

# CONSTITUTION OF THE TENNESSEE BAPTIST MISSIONARY AND EDUCATIONAL CONVENTION, INC.

## PREAMBLE

We the people who form this body known as the Tennessee Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Inc. comprised of Missionary Baptist Churches across the state of Tennessee, formed to provide and promote Educational, Missions and stewardship programs, to garner the support of Baptist Associations and Missionary Societies for the purpose of collectively supporting institutions of higher learning and to provide a support base in Christian Education, based upon Biblical principles and the teaching of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, recognizing the autonomy of affiliated churches.

## ARTICLE I NAME

The Convention shall be named "The Tennessee Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Incorporated."

## ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The Convention shall promote missionary and educational interest of the Baptists of Tennessee as special objectives which shall include the Women's Ministry, Tennessee Baptist Leadership Educational Training Ministry (Congress), Missions Ministry, Laymen's Ministry, Choirs, Ushers, **Youth and Children**, and Moderator's Ministries; and the promotion of other objectives of benevolence and appoint such committees to whose special charge such objectives shall be committed and whose activity shall be reported at the Convention's Annual Meeting for its approval.

## ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1.** This Convention shall be composed of **messengers** from Missionary Baptist Churches and Associations that are cooperating and contributing annually to the objectives of this Convention.

**Section 2.** Any Baptist Church conforming to the beliefs and established policies of Missionary Baptists may be represented in the Convention by paying the annual quota that shall be suggested to it by the Convention and to which it agrees. The Convention may also receive monies from the ministries of the church. The paying of a quota shall admit members of the church to the sessions and activities. However, not more than ten (10) members from any one church *may* vote on any single issue.

**Section 3.** Associations may be represented in the Convention by paying the annual quota, which shall be suggested by the Convention and accepted by the Association. Payment of a quota shall admit representatives of these Associations to the sessions and activities of the Convention but no representatives shall have the right to vote.

## ARTICLE IV AUTHORITY

The Convention shall have no ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the churches or Associations represented in this body, nor act as advisory counselor in case of indifference between churches, nor shall it interfere with the constitution of any church or Association.

**ARTICLE V**  
**PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS**

**Section 1. Principal Place of Business:** The Convention's principle place of business shall be located in the State of Tennessee and known as Convention Headquarters.

**ARTICLE VI**  
**OFFICERS**

**Section 1. Officers.** This Convention shall elect, by ballot a President and a Vice President-At Large. They shall run on the same ballot. The President shall appoint all principal officers which shall include three (3) Regional Vice-Presidents; Recording Secretary, Statistical Secretary, Treasurer, President and Vice-President of all ministries of the Convention, with the Moderators and Former Presidents acting as an advisory committee to the President. Other workers shall be appointed by the Presidents of the respective ministries, with the approval of the Convention President. The President of the Convention shall be elected to a four (4) year term. The President can be elected to a second four (4) year term (consecutively or intermittently).

**Section 2. Eligibility.** Any Pastor with membership in good standing with any church holding membership in this Convention shall be eligible for the offices of the President and Vice President At-Large of this Convention. Any member in good standing with any church holding membership in this Convention shall be eligible for any of the other offices of this Convention.

**Section 3. Duties of the President.** It shall be the duty of the President to preside at all meetings of the Convention, enforce a rigid observance of the Constitution, by-laws, rules, and regulations of the Convention; and appoint all committees unless otherwise ordered. The President shall cast the deciding vote in case of a tie, and shall sign all documents requiring the President's signature, and by virtue of that office shall have general supervision over the work of the ministries of the Convention. The President, in consultation with Regional Vice-Presidents and Ministry heads, shall arrange a suitable program with topics and speakers for the Annual and Mid-Winter sessions.

**Section 4. Duties of the Vice President At-Large.** It shall be the duty of the Vice President At-Large to preside in the absence of the President and perform the duties of this office and any other duties as assigned by the President.

**Section 5. Duties of the Regional Vice-Presidents.** It shall be the duty of the Regional Vice-Presidents to preside at meetings of the respective regions and to promote the interest and objectives of the Convention in the respective regions.

**Section 6. Duties of the Recording Secretary.** It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to keep the minutes of the Convention, register the names of the *members*, and perform such other duties pertaining to that office as may be required by the Convention; and appoint temporary secretarial assistants, subject to approval of the President.

**Section 7. Duties of the Treasurer.** The Treasurer of the Convention shall be the custodian of the assets of the Convention, including its general funds, and shall disburse, or cause to be disbursed, funds of the Convention in accordance with the budget as adopted by the Convention, or in approval of the Business Committee of the Convention. The Treasurer shall deposit, or cause to be deposited, all receipts of the Convention, and shall receive monthly reports of receipts and expenditures of the Convention's general funds from the Executive Secretary (see Article VII Section 4). The Treasurer shall transfer Convention assets, real or otherwise, only on authorization of the Convention. The Treasurer, along with the Executive Secretary, shall sign all checks on the general funds of the Convention. The Treasurer shall be bonded.

**Section 8. Reporting.** It shall be the duty of all officers to make a report when required by the Convention or the President of the Convention.

**Section 9. Vacancies.** Should there be a consequential vacancy in the office of President (dismissal, resignation, or death), no former president shall be eligible for a third term. In the event of a vacancy, the Vice President At-Large shall assume the presidency and complete the unexpired term of the Convention President. With respect to all other vacancies, they shall be made by appointment of the Convention President or his designee.

## ARTICLE VII **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Section 1. Governance.** The Board of Directors is the official governing entity of the Convention. It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to recommend policies and procedures for the Convention. The Board of Directors shall have fiduciary responsibilities of the Convention. The Board of Directors is accountable to the Tennessee Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Inc. and shall act in accordance with the Constitution of the Tennessee Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Inc.

**Section 2. Membership.** The Board of Directors of the Tennessee Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Inc. shall include the following persons:

1. The President, Vice President At-Large, Secretary, and Treasurer;
2. The Moderator from Each District Association;
3. Regional Vice Presidents **and Former Presidents**;
4. Representative Leader of each Ministry of the Convention;
5. Seven (7) Pastors (recommended by the Executive Committee and elected by the Convention); and,
6. Five (5) At-Large members (recommended by the Executive Committee and elected by the Convention).

(a). The role of the Board of Directors is essential to Convention effectiveness. The success of the State Convention depends greatly upon a competent and reliable Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall meet during the Adjourned Session and Annual Session of the State Convention. Other meetings may be called as deemed necessary by the Chairman of the Board of Directors or by request of the majority of the Board of Directors.

(b). The President of the Convention, or a person appointed by the President, shall serve as Chairman of the Board of Directors. The Board may create from its members, such committees as it deems necessary to carry out its assigned duties, as long as such committees are consistent with this Constitution.

**Section 3. Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall consist of fifteen (15) persons: the President, Vice President At-Large, the General Secretary, other Vice Presidents, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and five (5) other persons elected from the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors shall transact business referred to it by the Board of Directors and transact any urgent matters demanding immediate attention of the Convention, and report the same to the Board of Directors.

(a). Meetings. Executive Committee meetings shall be set annually and during Board meetings. Schedules shall be set for all meetings and an additional notification of Executive Committee meetings shall be by mail two weeks prior to said meeting. The Executive Committee shall be chaired by the President or his designee, and is accountable to the Board of Directors for the performance of its duties.

**Section 4. Executive Secretary:** The Convention shall have an Executive Secretary, who shall be appointed by the President, with the approval of the Executive Committee. The Executive Secretary shall be the paid agent of the Convention. The Executive Secretary shall be evaluated not less often than every three years by the Personnel Committee. The Executive Secretary shall be eligible to be succeeded.

(a). The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by the President and shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Convention, responsible to the Convention through the President and Board of Directors. The Executive Secretary's office, maintained at the Convention's headquarters, shall be the principle depository of the records of the Convention, and shall be the custodian of the same. The Executive Secretary under the direction of

the President and Board of Directors shall coordinate the financial efforts of the Convention, ensure that receipts are issued for money received and deposited in the general funds of the Convention. The Executive Secretary shall be bonded and along with the Treasurer, sign checks on the general funds of the Convention in accordance with the budget of the Convention or as approved by the Board of Directors, and shall be the Chief Promotional Officer and shall promote the general work of the Convention, serve Associations and churches in useful and helpful ways, promote Convention objectives, solicit support for the Convention and participate in its activities, especially its missionary and educational work; assist in developing and promoting stewardship and evangelism, help Associations and churches in Christian education and planning budgets, cooperate with the President and appointed officials of the Convention and its departments in their work throughout the year, assist Convention committees, ministries, departments, and other special committees or programs as may be authorized by the President, the Convention's Executive Committee, or the Board of Directors and shall make a personal report on activities at the Annual Session of the Convention or when required by the Board of Directors or the President. The Executive Secretary shall travel to various Associations, Alliances, Ministerial Associations, etc. promoting the work of the Convention.

(b). The Executive Secretary shall be responsible for all Convention publications as directed by the President and/or the Board of Directors.

(c). The Executive Secretary shall not be an active pastor or hold any other full-time position.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **MISSIONS AND MINISTRIES**

**Section 1.** The Convention shall have a Board of Missions composed of a State Director of Missions, An Assistant State Director of Missions, three (3) Regional Directors of Missions, three (3) Assistant Regional Directors of Missions for Home Missions, and three (3) Assistant Directors of Missions for Foreign Missions. Other committees shall be appointed as deemed necessary by the Board and approved by the Convention President. The Director and Assistant Director of Missions shall be an employee of the Convention. The Board shall have charge of the missionary activities of the Convention.

(a) The Board of Missions shall include evangelism and is defined (for the purpose of this document) as "aiding" (or helping) and evangelizing. It shall address individuals and groups' needs and developing relationships to enhance efforts to present the plan of salvation to the lost.

**Section 2. Ministries:** The Convention may sponsor a Ministry of Stewardship, a Ministry of Rural Church Work, and a Ministry of Christian Education which shall promote the interest of the Convention in these respective fields and at the discretion of the Convention. The President shall appoint Directors of these ministries who shall be employees of the Convention.

**Section 3. Standing Committees:** The President shall appoint the following standing committees which shall make annual reports to the Convention on the State of the Country, Education, Resolutions, Mission, Evangelism, Family and Personal Ethics.

**Section 4. Representation of Lay Persons:** Adequate provision shall be made for representation of lay persons and youth on all boards, ministries, and standing committees of the Convention.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **SEMINARY AND THEOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**Section 1.** The Convention shall be a sponsor of LeMoyne-Owen College, the Tennessee School of Religion, the American Baptist College, and the Knoxville Interdenominational Bible Institute. These shall be the principal educational institutions to which the Convention will lend support.

**Section 2. Board of Trustees/Directors Representation.** The Convention's President shall appoint one member to the Board of Trustees/Directors of each of the four institutions. The Convention's President may serve on the

Board of no more than two of the institutions at his discretion. The Convention members who serve one of the various Boards shall report on the status of the institution to the Convention at its Annual Session and at such other times as may be requested.

**Section 3. Funding.** All funding received by these institutions from the Convention and from any member Church, District, or Region shall be deemed by the Convention to be Convention funding to the said institution.

**ARTICLE X**  
**DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

Any member of the Convention or well-wishers may contribute to the Convention's endowment fund or create an endowment fund by means of, but not limited to, cash contributions, Life Insurance, stocks and bonds, real estate, or through a Last Will and Testament.

**ARTICLE XI**  
**GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

This Constitution shall be the governing instrument of the Convention. It may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board Members present concurring therein, provided written notice be given on the first day of the Annual Session. However, in the event of amendment, Article IV is not to be amended and shall forever remain intact.