

Manitoba Baptist Association

Constitution
Beliefs & Practices
Manual

October 13, 2007
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Manitoba Baptist Association Inc.
Constitution

Article 1: Name

Manitoba Baptist Association Inc.

Article 2: Purposes & Objectives

The Manitoba Baptist Association Inc. (hereafter referred to as the "Association") of North American Baptist Churches endeavors to serve Jesus Christ through,

- 1) fostering fellowship among Member Churches;
- 2) promoting the spiritual welfare of its Member Churches;
- 3) actively promoting mission and Church Planting Projects in Manitoba;
- 4) cooperating with, supporting and encouraging the North American Baptist Conference (hereafter referred to as the "Conference") and the affiliated organizations of the Association and Conference.

Article 3: Membership

- 1) Any church that adheres to Baptist principles and the Manitoba Baptist Association statement of faith may apply for membership by writing to the Recording Secretary of the Association, stating its origin, organizational development, and statement of faith [hereafter referred to as the "Applicant Church"]. The Executive Committee of the Association shall review the application of the Applicant Church and take the steps it deems necessary to make its recommendation to the Association.
- 2) The Applicant Church shall be admitted as a Member Church upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee and the passing of a Special Resolution at an Annual General Session or Special General Session of the Association.
- 3) Individuals are members of the Association by virtue of being members of a Member Church.
- 4) The Manitoba Baptist Association follows the Conference understanding of congregational church government. This means that church membership is available and attainable to all adult baptized believers within the congregation, and that church members possess the right to vote on at least the following matters (at a minimum):
 - Call/dismissal of the head pastor
 - Affirmation/confirmation of members of the governing board
 - Buying and selling of property
 - Amendments to the constitution and by-laws
 - Dissolution of the church
- 5) Membership in the Association shall constitute membership in the Conference.
- 6) Any Member Church may withdraw from the Association by: (a) serving written notice of intent to the Recording Secretary, including excerpts from minutes of a duly constituted membership meeting relating to the resolution to withdraw, and; (b) discharging its commitments to the Association including (without limitation) payment of all financial obligations or indebtedness owing to the Association. Withdrawal shall become effective ninety days after receipt of notice.
- 7) The Association shall have the right to terminate the membership of any Member Church where the Executive Committee (in its sole and absolute discretion) determines that the Member Church has: (a) departed from scriptural teaching or; (b) engaged in activities counter to Association purposes, objectives, beliefs and practices. If attempts by the Executive Committee to reconcile the differences are rejected by the offending Member Church, the Executive Committee may pass a Special Resolution for the termination of membership in the Association of the offending Member Church. Such termination shall not occur except by a Special Resolution passed at an Annual General Session or Special General Session of the Association.

Article 4: The Executive Committee Officers

Composition

The Executive Committee Officers (the entire group of which are also called the "Executive Committee") of

the Association shall be the:

1. Moderator
2. Vice Moderator
3. Recording Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Church Planting Ministries Chairperson
6. Conference General Council Representative
7. Manitoba Baptist Youth Ministries (MBYM) Representative
8. Women's Ministries (WM) Representative
9. Men's Ministries (MM) Representative
10. Regional Minister (ex-officio)

Election and Appointment of Officers

- 1) All Officers of the Association shall be elected to two-year terms. Under ordinary circumstances no elected Officer shall serve more than three successive terms in any given office.
- 2) All Officers, except Regional Minister, shall be elected by Ordinary Resolution at an Annual General Session.
- 3) The Moderator, Treasurer, Men's Ministries Representative, and MBYM Representative shall be elected in even calendar years and all other Officers shall be elected in odd calendar years, with the exception of the Conference General Counsel Representative, who shall be elected every three years.
- 4) Should any Officer of the Association vacate their office, the Executive Committee shall appoint a substitute Officer to serve until the next Annual General Session.
- 5) All Officers and committee members must be members in good standing of a Member Church.
- 6) With the exception of banking matters, the signing authorities for all legal documents shall be the Moderator or Vice-Moderator, and: (a) the Secretary and (b) the Treasurer.
- 7) For legal purpose, the Officers shall also constitute the Board of Directors.

Role of the Executive Committee

Moderator

1. The Moderator shall preside at all Annual General Sessions, Special General Sessions and Executive Committee Meetings of the Association, ensuring that these sessions are conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.
2. The Moderator shall act as chairperson of the Credentials Committee.
3. The Moderator may attend the Meetings of any Committee of the Association.
4. The Moderator shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Association, and shall represent the Association in all transactions approved by the Association.

Vice Moderator

1. In the absence or incapacity of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator shall assume all the duties and the powers of the Moderator.
2. The Vice Moderator shall act as chairperson of the Annual General Session Program Committee.
3. The Vice Moderator shall act as the chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

Recording Secretary

1. The Recording Secretary shall send out notices of the time and place of Annual General Sessions, Special General Sessions, and of meetings of the Executive Committee.
2. The Recording Secretary shall record the minutes of meetings, including those of Annual General Sessions, Special General Sessions, and of the Executive Committee.
3. The Recording Secretary shall have custody of all papers that belong to the Association and are not specifically under the charge of any other officer.
4. The Recording Secretary shall have custody of the seal of the Association and shall affix it to

instruments and agreements executed on behalf of the Association.

5. The Recording Secretary shall conduct all official correspondence of the Association and shall file the necessary documents required by The Corporations Act (Manitoba).

Treasurer

1. The Treasurer shall administer all funds belonging to the Association. All funds are to be kept on deposit in a chartered bank and/or a Manitoba Credit Union(s) and/or Church Extension Investors Fund (Canada) Ltd. in an account in the name of the Association. A systematic record of all receipts and disbursements shall be maintained which shall include specifics regarding the nature and source of the receipts, and the nature of payments and the source of their authorization. All payments shall be made by cheque and relevant invoices and vouchers shall be retained in support thereof.
2. The Treasurer shall report to the meetings of the Executive Committee on the financial position of the Association.
3. The Treasurer shall prepare a detailed financial statement of the Association to be submitted for ratification by the Annual General Session. Such financial statements shall be prepared sufficiently in advance of the Annual General Session to allow for: (a) their prior presentation for review and approval at a meeting of the Executive Committee, and (b) their examination by the auditors appointed by the Association for the purpose of reporting thereon to the Annual General session.
4. The Treasurer shall be authorized to issue official donation receipts on behalf of the Association for income tax purposes.

Church Planting Ministries Chairperson

The Chairperson shall carry out the duties pertaining to that office, including a report to all meetings of the Executive Committee of the Association and a written report to the Annual General Session.

Conference General Council Representative

1. Represent the Association to the Conference General Council.
2. Represent the Conference General Council to the Association.

Manitoba Baptist Youth Ministries Representative

The representative shall report to all meetings of the Executive Committee of the Association and submit a written report to the Annual General Session pertaining to the activities of the Manitoba Baptist Youth Ministries.

Women's Ministries Representative

The representative shall report to all meetings of the Executive Committee of the Association and submit a written report to the Annual General Session pertaining to the activities of the Association Women's Ministries.

Men's Ministries Representative

The representative shall report to all meetings of the Executive Committee of the Association and submit a written report to the Annual General Session pertaining to the activities of the Association Men's Ministries.

Regional Minister

1. The Regional Minister shall facilitate and promote Church health within a specified region.
2. The Executive Committee shall liaison with the Regional Leadership Team in directing the ministry of the Regional Minister in our Association.
3. The Regional Leadership Team is comprised of representatives of the various Associations which have partnered to hire the Regional Minister. The Executive Committee shall appoint a minimum of two representatives to the Regional Leadership Team, of which one must be a member of the Executive Committee.

Remuneration of Association Officers

No elected Officer of the Association shall be paid any salary, wages or honoraria for services provided to the Association as an Officer. An Officer may be reimbursed such sums in respect of his or her expenses reasonably incurred in respect of his or her performance of an Officer's duties as the Executive Committee

may determine from time to time.

Meetings of the Executive Committee

- 1) The Officers shall meet at least four times annually at such time and place as may be determine. Special Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Moderator at any time.
- 2) The Recording Secretary shall give to each Officer a minimum of seven (7) days notice of each meeting. Minutes of the previous meeting shall accompany the notice.
- 3) Quorum shall consist of a majority of the number of Officers then holding Office.
- 4) Minutes shall be kept of all Executive Meetings, with a copy of such Minutes shall be supplied to all the Officers.
- 5) Decisions of the Executive Committee shall be made by Ordinary Resolution (the Chairperson shall be eligible to vote). All votes at any Executive Committee Meeting shall be by show of hands unless a ballot is requested by any Officer who is present at the Meeting. In the case of a tie, the Chairperson shall have the deciding vote.
- 6) Voting privileges can be extended to the chair or a representative of all affiliated organizations as defined in Article 6.

Article 5: Committees/Ministries

The Association Standing Committees and Ministries are as follows:

Annual General Session Program Committee

- 1) The Committee shall consist of the Vice Moderator to serve as Chairperson, the WMF Representative, a Pastor from the host Church, and others as appointed by the Chairperson.
- 2) The Program Committee shall prepare the program for the Annual General Session for approval by the Executive Committee.
- 3) The Executive Committee shall give direction to the Program Committee as to the Annual General Session theme and potential guest speakers.
- 4) The host church shall be responsible for the distribution of the registration packets and for the hosting of the fellowship events.
- 5) The Committee shall keep records of its activities and share a summary with the Executive Committee.

Church Planting Ministries

- 1) The Ministry shall consist of a Chairperson and a minimum three members.
- 2) The Chairperson of the Ministry shall select nominees for the Ministry, and present the names to the Executive Committee for confirmation.
- 3) The Ministry shall keep records of its activities and share a summary with the Executive Committee.
- 4) The function of the Ministry shall be:
 - To encourage possibilities of Member Churches planting new churches.
 - To create and increase awareness and interest throughout Manitoba in church planting amongst the Association and Member Churches.
 - To advise Member Churches requesting Church Planting assistance.
 - To share specific needs of Church Planting projects and request prayer support from Member Churches.

Men's Ministries

- 1) The task of the Ministry Leadership is to facilitate fellowship, service, and spiritual growth among men of the Association.
- 2) The Ministry Leadership shall consist of men from Member Churches selected by said men. The Ministry Leadership shall appoint one (1) representative to the Executive Committee.

Women's Ministries

- 1) The task of the Ministry Leadership is to facilitate fellowship, service, and spiritual growth among women of the Association.

- 2) The Ministry Leadership shall consist of women from Member Churches selected by said women. The Ministry Leadership shall appoint one (1) representative to the Executive Committee.

Manitoba Baptist Youth Ministries

- 1) The task of the Ministry Leadership is to facilitate fellowship, service, and spiritual growth among youth of the Association.
- 2) The Ministry Leadership shall consist of youth and the Youth Pastors from Member Churches selected by said youth and Pastors. The Ministry Leadership shall appoint one (1) representative to the Executive Committee.

Credentials Committee

The Committee shall consist of not less than four members of the Executive Committee and shall give guidance to Member Churches and candidates in the ordination of Pastors. Other members may be appointed by the Executive Committee. The Credentials Committee shall adhere to the “Credentialing Guidelines” as posted on the website of the North American Baptist Conference.

Nominating Committee

- 1) The Committee shall be chaired by the Vice Moderator and consist of two additional members from the Member Churches appointed annually by the Executive Committee. These Committee Members should equally represent the Central Churches and Southern Churches.
- 2) The Committee shall make every effort to have a balance of pastoral and lay representation on the Executive Committee.
- 3) The Committee shall present to the Annual General Session at least one candidate for each Office to be filled.

Special Committees

In addition to the Standing Committees, the delegates to the Annual General Session or Special General Session may elect, or the Executive Committee may appoint, such Special Committees as are considered necessary from time to time.

Expenses of Committees/Ministries

No committee or ministry shall incur debts on behalf of the Association unless previously authorized to do so by an Annual General Session, a Special General Session, or the Executive Committee.

Article 6: Organizations Affiliated with the Association

Designation of affiliated organizations

Each of the organizations listed below, and such others as may be designated from time to time by Ordinary Resolution of delegates present at an Annual General Session of the Association, shall be deemed to be organizations affiliated with the Association:

- Lake Nutimik Baptist Camp Inc.
- Manitoba Baptist Home Society Inc. (Meadowood Manor)
- Meadowood Manor Foundation Inc.
- Wellman Lake Bible Camp

Article 7: Annual General Session/Special General Sessions

Frequency

The Association shall meet at least once every calendar year for an Annual General Session, such meetings being at the call of the previous Annual General Session or the Executive Committee.

Notification

Notice of an Annual General Session shall be sent out 45 days prior to the Annual General Session and shall include the following:

- Agenda for the Session,
- reports of Committees/Ministries and of organizations related to the Association,
- report of Treasurer, including: (a) financial statements of the Association for its last fiscal year preceding the Annual General Session and the accompanying report thereon by the auditors of the Association, and (b) budget proposed for the subsequent fiscal year,
- proposed ballot for elected positions, if possible,
- draft of all resolutions to be presented to the Annual General Session,
- and such other information as is considered to be relevant to the business to be transacted at the Annual General Session.

Special General Session

A Special General Session may be called at any time by: (a) Special Resolution of the Executive Committee; or (b) upon the written request of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the Member Churches.

Notification of a Special General Session

Notice of a Special General Session shall be sent out 45 days prior to the Special General Session and shall include the following:

- A description of the nature of that business in sufficient detail to permit the delegates to form a reasoned judgement thereon, and
- A draft of any resolution or Special Resolution to be presented at the meeting.

Any meeting of delegates at either an Annual General Session or a Special General Session shall be deemed for all purposes to be, and have all the powers of, a Meeting of Members of the Association.

Delegates

Delegates to the Annual General Session or a Special General Session shall include:

- 1) All duly elected members of the Executive Committee.
- 2) The Senior Pastor of each Member Church.
- 3) Individual members duly elected or appointed as delegates by Member Churches; the maximum number of delegates from each Member Church being determined as follows: (a) Three (3) delegates for the first fifty (50) members or fraction thereof, with at least one of these serving on the key leadership board of the Member Church; (b) Two (2) delegates for the second fifty (50) members or fraction thereof; (c) One (1) delegate for every additional fifty (50) members or fraction thereof.
- 4) All duly appointed Pastoral Staff, serving in Member Churches and affiliated organizations.
- 5) One (1) delegate appointed by the Board of each affiliated organization.

Quorum

A majority of all delegates eligible to attend and registered to vote at an Annual General Session or Special General Session (as the case may be) shall constitute a quorum.

Resolutions

In order to be voted upon at an Annual General Session or Special General Session of the Association, a resolution shall be presented to the Session by the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee shall:

- Accept and study all draft resolutions submitted to it by Member Churches, or by (an) individual(s) member(s) of a Member Church(es), The Executive Committee shall determine whether the submitted resolution should in turn be submitted to either an Annual General Session or Special General Session (whether in the original form as submitted or as revised by the Executive Committee) or whether the submitted resolution should be rejected. The Executive Committee shall exercise all foregoing powers in its sole discretion.
- Prepare draft resolutions; in its and absolute discretion, for presentation at either an Annual General Session or a Special General Session.
- Send a copy of all draft resolutions to each Member Church and affiliated organizations at least 45 days prior to the commencement of the Annual General Session or a Special General Session.

Special Resolutions

The passing of a Special Resolution is required to: (a) terminate the membership of a Member Church in the Association; (b) dissolve the Association; (c) remove an Officers from Office; (d) confirm any other action which involves changing the basic structure of the Association or curtailing the rights therein of the Member Churches.

Voting

Each delegate registered to vote and present at an Annual General Session or a Special General Session shall be entitled to one vote.

With the exception of matters for which this Constitution requires passage by Special Resolution, decision at an Annual General Session or Special General Session shall be made by Ordinary Resolution passed by delegates.

Rules of Order

The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not in conflict with this Constitution.

General Session Committees

The following Committees shall be appointed by the Moderator and for the purposes of a General Session (whether an Annual General Session or Special General Session):

- Balloting Committee
- Scrutineers Committee
- Resolution of Thanks Committee

Article 8: Fiscal Policy

- 1) The fiscal year of the Association shall end on the thirty-first day of December of each year.
- 2) It is intended that the Association be registered as a charitable organization for purposes of the Income Tax Act (Canada). Accordingly, the work of the Association and its financial transactions and reporting thereof shall be carried on at all times in a manner which will permit the Association to retain its registered status for income tax purposes so long as the registration requirements are not in conflict with the purposes and objects of the Association.
- 3) The Association shall be carried on without the purpose of pecuniary gain for the Member Churches or individual members. Any gains or other accretions to the Association shall be used in carrying out its purposes and objects.
- 4) For the purposes of this subsection 4) "Member Churches" means Member Churches designated by Canada Revenue Agency as registered charities. In the event of the dissolution of the Association, all property of the Association remaining after payment of its debts and liabilities shall be conveyed and paid over to the Member Churches as at the date upon which the Special Resolution to dissolve the Association was passed. The total value of such remaining property shall be distributed among said Member Churches in the same pro rata shares as the number of members of each such Member Church at that time bears to the total number of al Members Churches at the time. Such distribution or disposition shall be subject to Section 277 of The Corporations Act (Manitoba) (R.S.M. 1987, C. 225) or any successor section thereto which may from time to time be in force.
- 5) The winding-up or dissolution of the Association and the distribution of its remaining property as provided above shall not be authorized except by Special Resolution passed at an Annual General Session or Special General Session of the Association.
- 6) The Executive Committee shall engage the services of an independent accounting firm to prepare an annual financial statement on at least a review engagement basis. Audited financial statements are required at least once every five years.
- 7) The Executive Committee shall, by Ordinary Resolution, designate the Officers authorized to possess signing authority for banking purposes.
- 8) The Moderator or his designate shall approve all accounts prior to payment.

- 9) Borrowing - As required to carry out the activities of the Association in conformity with the budget adopted at the immediately preceding Annual General Session or as authorized by a Special General Session, the Executive Committee may:
- Borrow money upon the credit of the Association.
 - Issue, re-issue or pledge debt obligations of the Association.
 - Mortgage, hypothecate, pledge or otherwise create a security interest in all or any property of the Association, owned or subsequently acquired, to secure any debt obligation of the Association.
- 10) Lending – As required to assist a Member Church or affiliated organization in situations of financial emergency, the Association may lend monies to a Member Church or affiliated organization upon passage of a Special Resolution at an Annual General Session or Special General Session. Where a Member Church or affiliated organization encounters a financial emergency between Annual General Sessions, or where it is impractical for a Special General Session to be called at the time of such financial emergency, the Executive Committee may lend monies on behalf of the Association to a Member Church or affiliated organization, provided however, that such loan arrangements shall be subsequently approved by a Special Resolution at the next Annual General Session. Any such loan made by the Association to a Member Church or affiliated organization shall provide for the repayment of the principal amount loaned subject to the conditions agreed to by the Association and the Member Church or affiliated organization.

Article 9: Definitions

Where used in this Constitution, the term “Central Churches” shall mean all those Member Churches located north and west of Winnipeg and Morris.

Where used in this Constitution, the term “Southern Churches” shall mean all those Member Churches located east of (and including) Winnipeg and Morris.

Where used in this Constitution, the term “Ordinary Resolution” shall mean a Resolution passed by the majority of those present at a Meeting or Session (as the case may be.)

Where used in this Constitution, the term “Special Resolution” shall mean a Resolution passed by two-thirds (2/3) of those present at a Meeting or Session (as the case may be).

Article 10: Amendment of Constitution

This Constitution shall not be changed except by a Special Resolution passed at an Annual General Session or Special General Session.

Article 11: Effective Date

This Constitution shall supersede any former Constitution or Constitutional By-Laws and shall become effective immediately upon a Special Resolution being passed at an Annual General Session or Special General Session.

Adopted by the Association in General Session on October 13, 2007.

Amended by the Association in General Session on October 17, 2009.

MANITOBA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION INC.
Beliefs & Practices Manual

MBA Statement of Faith

*Source: North American Baptist Conference Statement of Faith adopted: MBA Annual General Session • April 20, 1996.
Marriage & Family amendment adopted: MBA Annual General Session • October 13, 2007*

In continuity with our immediate forefathers and the larger fellowship of Baptists throughout our history, we seek to practice and propagate by God's grace the following convictions:

1. The Bible

We believe the Bible is God's Word given by divine inspiration, the record of God's revelation of Himself to humanity (II Timothy 3:16). It is trustworthy, sufficient, without error-the supreme authority and guide for all doctrine and conduct (1 Peter 1:23-25; John 17:17; II Timothy 3:16-17.) It is the truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself and leads them to Christian maturity (John 20:31, I John 5:9-12; Matthew 4:4; 1 Peter 2:2).

2. God

We believe in the one living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy and love (I Timothy 1:17; Psalm 86:15; Deuteronomy 32:3-4). He exists eternally in three coequal persons who act together in creation, providence and redemption (Genesis 1:26; I Peter 1:2; Hebrews 1:1-3).

a. The Father reigns with providential care over all life and history in the created universe; He hears and answers prayer (1 Chronicles 29; 11- 13; Matthew 7:11). He initiated salvation by sending His Son, and He is Father to those who by faith accept His Son as Lord and Savior (I John 4:9-10; John 3:16; John 1:12; Acts 16:31).

b. The Son became man, Jesus Christ, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18). Being fully God and fully man, He revealed God through His sinless life, miracles and teaching (John 14:9; Hebrews 4:15; Matthew 4:23-24). He provided salvation through His atoning death in our place and by His bodily resurrection (I Corinthians 15:3-4; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:23-25). He ascended into heaven where He rules overall creation (Philippians 2:5-11). He intercedes for all believers and dwells in them as their ever-present Lord (Romans 8:34; John 14:23).

c. The Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Scriptures (II Peter 1:21). Through this Word, he convicts individuals of their sinfulness and of their righteousness of Christ, draws them to the Savior, and bears witness to their new birth (James 1:18; John 16:7-11; I Thessalonians 1:5-6; Romans 8:16). At regeneration and conversion, the believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit indwells, seals and gives spiritual gifts to all believers for ministry in the church and society (Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 12:5-8; I Peter 4:10). He empowers, guides, teaches, fills, sanctifies and produces the fruit of Christ-likeness in all who yield to Him (Acts 4:31; Romans 8:14; I Corinthians 2:10-13; Ephesians 5:18; II Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 5:16; 22-23).

3. Angels & Demons

We believe God created an order of spiritual beings called angels to serve Him and do His will (Psalm 148:1-5; Colossians 1:16). The holy angels are obedient spirits ministering to the heirs of salvation and glorifying God (Hebrews 1:6-7; 13-14). Certain angels, called demons, Satan being their chief, through deliberate choice revolted and fell from their exalted position (Revelation 12:7-9). They now tempt individuals to rebel against God (I Timothy 4:1; I Peter 5:8). Their destiny in hell has been sealed by Christ's victory over sin and death (Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10).

4. Man

We believe God created man in His own image to have fellowship with Himself and to be steward over His creation (Genesis 1:26-28). As a result, each person is unique, possesses dignity and is worthy of respect (Psalm 139:13-17). Through the temptation of Satan, Adam chose to disobey God; this brought sin and death to the human race and suffering to all creation (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12-21; 8:22). Therefore, everyone is born with a sinful nature and needs to be reconciled to God (Romans 3:9- 18,23). Satan tempts people to rebel against God, even those who love Him (Ephesians 4:27; II Corinthians 2:11; Matthew 16:23). Nonetheless, everyone is personally responsible to God for thoughts, actions and beliefs and has the right to approach Him directly through Jesus Christ, the only mediator (Romans 14:12; I Timothy 2:5).

5. Salvation

We believe salvation is redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin and death (II Timothy 1:9-10; I Thessalonians 5:23). It is offered as a free gift by God to all and must be received personally through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27). As a child of God, the believer is acquitted of all guilt and brought into a new relationship of peace (Romans 5:1). Christians grow as the Holy Spirit enables them to understand and obey the Word of God (II Peter 3:18; Ephesians 4:15; I Thessalonians 3:12).

6. The Church

We believe the Church is the body of which Christ is the head and all who believe in Him are members (Ephesians 1:22-23; Romans 12:4-5). Christians are commanded to be baptized upon profession of faith and to unite with a local church for mutual encouragement and growth in discipleship through worship, nurture, service and the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world (Acts 2:41-42, 47; Luke 24:45-48). Each church is a self-governing body under the lordship of Christ with all members sharing responsibility (Acts 13:1-3, 14:26-28). The form of government is understood to be congressional (Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:3-6; 15:22-23). The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Savior Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-5). The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and of the cup by believers together as a continuing memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. It is an act of thankful dedication to Him and serves to unite His people until He returns (I Corinthians 11:23-26). To express unity in Christ, local churches form associations and a conference for mutual counsel, fellowship and a more effective fulfillment of Christ's commission (Acts 15; I Corinthians 6:1-3).

7. Church & State

We believe religious liberty, rooted in Scripture, is the inalienable right of all individuals to freedom of conscience with ultimate accountability to God (Genesis 1:27; John 8:32; II Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:21; Acts 5:29). Church and state exist by the will of God. Each has distinctive concerns and responsibilities, free from control by the other (Matthew 22:21). Christians should pray for civil leaders, and obey and support government in matters not contrary to Scripture (I Timothy 2:1-4; Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-16). The state should guarantee religious liberty to all persons and groups regardless of their religious preferences, consistent with the common good.

8. Christian Life

We believe Christians, individually and collectively, are salt and light in society (Matthew 5:13-16). In a Christ-like spirit, they oppose greed, selfishness and vice; they promote truth, justice and peace; they aid the needy and preserve the dignity of people of all races and conditions (Hebrews 13:5; Luke 9:23; Titus 2:12; Philippians 4:8-9; I John 3:16-17; James 2:1-4).

9. Marriage & Family

We believe the Bible teaches that marriage refers to the covenant relationship between one man and one woman, as instituted by God in the beginning, to the exclusion of all others (Genesis 1: 20b-24). We affirm the family as the basic unit of society and seek to preserve its integrity and stability (Genesis 2:21-25; Ephesians 6:1-4).

10. Last Things

We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth (Ephesians 1:9-10, Revelation 21:1). The certain hope of the Christian is that Jesus Christ will return to the earth suddenly, personally and visibly in glory according to His promise (Titus 2:13, Revelation 1:7; 3:11; John 14:1-3). The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge mankind in righteousness (John 5:28-29). The unrighteous will be consigned to the everlasting punishment prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41, 46; Revelation 20:10). The righteous, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, will receive their reward and dwell forever with the Lord (Philippians 3:20-21; II Corinthians 5:10; I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

MBA Marriage Resolution

(Adopted: MBA Annual General Session, October 15, 2005)

As the Supreme Court of Canada has clearly stated in their reference re: Same Sex Marriage (neutral citation: 2004 SCC 79) that the Charter protects “religious official from being compelled by the state to perform civil or religious same-sex marriages that are contrary to their religious beliefs,” thus we, the Manitoba Baptist Association, state our following position on marriage:

Whereas, in accordance to the North American Baptist Conference Statement of Faith, we affirm that each person is unique, possesses dignity, and is worthy of respect, and

Whereas, we also affirm that we are called to introduce each person to the loving, reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ and the life changing transformation described in scripture, and

Whereas, we believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is between one man and one woman only, to recognize other unions as legitimate marriages would be contrary to our understanding of scripture within the Manitoba Baptist Association and the North American Baptist Conference, and

Whereas, though as Christians we seek to demonstrate God’s love to all people, we will not compromise our convictions on marriage as defined by scripture.

Therefore, be it resolved that:

1. As a matter of belief, doctrine and religious practice, the Manitoba Baptist Association reserves the term “marriage” for the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.
2. And that the Manitoba Baptist Association establishes the standard that all individuals, who are licensed to perform marriages through the Manitoba Baptist Association, not officiate at, or co-officiate at, any marriage outside of the previously stated definition of marriage.
3. And that in the event that an individual licensed to perform marriages through the Manitoba Baptist Association, officiates at or co-officiates at a marriage that is outside of the previously stated definition of marriage, will be subject to disciplinary review and loss of license.
4. And we recommend that all churches in the Manitoba Baptist Association adopt the above as a policy of the individual, local church. We recommended that churches also review their “churches use policies” to reflect the resolution as stated.
5. And that the facilities of the Manitoba Baptist Association will not be used for weddings or receptions where the marriage union is contrary to the provisions of this resolution.

MBA Guidelines on Divorce & Remarriage of Clergy

(Adopted: MBA Annual General Session • October 15, 2005)

Foundational Truths

- God created marriage to be between one man and one woman for life. (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6)
- God allowed divorce in some circumstances because of the hardness of hearts. (Exodus 21:7-11; Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 19:8)
- Christ emphasized that even when one’s actions are allowable it does not mean that one’s heart is without need of scrutiny and care. (Matthew 5:27-28, 31-32)
- The local church is autonomous, but yields a degree of autonomy to the local association and conference to which it belongs. The parts yielded have to do with adherence to the agreed-upon doctrinal stance, accountability for biblical practices, and credentialing of pastors. While the Scriptures speak to the issue of divorce as well as to qualifications for church leaders, they do not specifically speak to the issue of a divorced or a divorced and remarried person serving as a pastor. There is some disagreement among churches, pastors, and biblical scholars concerning the interpretation of specific passages. (i.e. 1 Timothy 3:2)
- Because reputation, godly family life, and integrity are critical qualifications for a church leader, if a pastor in a marriage crisis wishes to continue to be assessed as ministering from a life of integrity, he or she needs to allow church leaders the kind of role that would enable them to minister to and assess issues of integrity within the marriage. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Galatians 6:1-5)

Suggested Course of Action

1. Vigilance through local church leadership, pastors' cluster groups, and Regional Minister to stay alert to potential marital problems among our clergy.
2. When marriage problems arise:
 - a. Pastor's cluster - encourage the pastor, wife, and any children to get professional help.
 - b. Cluster leader – if warranted, with the knowledge of the pastor, inform the Regional Minister that the pastor and his family may require assistance.
 - c. Regional Minister – if warranted, make a formal contact to assess the situation and further recommend counseling help, if necessary.
 - d. Regional Minister – if warranted, accompany pastor and wife to a meeting with local church leaders to communicate their need.
 - e. Local church - encourage, pray, give time off, and funding if needed for counseling.
 - f. Local church – approach Association for funding if needed.
 - g. If the behaviour within the marriage cannot be rectified while continuing in ministry, the pastor should be strongly advised to take a leave of absence. Depending on the giftedness and availability of the church members, the church at which he is employed should consider an interim pastor for the time the pastor is on leave. Church leadership can then continue to assess whether it is advisable for the marriage and the ministry that the pastor return to active service, the marriage being the priority. This should be determined by the local church leaders in consultation with the Regional Minister, the pastor's cluster group, and involved counselors.
 - h. If at any point in this process the pastor:
 - i) breaks with cooperating with church leadership
 - ii) attempts to leave to pastor another church
 - iii) resigns from his ministryhis credentials will be revoked by the MBA Credentials Committee.
3. If the marriage remains intact:
 - a. An assessment of the present health of the marriage and the readiness of the pastor for ministry should be made by the local church leaders in consultation with the Regional Minister, the pastor's cluster group, and involved counselors before restoring to active service.
 - b. The Regional Minister will provide direction to this process.
 - c. If restored, the pastor should be welcomed without reservation to the local church and association ministries.
 - d. If not restored, his credentials will be revoked by the MBA Credentials Committee.
4. If an apparently permanent separation or divorce occurs:
 - a. An assessment of the pastor as to readiness for ministry should be made by the local church leaders in consultation with the Regional Minister, the pastor's cluster group, involved counselors, and the Credentials Committee before restoring to active service. Even if circumstances allow the pastor to be restored to ministry, the pastor may still be advised to step aside for a time of recovery from personal loss and adjustment.
 - b. The Regional Minister will provide direction to this process.
 - c. If restored, the pastor should be welcomed without reservation to the local church and association ministries.
 - d. If not restored, his credentials will be revoked by the MBA Credentials Committee.
5. If a pastor resigns from or is not restored to ministry because of marital problems or divorce:
 - a. The local church, in cooperation with the Association, should fund a time period necessary for the pastor to become re-established financially (i.e. – another job). This should include parsonage or housing allowance.
6. When remarriage after divorce happens:
 - a. When a pastor considers remarriage, he should submit his intentions to the church leaders, the Credentials Committee, and the Regional Minister. They should:
 - i) Review the circumstances and plans with the couple.
 - ii) Receive a written assessment of the relationship from an approved marriage counselor
 - iii) Recommend whether the pastor's well-being and behaviour are consistent with retaining the

- ministry position and credentials.
 - b. All such marriages of pastors should be well publicized and Association pastors informed that the recommended process has been completed.
 - c. Two pastoral couples should be assigned by the Regional Minister in consultation with the couple to meet regularly with the pastor and wife in an accountability and nurturing relationship for the first year or longer if deemed necessary. The Regional Minister will continue to provide support to this group.
7. Regarding possible disagreement between MBA churches about divorce and remarriage of clergy:
- a. The NAB Conference has left it up to the local association to determine specifics regarding this issue. Once these guidelines are tested for a year or two, reviewed by MBA Pastors and church boards, and then finally approved at an AGM, it is the standard of the association. The association is to proceed according to the guideline with a restored pastor with no limitations or reservations. The association is to proceed with a pastor who refuses to comply with them according to the guidelines.

MBA Financial Policy

(Adopted: MBA Annual General Session • October 13, 2007)

Executive Expenditures

The Executive Committee has the authority to disburse up to \$5,000 per fiscal year for non-budgeted items without seeking approval of a General Session. Special flow-through items that arise from time to time are not subject to this policy.

MBA Funding Policy

(Adopted: MBA Annual General Session • October 15, 2005)

Guidelines for Funding

Working together as an Association allows us to consider provision of financial support (grants or loans) to start or expand ministries of Association churches. With the opportunity, however, comes a responsibility to good planning and stewardship.

Guidelines for funding requests from MBA churches:

1. Funding for ongoing operating expenses and staffing will not be considered.
2. MBA reserves may be available for viable one-time capital or pilot projects.
3. MBA funding will cover no more than 50% of the total cost of the project.
4. Applications will also be evaluated in light of the long-term viability of the MBA church/organization.

Guidelines for Application

1. Applicants must complete and submit the MBA Application form for funding.
2. Applications must be submitted by the governing board of the applicant to the MBA Executive.
3. Applications should propose methods of evaluation and accountability to the MBA Executive.
4. If the funding request is more than a one-time application, applicants should propose a time frame or duration for the funding on a declining scale.
5. Applications should be received by the MBA Executive at least six months prior to the MBA Annual General Meeting (AGM).
6. The MBA Executive will inform the applicant of its recommendation at least 60 days prior to the AGM.
7. Applications recommended by the MBA Executive will be brought to the AGM for discussion and approval.

Evaluation/Accountability

If the agreed-upon guidelines for approval are violated, the funding will be discontinued, and repayment of funds will be expected.

MBA Ministry Funding Application

Church/Organization: _____

Title of Project/Program: _____

Contact Information

Name: _____ Title/Position: _____

Address: _____

Town/City: _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: 204 – _____ Fax: 204 – _____

E-mail: _____

Project Description

Group served by this project: Youth Family Congregation Other: _____

Location of activity: _____

Date of activity (please include time lines): _____

Detail the aims and objectives of the project or results you hope to achieve: _____

What needs will be met by the project? What activities or services will be provided? _____

Describe the overall project and specific uses of MBA funding in the project: _____

Financial Information

Please attach financial statements for the past two years as well as a current budget for your organization.

Anticipated annual cost: \$ _____

Duration of project: _____

Amount requested from Manitoba Baptist Association: \$ _____

Amount requested from other sources: (list sources, amounts requested & confirmed): _____

Declining support in subsequent years: _____

Evaluation process

What are the criteria for success? _____

How will this project enhance your goals as an organization? _____

How does this project related to the ongoing viability of your church? (financially and otherwise): _____

How will this project related to the Manitoba Baptist Association? _____

Repayment terms (Security: i.e., promissory note, etc.): _____

Contingency plans if the other funding sources fail or if MBA donations don't allow us to contribute: _____

What is your ability to sustain the project once financial support is discontinued? _____

Other comments: _____

Pastoral Sabbaticals

(Adopted in principle: MBA Annual General Session • April 24-26, 1987. Detailed and reaffirmed: MBA Annual General Session • October 19-21, 2001)

On April 24-26, 1987, the 76th session of the Manitoba Baptist Association moved, seconded and carried to accept Pastoral Sabbatical Leave, in principle, as distributed with the following clarifications: Executive to develop stricter guidelines, Area Minister to be available for further guidance as needed.

Definition

A Sabbatical is based on the seventh day rest from creating taken by God as outlined in Genesis 2. The purpose was to rest from the work of the previous 6 days in order to be enriched and refreshed. The Lord, in Exodus 20:8-11 commands His people to work six days each week and rest on the seventh. As well, the Israelites were to give their fields a year's rest after six years of sowing and harvesting. Additionally, animals were to rest every seventh day. In Deuteronomy 15:12-18, the Lord gives the command that slaves were to be set free after six years of service.

The concept of a Sabbath or “rest” is a common theme in Scripture. God designed us in such a way that we all need a time to cease from our normal activities. The concept of Sabbath is to “cease not only from work itself, but also from the need to accomplish and be productive, from the worry and tension that accompany our modern criterion of efficiency, from our efforts to be in control of our lives as if we were God, from our possessiveness and our enculturation and finally, from the humdrum and meaninglessness that result when life is pursued without the Lord at the center of it all.” (Marva Dawn – Keeping the Sabbath Wholly, 1989)

The concept of a “Sabbatical Leave” for pastors is based on this teaching. It is to give a pastor an extended time away on retreat or renewal or to be involved in other activities that would renew the pastor and increase the effectiveness of his ministry. The sabbatical is a time for reading, reflection, renewal and restoration.

Rationale

- Burnout among pastors is becoming an increasing problem. Often we are losing good pastors simply because they need to be personally and spiritually renewed.
- Long-term pastorates have been proven to be healthier for churches. How many times do pastors leave churches where they would like to stay, but just need a break?
- A renewed and refreshed pastor will be far more effective.
- By making an investment in the pastor's future, the bond of trust and mutual esteem is enhanced.

Guidelines

While not all churches will be able to give pastors a full sabbatical, it should be every MBA church's goal to provide a time of sabbatical under the following set of guidelines:

- Sabbatical leave should be granted for (4) four consecutive months following (7) seven full time years of continuous ministry in the church.
- While on sabbatical leave, the pastor shall receive full salary.
- Application shall be made in writing to the Board of the church stating the desire for the sabbatical leave. The proposal shall include a detail of how the time will be spent, and the benefits anticipated.
- The pastor shall assist the Board of the church in planning for the continuation of the ministry during the sabbatical.
- The pastor shall also commit to serving the church for a period of not less than two years following the return from his sabbatical.

Sabbatical Goals

- To cease from all regular professional activities in order to be restored spiritually, physically, emotionally, and relationally.
- To be present to the holiness of God through study of His Word not for the purpose of preaching or teaching, but rather for personal edification and renewing.
- To be renewed spiritually through reflection and by prayer and journaling.
- To take this time to develop a meaningful plan for future growth and service in his home, community and congregation.
- To prepare to return to professional life events with new joy and perspective.

Based on the above information, it is recommended that the following resolution be presented to the MBA meeting for approval:

- Whereas the Lord God has set up the Sabbatical Rest as a vital part of His creating process; and
- Whereas the Lord God Himself took a Sabbath Rest after six days of creating; and
- Whereas the Lord commanded His people to observe a Sabbath rest; and
- Whereas it has been shown that pastors are leaving ministry due to burnout and lack of personal renewal; and
- Whereas it has been shown that a time of Sabbatical Rest is beneficial for pastors and congregations alike and that a refreshed and renewed pastor is more effective in ministry; and
- Whereas the 76th session of the Manitoba Baptist Association held on April 24-26, 1987 accepted in principle Pastoral Sabbatical Leave;

Be it Resolved — That MBA Churches be encouraged to make it a policy of their pastoral ministry that a time of sabbatical will be granted to their pastoral staff upon the completion of seven years of full time service for that pastor in that church.

Clergy Registration

(Adopted: MBA Annual General Session • October 13, 2007)

The Vital Statistic Agency of the Government of Manitoba requires that all clergy solemnizing marriages in the Province of Manitoba be registered. It is the responsibility of each Member Church to determine who is permitted to solemnize marriages on their behalf. This also applies to individuals not residing in the Province seeking a temporary registration to solemnize a marriage in a Member Church. The procedure for registration (permanent or temporary) of clergy is as follows:

1. The Member Church approves who is permitted to solemnize marriages on their behalf.
2. The individual seeking registration must complete the Clergy Registration Application indicating agreement with the Manitoba Baptist Association Beliefs and Practices regarding marriage.
3. The Member Church shall contact the Manitoba Baptist Association liaison (appointed by the MBA Executive) for completion of all documentation required for each registration. All direct contact with the Vital Statistics Agency regarding registration must be made through the liaison.
4. The Certificate of Registration will be mailed to the approved candidate(s).
5. Permanent Certificates of Registration shall be returned to the Vital Statistics Agency through the Association Liaison when the clergy member moves out of the Province or is no longer approved by the Member Church to solemnize marriages.

Clergy Registration Application

(Adopted: MBA Annual General Session • October 13, 2007)

Please sign and date the application as well as fill in the information that is requested. Then mail it to the Manitoba Baptist Association Recording Secretary. This will allow us to begin to process your permanent or temporary license.

I have read and agree to comply with and not act in any way contrary to the Manitoba Baptist Association policy regarding marriage.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please print the following information:

Full Name: _____ Ph. No. _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

E-mail: _____

Current Ministry: _____

Church Name: _____ Ph. No. _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

NAB Ordination Date: (if applicable) _____

Required for temporary license only:

Name of Groom/Party in full: _____

Name of Bride/Party in full: _____

Date of intended Marriage: _____

Place of intended Marriage: _____
(City, Town, etc.)

For Association Office Use Only

License Number: _____ Temporary Permanent

Issue Date: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Date Sent: _____

Notes:

Organizational Structure

