

Section 2:

Constitution & Bylaws

Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware

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Constitution of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, Inc.

Article I • Name

The body will be called the Baptist Convention of Maryland/ Delaware, Inc.

Article II • Mission Statement

Section 1—The Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware will intentionally assist in the starting and strengthening of congregations so that together we can fulfill Jesus' commands in Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8.

Section 2—This Convention is an autonomous body and is neither limited nor restrained by any authority or decision of any other Baptist body and will achieve its objectives through such means as this Convention alone determines.

Section 3—This Convention does not have any ecclesiastical authority to limit the autonomy of the local congregation.

Section 4—This Convention recognizes the Southern Baptist Convention as our primary instrument to further the cause of Christ on a worldwide basis. This Convention pledges its loyalty and support to the purposes served by the Southern Baptist Convention.

Article III • Membership

Section 1—The membership of this Convention will consist of messengers who are members of Baptist churches which are in friendly cooperation with this Convention and sympathetic with its purpose and work, and which have during the preceding 12 months (October 1 through September 30) been bona fide contributors to the work of this Convention.

Section 2—Each cooperating Baptist church will be entitled to two (2) messengers; each cooperating church exceeding fifty (50) members will then be given one additional messenger for each additional fifty (50) members or part thereof; or one additional messenger for each \$750 contributed to the work of this Convention through the Cooperative Program until the maximum of thirty (30) is reached.

Section 3—Messengers to this Convention will be certified by their churches. This Convention will be the final judge of election and qualifications of its members.

Section 4—The officers of this Convention, the employed staff of this Convention, and its agencies may be messengers provided they are elected by the church in which they hold membership.

Article IV • Meetings

Section 1—This Convention will meet at least once each year, hereafter known as the Annual Meeting, at such time and place as may be fixed by this Convention at the Annual Meeting held the preceding year. The duly appointed messengers of the cooperating churches will comprise the voting body of this Convention.

Section 2—In case of an emergency, the General Mission Board is empowered to change the time and place of meeting or call a special meeting by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting.

Section 3—Notice of any special meeting will be given at least thirty (30) days prior thereto by publication in BaptistLIFE and in such other ways as the General Mission Board may direct.

Article V • Officers

Section 1—The Officers of this Convention will be a President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Corporate Secretary, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and an Assistant Recording Secretary. All but the Corporate Secretary and Treasurer will be elected at each Annual Meeting by a majority of the duly elected messengers present and voting, and will hold office until their successors are elected and installed. Employees of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware are ineligible to serve as officers of this Convention with the exception of the Executive Director who will serve as Corporate Secretary and the Director of Finance who will serve as Treasurer.

Section 2—Nominations will be from the floor. Election will be by ballot except where there is a single nominee for an office. In the latter case, the President will instruct the Secretary to cast a unanimous ballot for the nominee.

Section 3—Officers will serve for one (1) year and hold office until their successors are elected and qualified; however, the President and Vice Presidents may not serve more than two (2) complete successive terms in office. Terms of office will commence at final adjournment of the Annual Meeting in session at the time of their election and terminate in the final adjournment of the succeeding regular session of the Annual Meeting. In case of death, disability of, or other cause making necessary the retirement of the President, the Vice Presidents will succeed in order. The General Mission Board will determine when an office is vacant due to the disability of an incumbent.

Section 4—The President will preside over the deliberations of the Annual Meeting and will perform other duties as may be customary to the position or as determined in the Bylaws, and will become an ex officio member of all Convention committees and boards. The President will continue as ex officio member of the General Mission Board for one full year immediately following tenure as President of this Convention unless elected to fill a vacancy in the regular membership of the Board.

Section 5—The Vice President may, in the absence of the President or when requested by the President, preside over the Annual Meeting and will perform other duties as may be provided in the Bylaws or as requested by the President.

Section 6—The Secretary will keep accurate minutes of all sessions of this Convention and will cause these to be published in suitable form in the Annual of this Convention together with other information as this Convention or the General Mission Board of this Convention deems necessary and proper.

Section 7—The President will be authorized to sign legal papers for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, Inc. If unable to do so, the First Vice President or the Second Vice President will be so authorized.

Section 8—Should the President and Vice Presidents be unable to serve, the duties of the President will devolve upon the President of the General Mission Board until said Board will elect an interim President.

Article VI • General Mission Board

Section 1—This Convention will elect a General Mission Board to be known as the General Mission Board, none of whose members will be employees of said Board. Fifty-one percent will be a quorum for business.

The Rules of Order for the meetings of the General Mission Board will be those in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

The General Mission Board will be composed of three members from the geographic area of each association. For each 5000 resident members or major fraction thereof, one additional Board member will be chosen, up to but not to exceed a total of ten Board members from any association. The President of this Convention, the President of the Brotherhood, the President of the Woman's Missionary Union and the Maryland member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee will serve as at-large members of the Board. Board members selected by virtue of their Convention offices, will not be used in determining the number of members from an association or local church.

The term of the office of the members will be four years with, as nearly as possible, the terms of one-fourth of the members expiring each year. Any member serving for a full term or three years of an unexpired term will not be eligible for reelection until one year has expired.

Membership on the Board will cease when the member dies, moves membership from a church within the Convention, or the member's church ceases to be in cooperating fellowship with this Convention. In the event a member moves from a church in one association to another within this Convention, or the member's church changes from one association to another within this Convention, the member will be eligible to serve until a successor is elected at the next Annual Meeting. Membership on the Board will automatically be terminated when a member is absent for two consecutive meetings of the Board without notification submitted to the Board President or the Executive Director. The member will be notified of such termination.

Section 2—The members of the General Mission Board will be elected by this Convention, after receiving nominations from the committee selected by this Convention for this purpose, and after giving opportunity for nominations from the floor of this Convention.

Section 3—The work of this Convention, except as otherwise specified, will be committed to the General Mission Board described as follows: The General Mission Board of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware will act for this Convention ad interim promoting all the interests of the Kingdom, such as evangelism, missions, education, benevolence, social welfare, and public morals, and so on. The General Mission Board will not have authority to control the agencies and institutions of this Convention, but it will maintain general care and responsibility for the work of same. It is instructed to study annually their reports, to interpret and apply the rules of the constitution and the business and financial policy of this Convention as items may apply to any of the agencies of this Convention, to make recommendations directly to agencies and also to make whatever recommendations to this Convention concerning them it may deem advisable.

Section 4—This Convention will annually elect members to fill all vacancies on the Board.

Article VII • Agencies

Section 1—The Convention may establish agencies for the purpose of performing collateral Christian services. An agency will be a separate corporation independent of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware in its day-to-day operations but will work in cooperation with the Convention in order to avoid costly duplication. The Convention and each agency will establish, through the General Mission Board, an agreement defining their working relationship. An agency of this Convention will act in accordance with our historic Baptist doctrine and practices.

Section 2—The trustees of these agencies will be elected by this Convention after receiving nominations from the Committee selected by this Convention for this purpose and after giving opportunity for nominations from the floor of this Convention. The number of trustees for each agency and their terms of office will be in accordance with the requirements of their respective charters and bylaws.

Section 3—All agencies sharing in the Cooperative Program receipts must include a summary of their financial report in the annual report to the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, and the General Mission Board will request a copy of the budget of all agencies sharing in the Cooperative Program receipts along with their requests for financial assistance.

Section 4—No agency of this Convention will create any liability or indebtedness (except such as can and will be repaid out of its anticipated receipts for current operations within a period of three years) without the consent of this Convention or the General Mission Board. In order to obtain such approval, the agency must file a statement showing the source of such anticipated receipts. Such consent must be likewise obtained for a purchase of properties or construction of same, subject to liens or encumbrances which cannot be repaid out of its anticipated receipts for current operations within a period of three years.

Section 5—Proposals for the establishment of new agencies must follow one of the following procedures: (1) Authority may be granted upon favorable vote by two successive Annual Meetings, or (2) Authority may be granted by vote of one Annual Meeting provided a favorable recommendation is made by the General Mission Board, after thorough study, and provided further that the proposal has been published in two issues of BaptistLIFE.

Section 6—The agencies of this Convention are the Baptist Family and Children's Services of Maryland, Inc., and the Baptist Foundation of Maryland/Delaware, Inc.

Article VIII • Business and Financial Policy

Section 1—This Convention approves the Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists as its plan of world mission work and appeals to the churches to support it and to recognize the wisdom and right of this Convention to divide equitably the Cooperative Program receipts.

Section 2—Cooperative Program gifts will be distributed on a percentage basis approved by this Convention and designated gifts according to the wishes of the donors. The Administrative Committee of the General Mission Board will recommend at each pre-convention meeting of the General Mission Board the Cooperative Program goal and the distribution of receipts for the following year. Financial reports will be given at each meeting of the Board and an annual review conducted.

Section 3—The fiscal year of the General Mission Board and this Convention will be the calendar year.

Section 4—All funds entrusted to this Convention or to any of its boards or agencies will be strictly applied according to the expressed will and direction of the donors.

Section 5—This Convention will receive contributions, legacies and bequests for the several objects which it fosters. The Baptist Foundation of Maryland/Delaware, Inc., is the agency designated for the management of trust funds.

Article IX • The Denominational Paper

Section 1—The BaptistLIFE will be the official news journal of this Convention.

Section 2—The General Mission Board of this Convention will be responsible for the conduct of this phase of our work through the Director of the Communication Center.

Article X • Woman's Missionary Union

The Woman's Missionary Union of Maryland/Delaware is recognized as an auxiliary of this Convention whose accomplishments and potentialities in good works are appreciated as being of immeasurable value to the Christian cause.

Article XI • Miscellaneous

Section 1—Neither this Convention nor any agency owned or supported in whole or in part by this Convention, will accept or receive, directly or indirectly, any gift, grant, or aid from the Federal or State governments or any governmental agency except for definite and full services rendered by the agency with the approval of this Convention or its General Mission Board. In any debatable instance that may occur, the General Mission Board will interpret this statement subject to the approval of this Convention.

Section 2—Any special campaign for funds must be specifically approved by vote of this Convention or the General Mission Board.

Article XII • Amendment

All amendments to this constitution must be submitted in writing at an Annual Meeting. A vote will be taken when the amendment is presented and at the succeeding annual session. The proposed amendment may be modified in form but not in substance upon presentation for vote at the second session. The amendment will be adopted only after an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the messengers present and voting at two successive Annual Meetings. Non-substantive changes such as grammatical corrections and title or name changes may be made by the Administrative Committee of the General Mission Board and included in their report at the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.

Bylaws of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, Inc.

The work of this Convention will be governed by the following bylaws:

Article I • Duties of Officers

Section 1—The President will preside over the deliberations of the Annual Meeting and discharge such other duties as are imposed by this Convention or as are incumbent on the presiding officer of a deliberating body. At least two months prior to the Annual Meeting, the President, in consultation with the two Vice Presidents, will appoint a Committee on Credentials and Enrollment, a Committee on Committees, a Resolutions Committee, and other committees when so directed by the Body (see Article II, Section 1). In case of death or incapacity to serve, the Vice Presidents will succeed the President in order.

Section 2—A First Vice President and a Second Vice President will discharge such duties as requested by the President, will serve as ex officio members of the General Mission Board, and in the event of the death or disability of the President, will succeed the President in order of their rank.

Section 3—The Recording Secretary will record and preserve the proceedings of this Convention and will, in cooperation with the Executive Director, have the same printed and distributed. The Assistant Recording Secretary will serve in the absence of the Recording Secretary and assist as necessary.

Section 4—The Corporate Secretary will perform the duties legally required of this office.

Section 5—The President and the Executive Director will be advisory to all Convention committees and agencies.

Article II • Committees and Their Duties

Administrative Guidelines for All Committees

All committees will reflect, as much as possible, a balance between vocational ministers and others. An ex-officio member will have voting privileges. No person will be elected to serve simultaneously on more than one standing committee.

No church will have more than two representatives simultaneously elected to serve on BCM/D committees, the General Mission Board, or as trustees of a BCM/D institution or agency.

Committees of this Convention may appoint persons other than members to special limited purpose subcommittees and advisory committees provided such persons will serve only in an advisory capacity and will not be permitted to vote at meetings of the authorizing committee.

Membership on committees will cease when the member dies, moves membership from a church within the Convention, or the member's church ceases to be in cooperating fellowship with this Convention. In the event a member moves from a church in one association to another within this Convention, or the member's church changes from one association to another within this Convention, the member will be eligible to serve until a successor is elected at the next Annual Meeting. Membership on the Board will automatically be terminated when a member is absent for two consecutive meetings of the Board without notification submitted to the Board President or the Executive Director. The member will be notified of such termination.

In the event of a vacancy between Annual Meetings, the President shall appoint members to fill that vacancy as an interim until approval at the next Annual Meeting. This would apply to all BCM/D committees.

Section 1—In advance of the Annual Meeting, the President will appoint the following committees:

1. Committee on Credentials and Enrollment—The committee will consist of five members whose duties it will be to register messengers and visitors. This committee will review and rule upon any questions which may arise in registration concerning the credentials of messengers. Any such ruling may be appealed to this Convention during business session. This Committee will make a report to the assembled messengers upon the call of the President, and will pass on the credentials of all messengers.

The Committee on Credentials and Enrollment will function under the following guidelines:

- Each person elected by a church, cooperating with the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, as a messenger to the Annual Meeting will be registered as a messenger to this Convention upon presentation of proper credentials. Credentials will be presented by each messenger, in person, at the Convention registration desk and will be in the following form:
- A completed and signed BCM/D registration card certifying the messenger's election in accordance with Article III Membership of the Constitution of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, Inc.; but if the messenger does not have the messenger registration card,
- A letter from the messenger's church, signed by the clerk or moderator of the church certifying messenger's election in accordance with Article III Membership of the Constitution of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, Inc.; or

2. Committee on Committees—This committee will consist of one member from each association whose duty it will be to nominate for election by this Convention the members and chairpersons of the committees listed in Sections 2 and 3 of this article, with the exception of the Committee on Committees, and other committees as may be assigned to it. Members of this committee will be appointed to a three-year term, one-third of its number retiring each year. A member of this committee cannot be nominated as a member of the General Mission Board, a trustee of the agencies of this Convention, or a member of any Convention committee.

3. Resolutions Committee—This committee will consist of five members. It will be responsible for initiating, reviewing, researching, preparing and recommending all resolutions for adoption. Only resolutions presented to the Resolutions Committee at least 45 days in advance of the Annual Meeting will be considered by the committee before the first session. Other resolutions may be referred to the committee by the general body during the session as described in Article VI, Section 2. Resolutions should seek to build up and unify the body rather than divide it; therefore, only resolutions that have the full consensus of the committee will be presented at the Annual Meeting.

An announcement will be published in BaptistLIFE no later than 75 days before the Annual Meeting requesting resolutions for the committee's consideration and possible presentation at the Annual Meeting. Proposed resolutions will be submitted in writing and addressed to either committee members or to: Resolutions Committee, BCM/D, 10255 Old Columbia Road, Columbia, Maryland 21046-1716. BaptistLIFE will be requested to print the titles and nature of the resolutions to be presented by the committee at the Annual Meeting no later than 15 days before the Annual Meeting. These resolutions will be printed in their entirety and will be distributed for consideration at the Annual Meeting.

Section 2—This Convention will elect the following committees to report to the next Annual Meeting:

1. Committee on Order of Business—This committee will consist of one member from each association. The members of this committee will be elected to a three-year term, one-third of their number retiring each year. The President of the Maryland/Delaware Ministers' Conference and the music director for the Annual Meeting will serve as ex officio members of this committee. The committee will be responsible for recommending to this Convention the place, time, preacher, and music director of the Annual Meeting one year hence and, if feasible, the time and place two years hence. The committee will present to the opening session of the Annual Meeting for adoption, a recommended agenda for the Annual Meeting.

2. Committee to Nominate the Members of the General Mission Board and Trustees of the Agencies of this Convention—This committee will consist of one member from each association. Members of this committee will be elected to a three-year term, one-third of their number retiring each year. The head of an agency, or his representative, will meet with the committee to suggest names for consideration on the committee, for vacancies on the respective agency's board of trustees and for the agency's representatives on the General Mission Board. A member of this committee cannot be nominated as a member of the General Mission Board, a trustee of the agencies of this Convention, or a member of any Convention committee.

3. The Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee—This committee will act for this Convention in the field of Christian ethics, public affairs, interfaith cooperation, and Christian social concerns. Specifically, but not exclusively, these areas will include family life, human relations, race relations, moral issues, economic life, daily work, citizenship, church-state relations, cooperative relationships with other religious groups, and those areas where the gospel and the churches affect or are affected by community and public life. The Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee may act on matters referred to it by this Convention, by the General Mission Board, or by any agency of this Convention

The Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee will be responsible for initiating consideration and study, and for recommending action of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and/or General Mission Board on any matter or issue falling within the scope and purpose as set forth in the preceding paragraph.

The committee will be elected and directly responsible to the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware. It will report annually to this Convention.

The committee is authorized to make pronouncements on matters within its scope and purpose in as far as they are consistent with actions previously taken by the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, the General Mission Board, or the Southern Baptist Convention. However, under no circumstances will the committee assume the exercise of authority for this Convention, its agencies or the churches.

The Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee will be composed of one member from each association. At least half the members will be lay people. All members will be elected by the Convention in the Annual Meeting. Members will be elected to a three-year term, one-third of their number retiring each year. No member can be elected to serve more than two full terms of office until at least one year will have elapsed after the second full term. A member may be elected to complete an unexpired term caused by vacancy and thereafter be elected to two full terms per above. In addition, the Executive Director will annually designate a Convention staff member as a consultant to this committee. Staff member succession will be at the discretion of the Executive Director.

The committee will elect a recording secretary and such other officers each year as it will deem necessary. The committee will meet quarterly and/or at such other times as will be designated by the chairperson.

The financial needs of the Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee will be through the budget of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.

4. History Committee—This committee will consist of one member from each association. Members will be elected to a three-year term, one-third retiring each year. No member can be elected to serve more than two full terms of office until at least one year will have elapsed after the second full term. A member may be elected to complete an unexpired term caused by vacancy and thereafter be elected to two full terms per above. In addition, the Executive Director will annually designate a Convention staff member as a consultant to this committee. This committee will recommend to this Convention or General Mission Board appropriate measures which should be taken to preserve Baptist history. It will seek to preserve the minutes and records of all Baptist bodies, churches, associations, and conventions, printed materials, including correspondence, and museum objects. It will recommend what historic sites, including buildings, should be properly marked and preserved.

Article III • Avoidance of Illegal Action

No action of this Convention will be construed as authorizing its committees or related agencies to take any action that may be contrary to the law.

Article IV • General Mission Board**Section 1 —Meetings**

The General Mission Board will have three regular meetings annually. Additional meetings may be called by the Administrative Committee.

Section 2—Officers

At the first meeting of the General Mission Board, annually after its election, there will be elected from the membership of the Board the following officers who will serve one year or until their successors are elected and qualified: President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Assistant Recording Secretary.

Section 3—Work

The General Mission Board will serve as the corporate body and will have the power to act for this Convention in the interim between Annual Meetings except as specifically limited by the Constitution, or tasks committed to Boards of Trustees of its agencies. It will, therefore, be the purpose of the General Mission Board to promote and supervise such programs and activities as may be approved by the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware from time to time. It will have no power to contravene any action of this Convention nor to launch any new agencies. It may provide for the expansion of any phase of its work which its income and resources may make possible. The incumbent General Mission Board, its officers and committees will continue to function until the new General Mission Board, at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/ Delaware, is duly organized. For the purpose of carrying out the world mission program of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, the Board will elect an Executive Director and other staff in keeping with the needs, resources, and guidelines. All Convention employees will serve for an indefinite period of time.

The General Mission Board will recommend to this Convention the division of Cooperative Program gifts between the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware and Southern Baptist Convention and the division of funds among the objects of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.

Section 4—Reports

The General Mission Board will make a full-year report to this Convention of its activities during the year. The Board will have its report printed and ready for distribution at the first session of the Annual Meeting, including reports from all other agencies of this Convention.

Section 5—Financial Review

The General Mission Board will employ a certified public accountant each year to review the books and accounts of the Treasurer. Annual reviews will be reported to the Board and printed in the minutes of this Convention.

Section 6—Committees

1. Nominating Committee—This committee will be composed of the Vice President of the General Mission Board, who will serve as chairperson, and four members appointed by the General Mission Board President. Should the Vice President not be able to serve on the Nominating Committee, the General Mission Board President will appoint another committee member and designate the chairperson. This committee will present nominations for General Mission Board officers and the chairperson and members of the Administrative Committee at its organizational meeting. Members of this committee cannot be nominated as members of the Administrative Committee.

2. Administrative Committee Purpose—The Administrative Committee performs normal administrative committee responsibilities for the General Mission Board between regular meetings and works with the Executive Director in the implementation of the Board's policies, programs, and services assigned to its general care.

- **Membership**—The Administrative Committee will be comprised of a chairperson, the President of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, the President of the General Mission Board, the past BCM/D President (one year), and one member from the geographic region of each association. The Executive Director will serve as an ex-officio member.
- **Responsibilities**—The committee, in cooperation with the Executive Director, will provide for the administering of the business and administrative affairs of the General Mission Board and for the monitoring of its Business and Financial Plan, including Stewardship Development and Cooperative Program Development. It will monitor the effectiveness of the services and programs of the General Mission Board, maintain employee policies and guidelines, serve as personnel committee, budget committee, perform committee functions for the General Mission Board and assist the Executive Director in accomplishing the purposes of the Board. The committee is responsible for an annual review of the Constitution and Bylaws of this Convention.
- **Meetings**—The Administrative Committee will meet at times specified by the General Mission Board and, if extra meetings are necessary, at times specified by the Executive Director and the chairperson of the Administrative Committee. An agenda will be jointly approved by the Executive Director and the chairperson and distributed at the meeting.

3. Ad Hoc Committees

Ad Hoc Committees will be appointed as needed by the president of the General Mission Board in consultation with the Administrative Committee chairperson and the Executive Director. Appointments will be reported to the General Mission Board at the next meeting.

4. Strategic Planning Teams

Strategic Planning Teams will report at each regular General Mission Board meeting. Strategies relating to budget and personnel matters must be approved by the General Mission Board.

Article V • Eligibility for Membership on Boards

Each member of the General Mission Board and trustees of any agency of this Convention will be a member, for at least twelve months preceding election, of one church which cooperates with this Convention.

The incumbent General Mission Board, its officers and committees, will continue to function until the new General Mission Board, at its first meeting during or after the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, is duly organized. The same is true for trustees and directors of any agency of this Convention.

Article VI • Procedure for the Annual Meeting**Section 1—Rules**

1. The rules of order for the sessions of the Annual Meeting will be those in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order, but in cases where the meaning may not be clear, the President's discretion will be exercised. The President may appoint a Parliamentarian who will advise and assist the President with respect to all matters involving parliamentary procedure.
2. No person addressing the Annual Meeting may speak more than twice on the same subject without unanimous consent.
3. The President is charged at all times with the maintenance of decorum and order.
4. In the last two sessions of the Annual Meeting, any new business may only be considered by permission of majority vote of the messengers present.

Section 2—Resolutions

All resolutions considered at the Annual Meeting will come from the Resolutions Committee and have their full consensus or, as a redress, one presented to but rejected by the committee may be ordered to the floor under a "question of privilege" without having the full consensus of the committee. All resolutions available to the Resolutions Committee 45 days before the Annual Meeting will be automatically considered by the committee and, if accepted, will be printed and distributed at the first session of the Annual Meeting. If, in the opinion of the President, a messenger has a "copy-ready master" of a resolution with justifiable reason for not meeting the 45-day rule, it may be referred to the Resolutions Committee by the assembly at the first session. The action should follow the form: (Petitioner) "Mr. President, I request the consideration of a resolution concerning (subject)."; whereupon the President immediately puts the question without debate, "(Messenger) requests the privilege of having a late resolution considered, all who favor instructing the Resolutions Committee to review this resolution for consideration ... (vote)."

All resolutions passed at the Annual Meeting are the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the messengers present at that Annual Meeting but are not binding on the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, local associations, local congregations or individual Baptists. In order for a resolution to express the clear opinion of the messengers at the Annual Meeting, successful adoption will require an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the messengers present and voting.

Section 3—Election of Officers

1. The Officers of this Convention will be nominated from the floor, and the election will be by secret ballot when two or more persons are nominated for the same office.
 - The one receiving the majority of all votes will be declared elected.
 - The chairperson of the Credentials Committee hands the results of the vote to the presiding officer who announces first whether the vote is a majority vote or not. If a majority, the candidate is declared elected. If not a majority, the chairperson declares a run-off of the two receiving the highest number of votes.
 - The vote is not effective until announced.
2. The President will be elected before the Vice Presidents are nominated and the First Vice President is to be elected before receiving nominations for the Second Vice President.

Article VII • Amendments to Bylaws

The Bylaws may be altered by a majority vote of the messengers present on the first or second day of the Annual Meeting of this Convention. Non-substantive changes such as grammatical corrections and title or name changes may be made by the Administrative Committee of the General Mission Board and included in their report at the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.