

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS of the BAPTIST CONVENTION OF NEW YORK

As Amended on September 26, 2015

Constitution

Article I: Name

This body shall be called the Baptist Convention of New York, hereinafter referred to as the “Convention.”

Article II: Statement of Faith

We adopt as our statement of faith *The Baptist Faith and Message* as adopted on June 14, 2000 by the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article III: Membership

The Convention shall consist of messengers elected and certified by churches and church-type missions cooperating with and contributing to the causes of the Southern Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program.

Section 1. Each church shall be entitled to three (3) messengers for the first fifty (50) or less members, and one (1) additional messenger for each additional fifty (50) members, provided no church shall have more than ten (10) messengers.

Section 2. The churches and church-type missions represented by messengers shall be in friendly cooperation with the Convention, sympathetic with its purpose, work, and with the Statement of Faith in Article II. Among churches not in cooperation with the Convention are churches which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior.

Section 3. The messengers shall be elected and certified by the churches to the Convention. The Convention office shall provide special registration forms for the churches at least sixty (60) days prior to the annual Convention meeting.

Section 4. A church-type mission sponsored by one of the churches of the Convention shall be entitled to one (1) messenger in addition to the messengers of the sponsoring church.

Article IV: Purpose

Section 1. This Convention is purely a cooperative body and its purpose shall be to furnish a means by which its cooperating churches, in their sovereign capacity, can work together in promoting all enterprises which they collectively deem necessary in carrying out Christ’s Great Commission.

Section 2. The Convention shall have no ecclesiastical authority whatever over its cooperating churches.

Section 3. This Convention and its Executive Board shall work in harmonious relationship with the existing state Conventions and all entities of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article V: Meetings

This Convention shall meet annually at such time and place as it may determine. Special meetings may be called, or the time and place of the annual meeting may be changed by a vote of two-thirds of Executive Board members present and voting, should an emergency justify such action.

1. Article VI: Officers

Section 1. The officers of this Convention shall be: a president, vice-president, recording secretary, and assistant recording secretary.

Section 2. These officers shall be elected annually by the Convention and shall be duly installed at the closing session of the Convention's annual meeting and shall hold their respective offices until their successors are elected and installed.

Section 3. No officer, except the recording secretary, shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 4. The Convention shall employ an Executive Director/Treasurer, and other salaried personnel, as needed according to current employment policies.

Article VII: Executive Board

Section 1. At each annual session the Convention shall elect members of an Executive Board.

Section 2. It shall be comprised of:

- a.** The elected officers of the Convention and the Executive Director as ex-officio members of the Executive Board;
- b.** Each church and association is autonomous. So that the Executive Board may be a widely representative body, churches cooperating with each BCNY recognized association will be represented by two (2) members for the first 25 (or portion thereof) cooperating churches in that association and one (1) additional member for each 25 (or portion thereof) cooperating churches in that association.
 - i.** Cooperating churches shall be defined as having contributed to the Cooperative Program of the SBC within the 12 months prior to the meeting in which they are attempting to vote. Churches may not be counted in more than one association for the purpose of determining the number of representatives to be chosen from the churches of each association.

ii. Associations shall become BCNY recognized associations, making churches in that association eligible for representation on the BCNY Executive Board, by an official vote of the state convention in annual meeting upon the recommendation of the Executive Board after the Administrative Committee has certified that the churches in the association meet the membership requirements in Article III.

c. No more than eight (8) members from any association, exclusive of any of the elected officers of the Convention and ex-officio members. The membership of the Executive Board from the churches of any association shall fairly represent the makeup of that association.

d. Any cooperating church, either directly or through its BCNY recognized association, will be asked to nominate their allotted representatives each year and notify BCNY by July 31. If nominations are not received by July 31, The Convention Life standing committee of the Executive Board will nominate persons to fill vacancies.

Section 3. The term of office for members of the Board shall be three (3) years except for the Recording Secretary. After serving one (1) full term of three (3) years, the remainder of another member's three (3) year term, or a term (or terms) as an ex-officio member, a member may be eligible for one (1) more three (3) year term (with the exception of the BCNY Executive Director/Treasurer, who is a permanent ex-officio member of the Executive Board). After that, a full year must elapse before the individual is eligible for re-election. In any case, no member (except for the BCNY Executive Director/Treasurer) shall serve on the Executive Board more than six (6) consecutive years (elected or ex-officio) without at least a one year break, except for the Recording Secretary if duly elected.

Section 4. All members of the Executive Board shall meet the qualifications for membership set forth in Article III, Membership. Any member of the Executive Board who does not meet this requirement at the time of the annual meeting of the Convention shall be disqualified from service on the Executive Board.

Section 5. No person or his or her spouse, other than ex-officio members, who receives regular remuneration directly or indirectly from this Convention shall be eligible for membership on the executive board. Pastors who receive salary supplements shall not be disqualified from service by this section.

Section 6. The Executive Board shall act on behalf of the Convention between sessions and shall make reports of its work at the annual meeting.

Article VIII: Boards, Trustees and Committees

This Convention shall have power to appoint such boards, trustees and committees as shall be deemed necessary for the handling of the affairs of the Convention. The Executive Director/Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member of each such body.

Article IX: Funds

Section 1. All funds accepted by the Convention for any special object shall be applied according to the designation of the donors.

Section 2. All undesignated funds sent to the Treasurer of the Convention shall be distributed between this Convention's and the Southern Baptist Convention's causes according to percentage agreements adopted by this Convention.

Section 3. The overall financial policy of any institution or agency of the Convention shall require the approval of the Executive Board or the Convention. Such institutions or agencies shall finance their programs without governmental funds except for reasonable compensation for actual services by the institution or agency involved.

Section 4. Any special campaign for funds must be specifically approved by vote of the Convention or Executive Board.

Article X: Amendment

All proposed amendments shall be presented to the Convention in writing at an annual meeting, with action being postponed until the next annual meeting, at which time action must be taken no later than the second day of the annual meeting, with a two-thirds vote of messengers present and voting required for ratification.

By-laws

The work of the Convention shall be governed by the following By-laws.

Article I: Meetings

Section 1. The sessions of the Convention shall be opened and closed with prayer.

Section 2. Persons who are not messengers, but are invited to attend the Convention shall have the privilege to speak in debate with the permission of the moderator. Such persons shall not be permitted to vote.

Section 3. No member shall speak more than twice in any single debate on the same day without permission from the body.

Section 4. The rules of order for the sessions of the Convention shall be those laid down in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, but in cases where the meaning may not be clear, the president shall exercise his discretion, subject to the appeal of the Convention.

Section 5. All resolutions presented to the Convention shall be in writing and shall be referred to the Committee on Resolutions. Effective with the annual meeting of 2004, all resolutions must be submitted in writing at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting of the Convention.

Article II: Officers

Section 1. Election of officers.

- a. The officers of the Convention shall be nominated from the floor and the election shall be by secret ballot when two (2) or more persons are nominated for the same office.
- b. The president shall be elected before the vice-president.
- c. When three (3) or more persons are nominated and no person receives a majority of the votes cast, a second ballot will be taken to decide between the two (2) candidates receiving the most votes on the first ballot.

Section 2. The duties of these officers shall be those required in this Constitution and the By-laws.

Article III: Executive Board

Section 1. Executive Board responsibilities:

- a. The Executive Board shall serve the Convention when the Convention is not in session and will report to the Convention annually.
- b. The Executive Board shall seek:
 - i. To assist in the growth and ministry of the churches;
 - ii. To strengthen the associations;
 - ii. To promote evangelism;
 - iv. To promote the establishment of new missions and churches, and help them minister to the world and within the geographical region of the Convention; and,
 - v. To secure an Executive Director/Treasurer and other personnel in accordance with terms and job descriptions previously adopted in keeping with its needs and resources.

Section 2. Executive Board meetings.

- a. The Executive Board shall meet at least twice a year and at any other time it deems necessary to do its work. Such sessions shall be open meetings unless declared by the Executive Board to be a closed meeting.
- b. For a regular meeting, one fourth of its membership shall be a quorum; and for a special called meeting, one third of its membership shall be a quorum.

Section 3. The Executive Board shall elect a chairman and a vice-chairman. The Board will divide itself into such subcommittees as are necessary. The chairman and vice-chairman of the Executive Board shall be elected at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Executive Board previous to the annual meeting of the Convention. The chairman's term of service shall begin immediately following the Convention's annual meeting. The recording secretary of the Convention shall serve as the recording secretary of the Executive Board. The committees of the Executive Board shall be appointed by the chairman of the Executive Board after

consultation with the president of the Convention and the Executive Director/Treasurer. No chairman shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms.

As soon as possible after the BCNY Annual Session, the Executive Board Chairman, in consultation with the Convention President and the BCNY Executive Director, shall divide the Executive Board into such subcommittees as are necessary. The first committee to be formed will be the Administrative Committee.

a. Administrative Committee

i. The Administrative Committee shall consist of the Executive Director/Treasurer, the president and vice president of the Convention, the chairman, vice-chairman, the recording secretary of the Executive Board, the retiring chairman of the Executive Board (or a previous term member of the Administrative Committee, if the retiring chairman's Executive Board term has expired), and the chairmen of the standing committees of the Board.

ii. The Administrative Committee will serve the Executive Board and make executive decisions on behalf of the Executive Board when it is not in session.

iii. The Administrative Committee decisions shall be reported to and subject to review by the Executive Board at its next scheduled meeting.

iv. After forming the Administrative Committee, the Executive Board members shall be divided into two (2) Standing Committees, as follows, and have a chairman appointed for each from among the Executive Board members assigned to each committee.

b. Great Commission Committee

i. This committee shall relate to, and serve in an advisory role to, BCNY staff assigned to ministries related to Missions, Evangelism, Ministry, Church Growth, and/or Discipleship.

ii. This committee shall suggest and/or recommend actions in the areas of Missions, Evangelism, Ministry, Church Growth, and/or Discipleship they deem appropriate for the churches of BCNY.

iii. This committee shall perform such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the BCNY Executive Board.

b. Convention Life Committee

- i. This committee shall relate to, and serve in an advisory role to, BCNY staff assigned to ministries related to Stewardship, Cooperative Program Promotion, and/or Communications.
- ii. This committee shall suggest and/or recommend actions in the areas of Stewardship, Cooperative Program Promotion, and/or Communications they deem appropriate for the churches of BCNY.
- iii. This committee shall perform the responsibilities assigned to it by Article IV, Section 2 of these by-laws.
- iv. This committee shall perform such other responsibilities as may be assigned by the BCNY Executive Board.

Section 4: Terms of office for all officers of the Executive Board shall be one year beginning immediately after the close of the BCNY Annual Session. No Executive Board officer shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive terms, except the recording secretary.

Section 5. Members shall attend meetings of the Executive Board unless providentially hindered and in such cases notification shall be given to the Board. Two (2) such consecutive absences without notification will be recognized as a resignation.

Section 6. If vacancies occur on the Executive Board or among officers between meetings of the Convention, the Board shall be empowered to fill the vacancies until the next Convention meeting.

Section 7. The Executive Board shall not incur any indebtedness for any period in excess of five (5) years without the approval of the Convention at its next scheduled meeting or a special meeting authorized under Article V of the Convention's Constitution.

Section 8. Finances.

- a. The Executive Board shall present a proposed budget each year at the annual meeting for the purpose of financing the program projected for the next calendar year.
 - i. The Basic Budget will be the operating budget of the Convention. It will include all personnel and program expense for the succeeding year. The Income section of this budget will include actual expected revenues from all sources for the next year. The Cooperative Program income projected in the recommended budget will not exceed the income for the current year. This Cooperative Program income projection will be based on the Cooperative Program income for the twelve (12) months prior to budget preparation.

ii. A Challenge Budget may be adopted with the Basic Budget. This budget will be the Cooperative Program goal beyond the Basic Budget's allocation for the Cooperative Program. It will be based on a realistic percentage increase over the previous year's Cooperative Program income and will be divided into segments on a percentage basis. Funds received in excess of the Challenge budget will be managed by the Administrative Committee.

iii. The Total Budget will be the sum of the Basic and Challenge Budgets and will be the budget goal for the year.

b. All financial obligations as budgeted are to be paid by the treasurer for the Convention out of available funds. An annual audit shall be made.

c. Cooperating Baptist churches in the geographical area of the Convention shall be asked to support the budget by giving a regular percentage of their unassigned offerings through the Cooperative Program and an offering designated during the Week of Prayer for BCNY Missions.

d. Any expenditures in excess of the budget amount in one given year must be first approved by the Executive Board.

e. Restricted funds, those funds received for specific purposes and restricted by the party providing financial resources to be managed by the Convention, including restricted funds carried over into another year, are to be used in the year in which they are provided or in the year immediately following the year in which they are provided. If not used for their intended purposes, their funds will be returned to the party providing them, or redirected on written approval from the donor.

i. The Executive Board will receive a written report in each September meeting on the activity planned or completed in each of these funds.

ii. Each donor will receive at year-end a report of the activity during that year in the restricted funds which he or she provided.

Article IV: Committees

Section 1. In advance of the annual session, the President shall appoint a Committee on Credentials and Enrollment whose duties it shall be to provide registration materials for messengers and visitors. This committee shall make a report to the assembled messengers upon the call of the president and shall pass on the credentials of all messengers.

Section 2. In advance of the BCNY annual session, The Convention Life Standing Committee of the BCNY Executive Board shall:

- a. Nominate, for election by the convention in annual session, a preacher and alternate preacher for the next year's annual sermon.
- b. Nominate, for election by the convention in annual session, persons to fill vacancies on the committees and boards of the agencies of the BCNY

- c. Plan and recommend the Order of Business for the annual session of the Convention

- d. Recommend to the Convention for its approval the dates and meeting places for future annual Conventions for not more than 5 years in advance.

Article V: Amendment

The By-laws may be altered by a two-thirds vote of the messengers present and voting in the first or second session of the Annual Meeting of the Convention.