

**CONSTITUTION OF THE BAPTIST CONVENTION  
OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA  
Originally Adopted 1919**

**Amended 2009**

**I. Name and Purpose**

**Sec. 1. The name** of this body shall be the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia.

**Sec. 2.** The Georgia Baptist Convention is a living partnership of churches growing in grace, strengthening one another in faith and working together in obedience to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

**II. Membership**

**Sec. 1.** This body shall be composed of messengers from cooperating Baptist Churches. A cooperating church is one that gives evidence of its belief in Holy Scripture as its authority in matters of faith and practice and is in harmony and cooperation with the work and purpose of this Convention. A cooperating church does not include a church which knowingly takes, or has taken, any action to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior.

**Sec. 2. Messengers.** Each cooperating church, having contributed through the Convention for the Cooperative Program and Convention causes during the preceding year, shall be entitled to two messengers and to one additional messenger for each \$800 contributed through this Convention for the Cooperative Program and Convention causes, but in no case shall any church be entitled to more than fifteen (15) messengers.

**Sec. 3.** Voting by proxy is not permitted.

**III. Meetings**

**Sec. 1. The Convention** shall meet at least once each year, the time and place to be fixed by the Convention or the Executive Committee. The dates and places of meetings shall be planned two years in advance.

**Sec. 2. Special Meetings.** The Convention may be called into a special meeting by two-thirds vote of the Executive Committee. The call for the special meeting shall state the purpose of the meeting and the time, date and place for the meeting. The meeting shall be held no sooner than twenty-one days or later than sixty days after action of the Executive Committee to call the meeting. Notice of the purpose, time, date and place for the special meeting shall be published in The Christian Index in a notice at least the size of one-half page in a minimum of two issues with the second issue published at least seven days before the date of the meeting. The special meeting shall be limited to the purpose stated by the Executive Committee.

**Sec. 3. Quorum.** The quorum for the annual meetings or special meetings shall be ten percent of the registered messengers.

**IV. Powers**

**Sec. 1.** This Convention shall never attempt to exercise authority over any Church, but shall always cheerfully recognize and uphold the Churches' autonomy under Christ.

**Sec. 2.** The Convention shall receive funds for the approved work of the Convention and its agencies and shall dispense these funds according to the expressed will and direction of the donors.

**V. Officers**

**Sec. 1. Officers.** The officers of the Convention shall be a president, four vice presidents, a secretary and two assistant secretaries, each of whom shall be elected at each annual meeting by the registered messengers and who shall hold their offices until their

successors are elected. The officers shall assume office at the close of the Convention at which they are elected. The vice presidents shall be elected by plurality, without regard to receiving a majority of the total votes, the first vice president being the person receiving the most votes and the other vice presidents serving in the positions in order of the number of votes received, and all other officers shall be elected by majority. Their duties shall be those usually discharged by such officers. No person shall serve as president more than two years, and thereafter shall not be eligible for re-election to that office. No person shall be nominated and elected as an officer who is not a registered messenger of the Convention at the time of the nomination.

**Sec. 2.** If the President, for any reason, is unable to complete the term for which elected, then the first vice president shall immediately become President and shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. If the first Vice-President is unable to serve, the Vice-President receiving the next highest number of votes shall fill the office.

**Sec. 3. Ex Officio Membership.** The president shall serve as an ex officio member of all standing and special committees of the Convention.

**Sec. 4. Appointment of Committee on Nominations.** The president shall appoint the Committee on Nominations and the chairman of the committee.

## **Article VI. Boards, Commissions And Committees**

**Sec. 1. Executive Committee Membership.** An Executive Committee of the Convention shall be elected by the Convention and its membership shall consist of one member elected from each cooperating association and twenty members elected from the state at large, with each member being elected for a five-year term. It is requested that at least one-half of the at-large positions elected annually to serve on the Executive Committee be laypersons. Membership on the Executive Committee shall also include the officers of the Convention, the president of the Georgia Baptist Pastors Conference, the president of the Georgia Baptist Religious Education Association, the president of the Georgia Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, the president of the Georgia Baptist Student Union, the president of the Georgia Baptist Music Conference, the president of the Fellowship of Retired Ministers, the two representatives elected annually by the Ethnic Advisory Council for one-year terms, the president of the Preaching Conference, and the president of the Georgia Baptist Ministers Wives Fellowship, with all such persons serving as ex-officio members.

**Sec. 2. Executive Committee Membership Eligibility.** No person who is regularly employed by or who is a member of a governing board of any institution, agency or entity included in the budget of the Convention and whose trustees or directors are elected by the Convention, shall be eligible to serve as a member of the Executive Committee, except as an ex officio member. No person who is regularly employed by any institution, agency or entity shall be eligible to serve as a member of any governing board, supervisory body, commission or other board or committee of such institution, agency or entity which is appointed or elected by the Convention. No person serving as an elected member of the Executive Committee shall be eligible for re-election to membership on the Executive Committee after the expiration of their term of service or after a forfeiture of such service, until such person has been off the Executive Committee for at least one year; provided, however, where a person is elected to replace another member and where the replacement member will serve less than one-half of the original term, such person shall be eligible for re-election to membership on the Executive Committee. A person elected as a member of the Executive Committee as a representative of a cooperating association must be an active member of a church which is a part of such association. If, subsequent to the election, such person ceases to be a member of a church which is a part of the association, then that person shall be ineligible to serve on the Executive Committee; provided, however, that such person may continue to serve on the Executive Committee until the next annual meeting of the Convention if the association recommends to the Convention that the person be allowed to continue as the association's representative on the Executive Committee. At the next meeting of the Convention, the Convention shall elect another qualified person to serve in such position.

**Sec. 3. Executive Committee Attendance.** Any elected member of the Executive Committee who misses all of the Executive Committee meetings during any year of their term,

shall forfeit their membership on the Executive Committee. Any elected member of the Executive Committee who misses at least fifty percent of such meetings during any year without contacting the office of the Executive Director of the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia and receiving an excused absence for any meeting missed shall forfeit their membership on the Executive Committee. Persons serving as members of any governing board, supervisory body, commission or other board or committee of a Convention institution, agency or entity, who are elected or appointed to such position by the Convention, and who do not attend at least fifty percent of the meetings during any year, without being excused from a meeting by the appropriate chairman, shall forfeit their membership on such board, body, commission or committee. Any vacancy occurring due to forfeiture shall be reported to the Executive Committee and the Convention shall follow its regular procedure in electing a person to fill such vacancy with no interim replacements being made. The rotation policy of the Executive Committee shall apply to those persons appointed or elected by the Convention to any governing board, supervisory body, commission or other board or committee of any Convention institution, agency or entity.

**Sec. 4. Executive Committee Vacancy.** Any vacancy occurring in an elected position on the Executive Committee, caused by any reason, shall be filled by the Convention at its next annual meeting.

**Sec. 5. Executive Committee Authority.**

(a) Standing Authority. The Executive Committee shall have charge and control of all work, business, and affairs of the Convention, including missions, education, and benevolence, in the interim between meetings of the Convention and any action of the Executive Committee shall be in all matters the action of the Convention and shall be binding upon the Convention unless such action is contrary to a specific Convention policy or instruction that has been previously recorded in the minutes of the Convention.

(b) Emergency Authority. When an emergency occurs in any of the affairs of the Convention, or in any of the interests it controls, that, in the judgment of the Executive Committee, requires action before the next meeting of the Convention, the Executive Committee in that case shall have full authority to take such action as it determines appropriate, and all parties shall be bound by its action; provided, however, that it must report to the next annual meeting of the Convention all the facts in each case and the action taken. Nothing in this section shall be construed as giving the Executive Committee authority over any matter already committed by the Convention to any of its boards of trustees.

(c) Cooperating Churches. Should matters of concern arise from either (i) official action of an association, (ii) action of the Executive Committee, or (iii) action of the Convention, as to whether a church is a cooperating church, the matter shall be referred to the office of the executive director. The executive director, in consultation with the Administration Committee of the Executive Committee, shall review the matter which shall include hearing the concerns of the body that initiated the process and the concerns of the church, and seeking to restore an appropriate relationship between the church, the association, and the Convention. The executive director shall make recommendation to the Executive Committee which will determine either (i) that no further action is needed, whereupon the matter will be closed, or (ii) that the matter should be referred to the Convention for appropriate action. The Convention by vote of the messengers, can determine that a church does not qualify as a cooperating church, as defined in Article II, Section 1, whereupon such church shall be excluded from the Convention and all rights and privileges thereof.

**Sec. 6. Audits and Bonds.** Each governing body, supervisory body, commission or other board or committee of any institution, agency or entity included in the budget of the Convention or whose trustees or directors are elected by the Convention shall have its financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles accompanied by an unqualified audit opinion from a certified public accountant and shall have its financial officers placed under bond.

**Sec. 7. Committee on Nominations.** Within sixty days after each annual meeting of the Convention, the president shall appoint a committee of fifteen, five of whom shall have served on the previous Committee on Nominations, to serve as a Committee on Nominations to report at the next annual meeting, whose duty it shall be to nominate to the Convention all boards, commissions and committees elected by the Convention. A person nominated to the Convention

by the Committee on Nominations shall be an active member of a Georgia Baptist church. No person who is nominated by the Committee on Nominations shall serve at the same time on more than one governing board, supervisory body, commission or other board or committee of any institution, agency or entity whose members are elected by the Convention. Furthermore, no member of the Committee on Nominations nor any immediate family member shall be eligible for nomination by the Committee on Nominations.

**Sec. 8. Notice by Committee on Nominations.** At least ninety days before each annual meeting of the Convention the Committee on Nominations shall publish in The Christian Index the names of the associations from which Executive Committee members will be elected at the next session of the Convention, and it shall at the same time remind the constituency of the Convention within the fellowship of such associations that they may offer suggestions to the Committee on Nominations concerning the Executive Committee members to be elected from within their respective associations.

**Sec. 9. Convention Manual and Standing Committees.** The Executive Committee shall maintain an official organizational manual which shall be maintained by the Executive Director defining the duties, responsibilities, terms, members, and appointment or election procedures for the members of the boards, commissions and committees of the Convention and shall present to the Convention recommendations regarding any such matters.

**Sec. 10. Special Committees.** The Convention may by its action or approval create a special committee for a specific or special purpose. The members of any such committee shall be named by the president of the Convention unless otherwise specified by the Convention. After any such committee completes its task, it shall be dissolved.

**Sec. 11.** The Executive Director shall serve as an ex officio member on all standing and special committees of the Convention.

**Sec. 12. Membership in Georgia Baptist Convention Church.**

(a) Any person elected by the Georgia Baptist Convention to the Executive Committee, or to a board, commission or committee, or as an officer, or to any other position shall be an active member of a Georgia Baptist Convention church. In addition, any person elected to the Executive Committee as a representative of a cooperating association shall be an active member of a Georgia Baptist Convention church that is a part of such association.

(b) If a person ceases to be a member of a Georgia Baptist Convention church, or if a representative of an association ceases to be a member of a church in that association, then such person forfeits their remaining term of service and the position becomes vacant; provided, however, a representative of an association, upon written request from the association and approval of the Executive Director, may remain in the position until the next annual meeting of the Convention when the successor representative will be elected. Any vacancy occurring as a result of this section shall be filled by the Convention at its annual meeting.

(c) This section shall not apply to persons elected to the board of an institution where the institution's charter provides at the time this section is adopted that the Committee on Nominations is required to nominate from names received from the institution.

## **VII. Recognition Of Associations For Representation On The Executive Committee**

**Sec. 1.** Each new association shall consist of a minimum of fifteen (15) churches which are in harmony and cooperation with the work and purpose of this Convention. This association shall be a self-governing fellowship of churches sharing a common faith, active on mission in their setting, and occupying a geographic area of effective ministry which is both reasonable and discernible.

**Sec. 2.** Each new association shall submit an application provided by the office of the Executive Director which shall require the new association to state the reasons for the recognition of this association for representation on the Executive Committee. All applications must be submitted at least six months prior to the next annual Convention.

**Sec. 3.** All applications shall be reviewed by a special committee composed of the president of the Georgia Baptist Convention, chairman of the Executive Committee, chairman of the Administration Committee, and the president of the Associational Missionaries Fellowship.

The Executive Director and one staff member, appointed by the Executive Director, shall serve as ex officio members of this special committee.

**Sec. 4.** The Executive Committee shall review the recommendation of the special committee and recommend approval of the application to the Convention or refer the application back to the special committee for further review. All applicant associations shall be recognized for representation on the Executive Committee upon favorable action by the Convention at its annual meeting.

#### **Article VIII. Institutions**

**Sec. 1. Definition:** An institution is a body whose governing board is elected by the Convention.

**Sec. 2. Discontinuance of Relationship.** The relationship between the Convention and an institution shall not be discontinued without a majority vote on such action at two consecutive meetings of the Convention, unless the governing board of the institution and the Executive Committee of the Convention concur in such matter; whereupon, action can be taken at one meeting of the Convention and, further, that a notice of the discontinuance of the relationship of an institution of the Convention must be published in The Christian Index at least forty-five days before the meeting of the Convention.

#### **Article IX. Amendments**

**Sec. 1.** The Constitution may only be amended as follows: (i) a motion to amend may be made in writing at the annual meeting of the Convention by any messenger and upon the Convention's vote to consider such amendment, the proposed amendment will be submitted to the Convention for action at its next annual meeting; or (ii) a proposed amendment may be recommended by the Executive Committee in which case it will be submitted directly to the Convention for action.

**Sec. 2.** A proposed amendment submitted to the Convention for action must be published in The Christian Index at least thirty days before the meeting of the Convention and such amendment must be approved by two-thirds of the messengers present and voting.

#### **Article X. Parliamentary Authority**

**Sec. 1.** The rules contained in the current edition of Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised (Latest Edition), shall govern the meetings of the Convention in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the Convention's Constitution, bylaws or any special rules of order.