number of members to carry out the tasks, shall be appointed by the president not fewer than thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting of the Convention. This committee shall assist the presiding officer, as needed, with the taking of all votes by voice, hand and standing or ballot, collecting the ballots, tabulating the results, and announcing results to the presiding officer.

**Section 4.** The Convention shall have such other committees as authorized by the Bylaws.

#### **Article XI--Amendments**

This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting by two-thirds of the messengers voting, provided that the text of the proposed amendment shall have been

presented to the previous annual meeting, and provided further, that Article V shall not be subject to any amendment that would violate the principle that it embodies. Any proposed amendment to this Constitution shall, upon introduction and being seconded, stand referred to the Committee on Continuing Review, as established in the Bylaws of the Convention, for examination and hearing on such amendment and a report and recommendation to the Convention at its next annual meeting.