

Revision Committee Report

Dear Churches of the American Baptist Association,

At our 2021 Messenger Meeting in Charleston, WV, the messengers voted to “have our president appoint a committee to review our articles of agreement and mission policy, and report to the messenger body in 2022, any recommended updates or changes.”

Per your request, the following committee was formed:

- Ed Button – Chairman of the Standing Missionary Committee
- Randy Cloud – Past President of ABA
- Roger Copeland – Past President of ABA
- Jim Crain – Past President of ABA
- Nathan Luellen – Recording Secretary of ABA
- Joe Morrell – Past President of ABA
- Terry Parrish – Past President of ABA
- Caleb Wood – Member of Baptist Sunday School Committee

On Wednesday afternoon at the 2022 Messenger Meeting in Orlando, FL, the committee offered their recommendations to the messengers. After discussion and amendments, the Articles of Agreement passed by a vote of 237-0, and the Mission Policy passed by a vote of 199-0.

The Mission Policy requires a simple majority vote and will go into effect immediately. The current Mission Policy may be found on the ABA website under the “Missions” tab and “Missionary Directory” (abaptist.org/missionarydirectory).

The Articles of Agreement require a 2/3 vote of the messengers present, which happened in Orlando. In addition, a 2/3 vote of the churches at our Messenger Meeting next year in Spokane, WA. Per the Articles of Agreement (Article XVI, Section 3), “The average of the number of churches which have been represented by messengers in the immediate past three sessions of the Association shall be the number from which to reckon as to how many two-thirds of the churches are.” The average number of churches represented by messenger at the previous three Messenger Meetings is 332.

With the approval of the Messengers, we are now requesting that the churches of the American Baptist Association vote in their regular business meetings and express the will of their church to the Messengers of the 2023 Messenger Meeting in Spokane. You may cast your vote EITHER by mail or in person. To vote by mail, please use the ballot included with this letter. The in-person vote will be a rising vote which will be added to the total of the mail-in votes. Should a church decide to vote by mail, their ballot should be postmarked by May 1, 2023, and mailed to:

**American Baptist Association
ATTN: Recording Secretaries
PO BOX 1050
Texarkana, TX 75504-1050**

Again, we must have a 2/3 vote of the churches that have been represented at our previous three meetings, not the churches present in Spokane. Failure to submit a vote is essentially a no vote. **Please, vote!**

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact any member of the committee. The proposed changes to the Articles of Agreement can be found by visiting abaptist.org/events.

May God continue to bless and keep you!

Bro. Eric Sutton, President and Chairman

Bro. Nathan Luellen, Clerk

**American Baptist Association
Articles of Agreement
2023 Church Vote**

Dear 2023 Recording Secretaries of the American Baptist Association,

_____ Church has met in regular Church Conference on _____ and offers the following vote concerning the proposed changes to the Articles of Agreement of the American Baptist Association:

YES

NO

Approved:

_____ (Church Clerk) _____ (Date)

_____ (Pastor/Moderator) _____ (Date)

PLEASE NOTE: If you plan to attend the Messenger Meeting in Spokane, WA (June 20-22, 2023), you do not have to fill out this ballot as there will be a rising vote for those present. ***If you mail a ballot, please do not vote in person also as each church is allowed ONE church vote when amending the Articles of Agreement.*** All ballots should be postmarked by May 1, 2023, and mailed to:

**American Baptist Association
ATTN: Recording Secretaries
PO BOX 1050
Texarkana, TX 75504-1050**

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

PREAMBLE

With faith in God, and unquestioning acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God, and earnest prayers for the blessings of God, we offer all Missionary Baptist Churches of Christ the following Articles of Agreement.

ARTICLE I—NAME

The name of this Association shall be the American Baptist Association.

ARTICLE II—OBJECT

The object of this Association is to encourage cooperation and Christian activity among the churches, to promote interest in, and encourage Missions on a New Testament basis among all people, to stimulate interest in Christian literature and general benevolence, and to provide a medium through which the churches may cooperate in these enterprises. And further provided that the objects, or purposes, for which this Association is formed shall be exclusively religious, literary, and educational within the meaning of Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

ARTICLE III—MEMBERS

Section 1. This Association shall be composed of regular Missionary Baptist churches.

Section 2. The annual or called sessions of this Association shall be held by Messengers elected by the churches composing said Association.

Section 3. Each church shall be entitled to three Messengers(.) ~~whose qualifications shall be determined by the church electing them.~~

(A. In the event circumstances require a virtual meeting, each church will be entitled to one Messenger.)

(B. The Messenger's qualifications shall be determined by the church electing them.)

ARTICLE IV—NATURE

This Association is the joint cooperation of the churches composing it.

ARTICLE V—~~DOCTRINAL STATUS (FREEDOM AND LIMITS)~~

This Association shall recognize the freedom of speech as essential to the highest achievements in its work. It shall stand or fall upon its own conformity to truth. It shall exercise no ecclesiastical authority, but it shall by every precaution recognize the ~~sovereignty (autonomy)~~ of every individual church. It shall encourage on the part of the churches and messengers the greatest possible freedom of expression in discussing matters pertaining to its work, and in the preeminence of missions and evangelism in the work of the churches.

ARTICLE VI—POWERS

The powers of this Association shall be limited to the execution according to the teachings of the New Testament of the will of the churches composing it; and the Association, in annual session, shall elect such officers as are necessary for its deliberations and work and appoint such committees as are needed and transact other business as may be directed by the churches.

ARTICLE VII—OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of this Association shall be President, three Vice Presidents, two Recording Secretaries, ~~Treasurer~~ (Secretary/Treasurer of Missions), Parliamentarians, Music Directors, Director of Meeting Arrangements, and such Corresponding Secretaries as the needs of the work may demand, and such other officers as are provided for in Article 6 of the Articles of Agreement of the American Baptist Association, whose duty shall be such as usually devolves upon such offices.

Section 2. All officers shall be chosen annually, and shall hold their offices until their successors are elected and the same shall be true of all members of standing committees. All officers shall be elected by acclamation.

Section 3. The Recording Secretaries, in addition to keeping the records of this Association, will superintend the printing and distribution of minutes of such meetings as the churches may direct. (The Recording Secretaries shall work in cooperation with the Secretary/Treasurer of Missions in the printing and distribution of minutes.)

Section 4. The election of the officers of this Association shall be held on the last day of the annual session. This is not to include officers who make annual reports to the Association. These officers may be elected at any time after their reports have been received by the Association.

Section 5. In all votes of this Association, a majority of the votes cast shall decide all questions, except amendments to the Articles of Agreement, and votes to refer questions to the churches, in these cases a two-thirds majority vote is necessary.

Section 6. In event it is moved and seconded to refer a question from the messenger assembly to the churches for their consideration and votes, any regular messenger shall have the right to exercise his parliamentary privilege by offering his objection to the consideration of the question. Then, the Chair may take a vote to determine if a majority of the messengers wish to consider the question. A negative vote will set the motion aside for that session; while a vote to consider the question makes it the order of the day. A two-thirds vote shall be necessary to pass the motion. Each church is entitled to one vote on questions referred to it, which, by request, may be cast in writing by an instructed messenger from his church, or by a letter composed by the church, which shall certify (1) the name of the church, (2) the date of the church conference, (3) the vote of the church, and (4) be signed by the moderator and the clerk of the church conference. Church votes cast by the use of unauthorized ballot forms will not be counted, they must be by letter only. Votes by mail shall be placed in envelopes and plainly marked on the outside with the words "CHURCH VOTE," and sent to the clerks of the American Baptist Association, who will, at the next session, open, count and tabulate them, together with the votes cast by messengers. The total of all votes cast by messengers and by mail for, or against, the question shall be accepted as the will of the churches. Sufficient notice to the churches of the referral of a question to them, will be the printed minutes of the action taken by the messengers, when they voted to refer the questions, and notice given in our regularly published papers that are listed in the yearbook of the previous year.

Section 7. In the event that the Association shall fail at its annual session to elect a ~~Treasurer~~ (Secretary/Treasurer of Missions) or Corresponding Secretaries, the same shall be elected by the (Standing) Missionary Committee as soon as possible after the adjournment of the session of this Association.

Section 8. It shall be the duty of the ~~Treasurer~~ (Secretary/Treasurer of Missions) or Corresponding Secretaries to conduct all correspondence of the Association and of the (Standing) Missionary Committee, to conduct the work of said committee as financial agent of it, and he shall make in writing a full annual report of all important matters of this office to the regular session of this Association, and such other reports as the (Standing) Missionary Committee may require.

Section 9. It shall be the duty of the ~~Treasurer~~ (Secretary/Treasurer of Missions) to take charge of money and valuables not specifically entrusted to someone else and to dispose of same as he may be directed by this Association or instructed by the Articles of Agreement, and to report in writing in full, the receipt and expenditures of his office to the regular session of this Association.

ARTICLE VIII—FUNDS

Section 1. All funds of this Association shall be raised by voluntary donations secured purely upon the merits of the cause in the interest of which appeals are made for gifts; provided this is not to prevent the use of any income or any property that may be acquired by donations or purchase.

Section 2. Distribution of funds shall be authorized by an act of this Association, or by the act of properly authorized committees of this Association, hereinafter provided for, but in no instance shall the Association, or any committee of it, use means in violation of the expressed preference of the donor.

Section 3. All funds of this Association shall pass through the hands of the ~~Treasurer~~ (Secretary/Treasurer of Missions) in a manner hereinafter provided for. This is to include money, deeds, and whatever may be entrusted to any committee to be used by said committee under the instruction of this Association.

Section 4. The Treasurer of this Association shall hold all funds received between sessions of this Association subject to order of the committee entitled to use it.

ARTICLE IX—MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

Section 1. The messengers of the cooperating churches of this Association shall elect annually a (Standing) Missionary Committee, which shall consist of twenty-five members, thirteen of whom shall constitute a quorum. Any cooperating church may elect from its membership one committeeman to serve with the regular Committee elected by the messengers.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the (Standing) Missionary Committee of this Association (~~, along with the Association President and Vice-Presidents,~~) to act as executive of the Association, to carry out the object of this Association, and to attend all the needed matters not otherwise provided for by special provisions, and to render an annual report of this work to the Association.

Section 3. The membership of all committees shall be fairly distributed among the various sections and organizations of churches which cooperate with this Association.

ARTICLE X—MISSIONARY SERVICE TRUST

(Proposed Change: Remove Article X as this is no longer a functioning part of the Association. All other Articles numbers would reflect the removal of this Article.)

~~Section 1. The messengers of the churches of this Association shall elect annually seven men, one of whom shall be the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions of the American Baptist Association, and four of whom shall be a quorum, to be known as the Missionary Service Trust of the American Baptist Association.~~

~~Section 2. The Missionary Service Trust shall not function independently from the churches composing the American Baptist Association, but shall be constituted, directed by, and subject to the churches of said association.~~

~~Section 3. The duties of the Missionary Service Trust shall be limited to liaison work between the Foreign Missionaries of the Association, sponsoring churches, and messenger assembly of the churches of the association. The office of Secretary-Treasurer of Missions of the American Baptist Association shall be authorized to solicit, hold and administer both general offerings and trust funds directly involved in meeting requirements for our missionaries to enter, remain on, and return from Foreign Mission Fields.~~

~~Section 4. The Missionary Service Trust is authorized to assist the missionaries to secure permanent and resident visas to enter into a foreign country, and to serve as liaison agent between our churches, representatives of our own U.S. Government and foreign governments regarding international travel, recognition and laboring conditions of our missionaries.~~

~~Section 5. The Missionary Service Trust is privileged to request information from the churches and messenger assembly of the American Baptist Association, and requested to submit reports and recommendations to the Annual Messenger Assembly regarding requirements and conditions to be met by our churches and missionaries in order to secure the best possible conditions under which our missionaries may enter, be recognized and perform their labors in each foreign country where the missionary may be sent to work.~~

ARTICLE XI—LITERATURE COMMITTEE (BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL COMMITTEE)

Section 1. The messengers to this Association shall elect annually a committee on literature to consist of sixteen members, nine of whom shall constitute a quorum.

Section 2. The ~~Literature Committee~~ (Baptist Sunday School Committee) shall act in its field as an executive of the Association between the annual sessions, performing all duties that may be entrusted to said Committee by the Association and fill vacancies between sessions that may occur in the offices of ~~Business Manager~~ (Chief Executive Officer / CEO) and Editor (in Chief).

ARTICLE XII—HISTORY AND ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Section 1. The messengers of this association shall elect annually seven persons, four of whom shall constitute a quorum, who will compose the History and Archives Committee of the American Baptist Association.

Section 2. The duty of this Committee is to locate, collect and preserve such historic data as pertains to our Baptist people as it is within their ability so to do; and make an annual report to the messenger assembly.

Section 3. This Committee shall hold at least two regular meetings during each Associational year, if expense funds are available.

Section 4. The Committee is vested with the authority to solicit, collect and expend such funds as are necessary to defray all expenses incurred, and to keep a record of all receipts and expenditures which will be audited and become a part of the Auditor's annual report.

ARTICLE XIII—YOUTH ENCAMPMENT TRUSTEES

Section 1. The messengers of the cooperating Churches of this Association shall elect annually five men, three of whom shall constitute a quorum, to be known as YOUTH ENCAMPMENT TRUSTEES.

Section 2. The Youth Encampment Trustees shall act in their field for the Messenger Assembly to receive, hold and disburse funds for the maintenance, development, improvement and enlargement of the Youth Encampment Facilities owned by the Association and improve the grounds and/or buildings as the messenger assembly may direct and authorize.

Section 3. The Youth Encampment Trustees are hereby empowered to hire such managerial and maintenance help as needed. They shall not meet less than twice annually with their expenses to be paid from available funds. They shall give a written report annually, have an annual audit by a licensed auditor and include this auditor's report in the Annual Auditor's Report which is now given to this Assembly.

ARTICLE XIV—MEETING

The regular meeting of the Church Messengers shall be at such time and place as the assembled Messengers may appoint, and the (Standing) Missionary Committee herein is empowered to make a called session when necessary.

ARTICLE XV—DISSOLUTION

In the event of a dissolution of the Association, the messengers elected by the churches composing the said Association shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all the liabilities of the Association, dispose of the assets of the said Association by transferring the same to such other organization, or organizations, as will, according to the determination of the said messengers, effect and carry out the objects of this Association as set forth in Article II hereof; provided only that such organization, or organizations, shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization, or organizations, under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

ARTICLE XVI—AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The Articles of Agreement shall not be changed or amended unless the change or amendment to be offered in writing on the first day of a regular session and be permitted to lay over until some subsequent day of that same session and then it can be adopted only by a vote of two-thirds majority of the voting messengers present and two-thirds majority vote of the churches themselves in their regular conference.

Section 2. In case two-thirds of the churches shall demand an amendment, the vote shall be taken by churches.

Section 3. The average of the number of churches which have been represented by messengers in the immediate past three sessions of the Association shall be the number from which to reckon as to how many two-thirds of the churches are.