

1 **THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF**
2 **THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS**
3 *A Corporation Incorporated According to the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

4 **PREAMBLE**

5 The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts, following Jesus Christ as the head of the
6 Church, and sharing a common faith with other Christian churches bears witness to God's
7 intention to bring redemption and wholeness to all creation. American Baptists believe that
8 God's intention is revealed in gatherings of followers of Christ in local congregations and in
9 association, state, national and world bodies as they receive from one another mutual counsel and
10 correction. Each body of Christians, seeking to develop its life in accordance with the Scriptures
11 under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has a proper responsibility under God for ordering its life
12 of worship, witness and ministry. American Baptists, celebrating the richness of our diversity
13 and the creative opportunities it affords us, seek such a balance of freedom and order as will
14 allow all members of the American Baptist community to be open to the guidance of the Holy
15 Spirit as we respond in mission and ministry.

16 **ARTICLE I**
17 **NAME**

18 This Corporation shall be known as "The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts."

19 The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts is a Region of the American Baptist Churches,
20 U.S.A. It is also a coordinating agency for churches and the eight geographic associations in
21 Massachusetts and with regional Baptist and ecumenical bodies.

22 **ARTICLE II**
23 **PURPOSE**

24 The purpose of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts is to bear witness to the
25 Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world by:

- 26 1) providing resources for churches for their ministry, mission and evangelism in a
27 pluralistic world;
28 2) enabling the formation and development of new churches;
29 3) encouraging the churches to act on moral, economic, political and social matters and, in
30 appropriate cases, acting on their behalf with respect to such matters;
31 4) celebrating, strengthening and extending the unity we have in Christ; and
32 5) promoting understanding, unity and cooperation with other religious and secular bodies.

33 **ARTICLE III**
34 **MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION**

35 **Membership.** The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts shall consist of those churches
36 that are members of one of its constituent associations.

37 **Representation at Annual Meetings.**

- 38 1. Each such church shall be entitled annually to elect two members to serve with its pastor
39 as voting delegates to the corporation for the first 200 or fewer resident members, plus
40 one additional voting delegate for each additional 200 resident members or major fraction
41 thereof as reported in the latest Year Book.
42 2. The elected officers of each association shall be voting delegates.
43 3. The officers of the corporation, members of the Board of Directors, elected members of

all ministry teams, committees and the executive staff members of the corporation shall be delegates.

4. Messengers may be sent by any member church. They are privileged to share in the activities of annual meetings of the corporation, but without vote.

ARTICLE IV MEETINGS

At an annual meeting, any matter may be acted upon which has been placed on the agenda proposed by the committee planning the annual meeting. Any proposed action relating to the affairs or ministry of the corporation shall be placed on the agenda if a request therefore is submitted to the Executive Minister at least thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of the annual meeting. There shall be included in the packet distributed to delegates at an annual meeting any material timely furnished to the Clerk for distribution that is pertinent to any matter on the agenda for the meeting or any ministry of an American Baptist church.

At special meetings, only such matters may be acted upon as are stated in the notice of the meeting or a two-thirds majority of those present and voting may add items to the agenda.

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* (Newly Revised, 10th ed., Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Publishing, 2000) shall govern the corporation in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these by-laws and any special rules of order the Society may adopt.

At all meetings of the corporation, a quorum shall consist of fifty (50) delegates representing churches from at least one-half of the associations but a smaller number may adjourn the meeting from time to time.

ARTICLE V OFFICERS

A. The officers of the corporation shall be: President, Vice-President, Clerk, Treasurer, and Executive Minister.

B. At the annual meeting of the corporation, there shall be elected by ballot the following officers, who shall serve for one year and until their respective successors shall be elected and qualified: President, Vice-President, Clerk and Treasurer.

C. The Executive Minister shall be elected by the corporation, upon nomination by the Board of Directors, at a meeting of the corporation duly called for the purpose by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Notice of the nomination, together with a detailed statement of the nominee's qualifications and experience, a summary of the nominee's Christian pilgrimage and any other information the Board of Directors may deem appropriate, shall be sent to each member church and to the Clerk of each association not less than twenty-one (21) days before the meeting of the corporation at which the nomination is to be considered. If feasible, an opportunity shall be provided for delegates and other interested persons to meet the candidate prior to such meeting of the corporation.

83 The Board of Directors shall appoint a search committee to fill the office of Executive
84 Minister, when vacant, consisting of nine persons. One of these will be nominated by the
85 Administration & Finance committee, and a second be a member of the Human Resources
86 subcommittee. The Board of Directors may appoint up to three of its members to the search
87 committee. In appointing members to the committee, the Board shall seek to reflect the future
88 call of God, composition, and ministry of TABCOM.

89 C. The Executive Minister shall be elected for an indefinite term; may resign from office upon
90 three (3) months written notice to the Board of Directors, or upon shorter notice by mutual
91 agreement; and may be removed from office upon the recommendation of the Board of
92 Directors at an annual meeting of the corporation or at a special meeting thereof duly called
93 for the purpose with two-thirds of those present and voting for removal.

94 D. The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

95 1. **President.** The President shall:

- 96 a. preside at all meetings of the corporation, the Board of Directors, and the Executive
97 Committee, and shall work closely with the executive minister to ensure the
98 organization operates smoothly;
- 99 b. be a member ex-officio (voting) of all ministry teams and committees of the
100 corporation, except Volunteer Ministries and the Nominating Committee;
- 101 c. no one shall be elected to serve as President for more than two consecutive years.

102 2. **Vice President.** The Vice-President shall:

- 103 a. act for the President when the President is absent or disabled;
- 104 b. be the Affirmative Action Officer and work with the Board of Directors and the
105 Human Resources sub-committee on diversity issues in staff hiring and work-place
106 inclusiveness;
- 107 c. work with the Area Ministers, Board of Directors, Ministry Teams and Committees
108 on moving toward genuine diversity at all levels of The American Baptist Churches
109 of Massachusetts; and
- 110 d. have such powers and be charged with such duties as the Board of Directors may
111 prescribe or as the President may delegate.

112 3. **Clerk.** The Clerk shall:

- 113 a. act as clerk of the corporation, of the Board of Directors and of the Executive
114 Committee;
- 115 b. record the minutes of every board meeting and perform all the other duties usually
116 pertaining to such office;
- 117 c. in the absence of the Clerk from any meeting a clerk pro tempore shall be chosen.

118 4. **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall:

- 119 a. have the immediate possession of and shall safely keep all monies, books, and
120 accounts, securities, contracts, and financial papers of the corporation except as
121 otherwise provided for;
- 122 b. enter in the books of the corporation a full and accurate account of moneys received
123 and paid out and of all financial transactions of the corporation;

- c. receive and give a receipt for money paid in on account of the corporation and shall pay out of the funds on hand all just debts and obligations of the corporation as authorized by the corporation, or the Board of Directors, or the Executive Committee or Administration and Finance;
- d. make a financial report from time to time as requested by the Board of Directors and shall make an annual report to the Board of Directors and to the corporation for the preceding fiscal year showing the financial standing of the corporation and of all its receipts and disbursements;
- e. the Treasurer or the President shall endorse all securities for transfer or sale, upon authorization of the Administration and Finance Committee.

5. **Executive Minister.** The Executive Minister shall:

- a. be the principal administrative officer of the corporation and of its Board of Directors to carry out the purpose of the corporation stated in Article II, under the jurisdiction of the Board of Directors;
- b. be an ex-officio (voting) member of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee and of all the ministry teams and committees and coordinate all their work;
- c. gather, prepare and present reports and statistics relating to the Board of Directors and shall report for the Board of Directors to the annual meeting of the corporation;
- d. employ the staff of the corporation, supervise and coordinate the work of the staff, and terminate members of the staff when necessary;
- e. act as representative and spokesperson for the corporation and may execute any document on its behalf, but shall commit the corporation only as directed by the corporation, its Board of Directors, its Executive Committee or other authorized agents of the corporation.

ARTICLE VI
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A. Membership. There shall be a Board of Directors comprised of:

- 1. The officers of the corporation and immediate past president.
- 2. Eight directors nominated by the Nominating Committee with attention to providing fair and inclusive representation, shall be elected by the corporation for a two-year term, the years of service to be staggered. None of these eight directors may serve on a Ministry Team.
- 3. One representative of the Board of General Ministries of the American Baptist Churches, USA
- 4. One representative from each TABCOM-recognized ethnic community (that representative must be a member of a TABCOM member church), presented by the Nominating Committee for ratification by the corporation for a two-year term.

B. Term Limits. No person shall be elected to serve as a director after having served on the Board of Directors for six consecutive years until the expiration of one year from the termination of service. The termination of membership of a director in a constituent church, or the withdrawal or removal of a director from the jurisdiction of the corporation or association represented, or the dismissal from the assignment by the association or organization represented, shall constitute a vacating of the office.

C. Meetings. The Board of Directors may hold at least three meetings annually, one of which shall be in conjunction with the annual meeting of the corporation. Meetings of the Board may be called by the President, or by the Executive Minister, or by the Executive Committee, or shall be called by the Clerk upon the written request of five directors. Notice of all meetings of the Board shall be given by the Clerk by mailing written, e-mail or printed notice to each director not less than fourteen (14) days before the meeting. The Board shall cause its business to be recorded by the Clerk. It shall present a written report through the Executive Minister or other designated agent to the annual meeting of the corporation, and when required shall report in writing to any meeting of the corporation. A majority of its voting members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a lesser number may adjourn the meeting.

D. Responsibility and Powers. The Board of Directors shall devise and execute corporation policy subject to the control of the corporation in session and consistent with these By-Laws and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It shall be empowered to transact the business of the corporation between sessions, except as otherwise expressly provided in the Constitution or by the corporation in session. It shall have the following additional specific responsibilities and powers. It shall:

1. be responsible for the overall long-range vision and the policies needed to implement that vision;
2. adopt such Standing Rules for the regulation of corporation affairs as it shall deem advisable, provided that such Standing Rules shall not be in conflict with the Constitution or contrary to the expressed will of the corporation. Standing Rules shall be reproduced and made available;
3. have power to fill until the next annual meeting any vacancies among the officers, directors, ministry teams and committees. Should a vacancy occur midterm on the board of directors from a recognized ethnic community, the recognized community may select another representative to fulfill the term of service.
4. have power to establish and appoint the membership of committees subordinate to it, except as otherwise provided by this Constitution;
5. arrange for the annual meeting and other meetings of the corporation with responsibility for the time, place, enrollment and program;
6. cause the books of the Treasurer to be audited each year by a certified public accountant.
7. be responsible for the final approval of the annual budget of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts.

E. Ethnic Community Recognition. The Board of Directors shall consider any application submitted by an ethnic community that desires to be represented on the Board. An ethnic community may seek recognition and subsequent representation on the TABCOM Board of Directors once it has a minimum of three congregations with membership in TABCOM's Associations. See Appendix A of the Standing Rules for the "Application Process for Ethnic Community Recognition."

F. Committees of the Board of Directors

1. Administration and Finance

Administration and Finance shall have eleven members of which one is the Treasurer. It

shall:

- a) supervise the administration of the corporation's business and property and exercise budgetary control in conjunction with the Executive Minister and shall make available to the churches and associations guidance in the development of effective procedures for the conduct of their business;
- b) upon the approval of the Board of Directors be authorized and empowered:
 - (1) to purchase, lease, accept as a gift, receive in trust or otherwise acquire real estate or any interest therein, including such improvements as may be located thereon;
 - (2) to sell, donate, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of, upon such terms and in such manner as it may determine, any real estate or interest therein now owned or hereafter acquired by this corporation, including such improvements as may be located thereon; and
 - (3) to lend money to any person, corporation, organization, or other entity, upon such terms and in such manner as it may determine, to accept mortgages and/or other security for the repayment of any such loan, and to discharge any such mortgage. The Executive Minister or the Treasurer or such other officer or officers of the corporation as it may specifically authorize shall execute, acknowledge and deliver on behalf of the corporation deeds, mortgages, discharges of mortgage, leases, and any and all instruments which, in its judgment, are required to carry out the authority herein granted;
- c) have charge of the personal property and investable funds of the corporation; have power to invest, sell and reinvest from time to time as occasion may require or when in the judgment of the department it may be for the interest of the corporation to change any of its investments;
- d) be authorized to accept trust funds and to fix the interest rate thereon, and also to approve annuity agreements with individuals following the rates of the Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of New York;
- e) develop the annual budget of the corporation for approval by the Board of Directors;
- f) designate a minimum of three and a maximum of five of its members to serve as the Human Resources sub-committee.

Any action to be taken by Administration and Finance may be taken without a meeting if a majority of the members consent to the action in writing as filed with the Secretary of Administration and Finance. Such written consent shall be treated for all purposes as a vote at a meeting.

2. Human Resources

Human Resources shall be a sub-committee of Administration and Finance. It shall:

- a) recommend job analyses and personnel policies, including salary scales to the Board of Directors;
- b) advise the Board in nominating an Executive Minister and advise the Executive Minister in hiring other staff members;
- c) provide resources for conducting an annual review of the work of each staff member;

- 258 d) be available for counsel in personnel problems brought by the Board of Directors,
259 the Executive Minister or by members of the staff;
260 e) confer with the Executive Minister on all matters affecting the staff and other
261 employees, their remuneration, vacations, advancement and relationships; and
262 f) be responsible for developing and recommending personnel policies of the
263 organization to the Board of Directors and it shall from time to time recommend
264 such changes in personnel policy as it deems desirable.
- 265 3. **Other Committees**
266 The board may establish committees for special purposes as the corporation or the Board
267 of Directors may decide.

268 **ARTICLE VII**
269 **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

270 There shall be an Executive Committee of the Board of Directors to act in its stead between
271 meetings of the Board, comprised of the President, Vice-President , Clerk, Treasurer, Executive
272 Minister. The Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the President or of the Executive
273 Minister.

274 **ARTICLE VIII**
275 **MINISTRY COORDINATING TEAM AND OTHER COMMITTEES**

276 The program of the corporation shall be carried forward by Ministry Teams, committees and task
277 forces.

278 **A. The Ministry Coordinating Team**

- 279 1. **Membership.** The members of the Ministry Coordinating Team are:
280 a. The officers of the corporation and immediate past president
281 b. Three representatives from each Ministry Team, preferably the chair, vice-chair,
282 and secretary.
283 c. The executive staff. Executive minister, area ministers, and directors of Camps and
284 Conferences, World Mission Support, and Administration and Finance.
285 d. A Representative from the American Baptist Women's Ministries and a
286 representative from the Conference of Baptist Ministers, as nominated by their
287 respective organizations.
- 288 2. **Meetings.** The Ministry Coordinating Team may meet five times during the year on
289 alternate months beginning in September with no meeting during the summer or as its
290 Coordinating Committee determines. Meetings may be called by the President, Executive
291 Minister, or the Coordinating Committee.
- 292 3. Responsibilities of the Ministry Coordinating Team and its member Ministry Teams will
293 be listed in the Standing Rules which are to be adopted by the Ministry Coordinating
294 Team and approved by the Board of Directors.
- 295 4. **Coordinating Committee.** There shall be a Coordinating Committee to coordinate the
296 activities of the Ministry Coordinating Team. It shall be composed of the president,
297 executive minister, and the chair or vice-chair from each of the Ministry teams.

298 **B. The Ministry Teams**

- 299 1. The **Ministry Teams** are:
300 a. Discipleship Development (Camping and Conferencing)
301 b. World Mission Support

- c. Volunteer Ministries
- d. Relationship Ministries
- e. Equipping Ministries
- 2. **Membership**
 - a. **Elected Members.** Each Ministry Team shall be composed of six representatives nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the corporation to serve for a two-year term. The years of service shall be staggered.
 - b. **At-Large Members.** The ministry team may also have at-large members as nominated by the ministry team and elected by the Ministry Coordinating Team to serve for two year terms. They may be reelected.
 - c. **Voting Rights.** All members are voting members. Three members, preferably the chair, vice-chair, and secretary, are to represent the ministry team on the Ministry Coordinating Team.
 - d. **Term Limits.** Members who have served on a ministry team for six consecutive years are not eligible for reelection to the ministry team on which they have served until after one year from the end of their term. The termination of membership of a ministry team member in a constituent church or the withdrawal or removal of a member from the jurisdiction of the corporation shall constitute a vacating of office.
- 3. **Reports.** Each ministry team shall at all times be subject to the Board of Directors and shall make an annual report to the Board and the corporation.

C. **Ordained Ministries**

- 1. Ordained Ministries shall act for the corporation subject to its jurisdiction, reporting directly to it at each annual meeting and whenever requested at other meetings. Appeal may be made for any ruling of Ordained Ministries directly to the corporation in annual meeting or at any special meeting called for that purpose.
- 2. **Members.** Ordained Ministries shall be composed of sixteen members. Twelve members shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the corporation. Four members shall be nominated by the Conference of Baptist Ministers and approved by Ordained Ministries. Terms are two years. After serving six years, members must have a one year sabbatical before serving again. All members are voting members.
- 3. **Committees.** Ordained Ministries shall have two committees, Ministerial Standing and Ministerial Preparation. Members will serve on one of the two sub-committees; the chair and secretary are ex-officio members of both committees.
- 4. **Responsibilities.** Ordained Ministries shall:
 - a. develop the standards and procedures by which ministers serving within the jurisdiction of the corporation shall be recognized as qualified and ordained;
 - b. devise ways and means for the recognition, recruitment and guidance of those called to the vocation of the ministry, setting standards for their licensing and concurring in the action of the church which issues the license;
 - c. prepare and submit to the corporation for adoption, or revision when advisable, standards by which it shall be governed in the recognition of ministers as licensed or regularly qualified and ordained. Exception from the application of those standards to one seeking ordination shall be made only by vote of the corporation in light of unusual circumstances and upon the recommendation of Ordained Ministries. It shall have discretionary power to determine what sort of recognition

- to give or what procedure to follow in the case of one seeking to be qualified by presenting credentials from another ecclesiastical body;
- d. develop and promote ways and means for furthering the effectiveness of ministers through conferences and continuing education, and coordinate the relationships of the corporation with other agencies organized for similar purposes;
 - e. deal with matters of ministerial discipline, to include counseling with those in trouble or whose attitude or acts have brought their effectiveness as ministers into question, and the withdrawing of recognition or fellowship from those whom it finds incompetent, or morally, ethically or financially delinquent: also to include matters concerning the ministry in service of the churches: developing standards by which churches may be guided in determining their expectations for ministerial service, and by which the effectiveness of such service is to be judged; furthering the recognition and observance of the same, and acting as a court of appeal in instances of contention thereon between minister and church;
 - f. deal with matters of pastoral settlement in conjunction with the Conference of Baptist Ministers in Massachusetts and the area ministers.

D. Nominating Committee

There shall be a Nominating Committee comprised of two representatives nominated from each of the region's eight geographic associations and elected by the corporation at each annual meeting. Members of the committee are not to serve more than six consecutive years. The Nominating Committee after consultation with Volunteer Ministries shall present nominations for members of the Board of Directors, corporate officers, ministry teams, and committees to the next annual meeting.

E. Formation of Other Committees or Task Forces

The President in consultation with the Executive Minister is authorized to appoint such other committees or task forces for particular functions as the need arises, and shall designate the membership of each, its functions and length of service.

ARTICLE IX UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

A. Recognition

Any group not proportionately represented on the Board of Directors which meets the following criteria may, on application to and approval by the Board of Directors upon recommendation of the Executive Committee, be recognized as an Under-represented Group:

1. The Group has an interest or concern which is restrictive as to age, gender, race or ethnicity.
2. The Group is state-wide in scope or at least has a significant constituency in more than one association.
3. The constituency is clearly defined and has provided a process whereby it identifies its leadership.
4. It does not presently have numerically proportionate representation on the Board of Directors or on the Ministry Coordinating Team.
5. There is overall agreement with the Preamble and Article II of this Constitution and By-laws, and no radical changes in polity or theology are advocated.

B. Representation

As a provisional means of achieving justice, each under-represented group may nominate one at large person to the Volunteer Ministries team.

C. Evaluation

In the fifth year after its recognition and every third year thereafter, there shall be an evaluation of the progress made by each under-represented group in achieving representation. That evaluation shall be conducted jointly by the under-represented group and the Board of Directors and a summary of that evaluation shall be reported to the next Annual Meeting.

D. Other Minorities

In addition, one person may be elected to the Volunteer Ministries team to represent all minorities too limited in number or in too small a location to qualify pursuant to Paragraph A for recognition as an under-represented group, such as persons of Asian, Native American, Portuguese or Haitian descent. This person may be nominated annually by Volunteer Ministries, and no person shall serve more than three consecutive two-year terms.

**ARTICLE X
STATEMENT OF CONCERN**

A. Definition

A Statement of Concern is a public statement of the delegates in attendance at an Annual Meeting of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. It seeks to express the position of such delegates seeking the mind of Christ on moral, spiritual, political, economic, social, denominational and ecumenical matters to American Baptists and to the rest of society. A motion to commit to action presented as a Statement of Concern shall not be in order.

B. Form and Process for Consideration

A proposed Statement of Concern must be presented in writing to the Relationship Ministries team of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts at least three (3) months prior to an Annual Meeting of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts.

Relationship Ministries following usual parliamentary procedure shall consider each proposed Statement of Concern. Suggested amendments to the proposed Statement of Concern must be submitted to the sponsor of the statement for approval. With the sponsor's* agreement, suggested amendments will be incorporated in the proposed Statement of Concern. Without the sponsor's* agreement, suggested amendments may be proposed from the floor at the time the Statement of Concern is considered at the Annual Meeting. Any amendments may be affirmed by simple majority. The proposed Statement of Concern must be approved by two thirds affirmative vote of members of Relationship Ministries casting ballots in order to be recommended to an Annual Meeting.

Relationship Ministries shall publish to the American Baptist constituency a short description of each proposed Statement of Concern at least sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Meeting at which the Statement of Concern is to be enacted. Churches will be invited to contact Relationship Ministries for further information or for input. Relationship Ministries shall send a final draft of the proposed Statements of Concern to each American Baptist Church at least thirty (30) days prior to the Annual meeting when the Statement of Concern is to be enacted.

A Statement of Concern may be developed on less notice to address current events of compelling urgency. In order to bring such a statement to the floor for discussion, a positive vote by three-quarters of the delegates to an Annual Meeting of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts is necessary.

C. Origination

A Statement of Concern may be presented by

- (1) any American Baptist Church affiliated with the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts;
- (2) any member Association of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts;
- (3) any Ministry Team of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts;
- (4) any organization affiliated with the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts; and
- (5) by petition of twenty-five persons who are active members of one or more member churches of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts. Such membership is to be validated by the pastor or clerk of the church and submitted with the petition.

D. Procedure for Action

Proposed Statements of Concern shall be presented to the Delegates gathered at The Annual Meeting at the agenda time scheduled. Relationship Ministries shall have authority to determine the order in which the statements will be presented and to determine time limits of debate to ensure that all statements are fairly handled. The Delegates gathered to consider the proposed Statement of Concern shall consider it as a main motion subject to amendment or other appropriate parliamentary action. Adoption of a Statement of Concern requires the affirmative votes of two-thirds of those casting ballots. Affirmative, negative, abstention counts of delegate votes on Statements of Concern shall be included with any communications about them.

**ARTICLE XI
POLICY STATEMENTS**

A. Definition

A policy statement sets forth the basic position of The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts on a broad principle of general concern. It should be based upon Biblical authority and theological understanding. It must also be consistent with Christian and Baptist traditions and in particular with the Constitution and Bylaws of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts.

B. Form

The format of a policy statement should include:

- (1) a description of the situation or area of concern which it addresses;
- (2) a development of the Biblical and theological basis for the policy with appropriate citations; and
- (3) a statement of the views or position of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts.

C. Origination

Only the following may develop and recommend a statement for adoption as an American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts policy statement:

- (1) any Association of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts;
- (2) any Ministry Team;
- (3) the Board of Directors; or
- (4) the Executive Committee

D. Procedure for Action

Only an Annual Meeting may adopt a policy statement. However, each proposed policy statement shall be submitted through the Board of Directors, which may, if it wishes, use a procedure of first and second readings when considering a proposed policy statement. The question whether the Board of Directors should recommend a proposed policy statement to an Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts shall be a main motion subject to amendment or other appropriate parliamentary action; such a recommendation by the Board of Directors shall require the affirmative votes of two-thirds of those casting ballots.

Any proposed policy statement recommended to the Annual Meeting shall be distributed to the churches and delegates sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting may, by vote of two-thirds of those casting ballots, adopt a recommended policy statement or may return it, with or without suggestions, to the Board of Directors. A proposed policy statement may not be amended by the Annual Meeting.

E. Procedure for Review/Amendment

The Executive Committee shall ensure that each policy statement is reviewed not less frequently than every five years. Technical amendments may be approved by the Board of Directors on recommendation of the Executive Committee, and substantive amendment of a policy statement may be approved by an Annual Meeting, by the affirmative votes of two-thirds of those casting ballots, upon the recommendation of a similar two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors. A Policy Statement may be retired by majority vote of an Annual Meeting upon recommendation of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XI

QUORUM

A quorum for the transaction of business by Ministry Teams and committees of the corporation shall consist of a majority of the voting members thereof, but a smaller number may adjourn a meeting.

ARTICLE XIII

AMENDMENTS

This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended at any annual meeting of the corporation, or at any special meeting called for the purpose, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the delegates present and voting, provided that at least sixty (60) days written notice of the proposed change has been given to those entitled to notice of the meeting.

Amended:

April 25, 1970
April 24, 1971
April 8, 1972
May 12, 1973

April 29, 1976
April 8, 1978
May 1, 1982
May 11-12, 1983
May 10, 1986
May 1, 1987
June 11, 1988
April 27, 1991
May 7, 1994
May 13, 1995
December 2, 2006
April 28, 2012
May 10, 2014