

MID-STATE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

Mid-State Baptist Association is a voluntary organization of autonomous Baptist Churches in the Middle Georgia Area which have joined together to work in the broad areas of Missions, Church Health, and Mutual Support. The focal point for our work will be the Middle Georgia area although we will also endeavor to incarnate the gospel of Christ in other areas, both nationally and internationally, where our resources and the commitment of our people will allow.

1. NAME:

The organization shall be known as the Mid-State Baptist Association, Inc.

2. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission objective of the association shall be to assist member churches in harmoniously work together as a community of faith, cooperating with sister associations of the Georgia Baptist and the Southern Baptist Conventions. As convenient and mutually beneficial, the association & churches may enter into and participate with other groupings of Baptists and other Christian Evangelistic Denominations & bodies. These objectives are to be secured by...

3. VISION STATEMENT

Every Member A Missionary

4. OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH

- a. We believe that the authority for our faith, our doctrine, and the principles by which we live is the Holy Bible. It is without error and harmonious throughout. **(2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:19-21)**
- b. We believe in the one and only true God who reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **(Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Mark 12:29-30; Romans 8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)**
- c. We believe that Jesus is God's Son and reveals to us in incarnate form who God is and His highest purposes for humanity. He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully Man, in Whom is redemption from sin's penalty and reconciliation between God and man. **(Galatians 4:4-5; Philippians 2:5-11)**
- d. We believe that mankind was created in the image of God and had an unlimited capacity for goodness; but because he is by nature separated from God by sin, he now only has the unlimited capability to do evil apart from grace. **(Genesis 1:26-30; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-12; Ephesians 2:1-10)**

- e. We believe that because of sin, we are incomplete on our own and inevitably miss the mark of God's purpose for us as His creation and hopelessly bound for hell apart from the new birth in Christ. (**Romans 3:23, 6:23; John 3**)
- f. We believe that God loves humanity so much that He sent His One and Only Son into the world to pay the price for sin. God sends His Holy Spirit into our lives to guide us in recognizing the reality of sin and our need for a Savior. (**John 3:16, 14:15-18; Romans 5:8-10; Hebrews 2:1-4**)
- g. We believe that there are two choices in life – to be dominated by our sinful nature or to be set free to live as God's children by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. (**Romans 10:9-13; 1 Peter 1:2-5; 1 John 1:7-9**)
- h. We believe that Jesus has come into this world to free us from the power of sin. His death on the Cross breaks the power of sin and death and defeats the evil one. His blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness. (**Matthew 18:11; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 John 1:7**)
- i. We believe that if we repent, turn from our sin, and trust in Christ, God will save us from the penalty of sin and grant us eternal life with Him and sanctify us by the continual work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. (**Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 2:8-9; James 4:7-10**)
- j. We believe that saving faith is best nurtured in an atmosphere of freedom. We begin the journey of faith as a spiritual child with limited understanding. As we grow in our experience of God through Christ, the ways we express that faith become richer. (**Romans 1:15-17; Philippians 3:12-16**)
- k. We believe that this same Jesus who came to earth as an infant through the virgin birth in Bethlehem will one day return and set all of creation in accordance with God's highest purposes. He will finish the work that He began in the lives of all believers. (**Matthew 1:18-25; Romans 8:30; Philippians 1:6**)
- l. We believe in the Great Commandment to love God with all of our being and to love our neighbor, those whom we come in contact with, as we love ourselves. (**Deuteronomy 6:4-6; Mark 12:29-31**)
- m. We believe the Great Commission that we are to go into all the world, helping people to understand the gospel of Christ and teaching them to follow His Word. (**Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8**)
- n. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two symbolic ordinances of Christ's church. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward change to be performed after conversion by immersion. The Lord's Supper is to be taken often in remembrance of Christ's death. (**Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32**)
- o. We believe that the congregation of believers is to be the united body and bride of Christ in this world. It is to be a community of faith which serves as God's voice in our culture. (**Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26**)

- p. We believe that each Church is autonomous and that others have no voice in the internal affairs of another congregation; yet we also believe that as an association of Baptist Churches, we can do more for the Kingdom of God as we work together.

5. MEMBERSHIP/MESSENGERS:

Section 1. Membership of the association shall consist of participating Baptist Churches, functioning under the general provisions of our Confession of faith and practices stated herein. These churches shall be represented at the annual and semi-annual meetings of the association, and special called meetings, by duly chosen messengers.

Section 2: Messenger Selection: Messengers will be determined by one of the following methods. The church will be allowed the larger of the two calculations.

- a. Percentage of Giving - Determined by dividing the church's total gifts to the MBA by the undesignated receipts of the church as reported in the latest ACP (Annual Church Profile). Each contributing church will be allowed no fewer than one and no more than fifteen messengers based on the following calculations:

Percent	Messengers
0.1 - 0.49	1
0.5 - 0.99	2
1.0 - 1.49	4
1.5 - 1.99	6
2.0 - 2.49	8
2.5 - 2.99	10
3.0 - 3.49	12
3.5 - 3.99	14
4.0 or more	15

- b. Dollar Amount - Each contributing church will receive one messenger for every \$1000 it gives to the MBA. Each church will be allowed no fewer than one messenger and no more than fifteen messengers.

Section 3: Applications for Membership in the Midstate Baptist Association:

- a) Churches may apply for admission into the association through a petitionary letter or request. A Credentials Committee, appointed by the Leadership Team, shall examine the request and determine if the requesting church adheres to the Constitution of the Mid-State Baptist Association and generally adheres to any one or several of the versions of the Baptist Faith and Message, published by the Southern Baptist Convention, circa, 1925, 1963 or 2000. The petitionary church shall be further examined to determine that it:
1. functions on a congregational principle of autonomy;
 2. will agree to file an Annual Church Profile (ACP)
 3. and will govern its internal affairs in a decent and honorable fashion.

Churches so verified by the Credentials Committee shall be presented for conditional membership into the association at the next annual meeting. Messengers must approve membership by three fourths of those attending

- b) Churches or Missions approved for membership in the association shall be under the “watchcare” for one year after the initial vote. Before the next annual meeting the Credentials Committee shall verify that the church, or mission has, in good faith, fulfilled all conditions of membership in the association. If so, a “full membership” vote shall be taken at the next annual meeting. Churches or missions may not elect messengers and may not have voting rights until “Full Association Membership” is affirmed.
- c) Churches which fail to submit an Annual Church Profile (ACP) or which make no financial contribution to the association for three successive years shall be subject to having their membership in the association terminated after review by the Leadership Team.
- d) Churches of the Mid-State area, which are members in good standing with a sister association, may request a transfer of membership into the Mid-State Baptist Association by filing a letter of application. The Leadership Team shall review the request, verifying that the requesting church generally adheres to the provisions of the MBA constitution & Bylaws, a copy of which shall have been provided to the requesting church at the time of the membership application. If so approved, the petition shall be presented at the next meeting of the association for final vote. If then approved by the association, the requesting church will be immediately accepted into full membership of the association and be accorded all rights & privileges as a member church.

6. MEETINGS

- a) The church messengers shall meet semi-annually, Spring (April) and Fall (October). Each church shall be encouraged to file an Annual Church Profile (ACP) for the past year. The purpose of which shall be to review progress toward achievement of their church and association mission priorities and help in a review of directional strategy for the future.
- b) The Leadership Team shall meet monthly, except for the month of July. The team shall meet in monthly session for a minimum of 10 months in each calendar year to conduct business and review association matters.

7. GENERAL OFFICERS

- a) The general officers of the association shall be Moderator, Moderator-Elect, Clerk, Treasurer and Budget Finance Officer. The Moderator shall serve as the President of the corporate body and the Clerk shall serve as the Secretary, both such positions as required by Georgia law as relates to non-profit organizations. All officers shall serve on the Leadership Team.

- b) Duties shall be as follows:
- 1) Moderator: The Moderator shall preside at all meetings of the association and shall be an ex-officio member of all leadership teams.
 - 2) Vice-Moderator: The Vice-Moderator shall preside in the absence of the Moderator, or at the request of the Moderator. In the absence of the Moderator and Vice-Moderator, a Moderator Pro-Tem shall be elected by messengers at the association meeting(s).
 - 3) Clerk: The Clerk shall take minutes of all association meetings. Shall secure and distribute Annual Church Profile (ACP) reports and shall compile the annual church minute books & directories.
 - 4) Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be the financial officer of the association and shall plan an annual budget for the association and arrange for an annual audit of the association records.
 - 5) Budget/Finance Officer: The Budget/Finance Officer shall regularly review associational financial activity as to income and expenses, coordinate with the Director of Missions and other associational teams to prepare the annual associational budget, act on behalf of the Leadership team in obtaining and reviewing maintenance contracts, bids for new equipment and obtaining required maintenance services for association equipment or property. The Budget/Financial Officer shall be responsible for all legal work that pertains to the association. (The Budget/Finance Officer shall work closely with the Treasurer)

8. TEAMS

- a) The association shall function under a “Team” concept; however, the association may create sub-grouping or special committees as deemed necessary to supplement the team concept. Such committees shall normally be Ad Hoc in nature, appointed by the Moderator, Director of Missions, or the Leadership Team, without formal election by the association. Team Leaders and Ministry Directors may also select sub-groups members within their area of ministry responsibility without formal association approval.
- b) The assembly of messengers at the annual meetings shall function as the Association Executive Committee

9. LEADERSHIP TEAMS

- a) The Leadership Team shall be comprised of chairs of the Church Health Team, The Missions/Ministry Team; Administrative Team, the Director of Missions and the Association General Officers serving as the Leadership Team. The Moderator of the Association shall serve as the chair of the Leadership Team; the Vice-Moderator as alternate.
- b) The Leadership Team shall communicate with churches of the association as may be expedient to fulfill association objectives and evaluate progress toward associational objectives, other services, and support to churches. In the period between the semi-annual meetings, the Leadership Team shall carry out the will and interests of the association as expressed at the semi-annual meetings.
- c) Leadership Teams shall be organized as follows: (See Chart Insert)

10. HOW MBA SERVES CHURCHES

- a) MBA serves to give support to Churches
- b) MBA shall respond to each Churches requests
- c) MBA serves to help churches continue to have better communications with each other and,
the surrounding communities.
- d) MBA serves to help churches in securing and calling a Pastor.
- e) MBA serves to help build a local church strategy.
- f) MBA provides Resource Center.
- g) MBA provides the Ministry Center as a place of service.
- h) MBA provides Partnerships for mission involvement.
- i) MBA serves to coordinate Missions Ministry
- j) MBA serves churches by providing a central location and a ministry staff.

11. HOW MBA CONSTITUTION/BYLAWS MAY BE AMMENDED

The constitution and Bylaws of the Mid-State Baptist Association may be amended by submission of proposed changes in writing at the Spring or Fall meeting. Copies of proposed changes shall be published in the associational newsletter at least 30 days before the next meeting. The changes may be presented at the next meeting by formal motion to accept and must be approved by 2/3 of those messengers attending. Unless otherwise specified within the body of the motion, changes to the constitution and bylaws go into effect immediately after approval.