



Southeastern Association of Confessional Baptists Constitution (Established March 19, 2010)

Southeastern Association of Confessional Baptists

I. Establishment of Association

A. The Name of the Association

The name of the Association is Southeastern Association of Confessional Baptists (SACB).

B. Need of Association

In 26:14 of the Baptist Confession of 1689 it is stated,

“As each church, and all the members of it, are bound to pray continually for the good and prosperity of all the churches of Christ, in all places, and upon all occasions to further it (every one within the bounds of their places and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces) so the churches, when planted by the providence of God, so as they may enjoy opportunity and advantage for it, ought to hold communion among themselves, for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification”

In God’s kind providence, the number of Baptist Churches in Georgia that are subscribing to the Baptist Confession of 1689 is increasing. This increase of confessional churches affords the opportunity and duty to form an Association of Confessional Baptist Churches in Georgia.

C. The Nature of the Association

1. This Association consists of Baptist Churches in the Southeastern United States that have adopted and subscribe to the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith and are committed to promoting the interests of the member churches and to advance the common causes found among them.
2. While seeking to promote the interdependence of churches, this Association recognizes and respects the independence of each member church.
3. The precedent of churches associating in this way is found in apostolic practice (Acts 15; 2 Corinthians 8:18-24; Galatians 1:2, 22; Colossians 4:13-18) and numerous historical examples of Baptists (the 1689-92 General Assemblies in England and the 1707 Philadelphia Association and 1767 Charleston Confession in the United States). It is also warranted by Christ’s prayer for visible unity (John 17:20-23), the confessional position of our Baptist forefathers (1689 Confession, chapter 26, para 14, 15), and Christian prudence and wisdom.

D. The Purpose of the Association

The purpose of this Association is to,

1. Advance Christ’s kingdom by providing a fellowship in which churches of common confession may find mutual encouragement, assistance, edification, and counsel, and may participate in cooperative efforts, home missions (such as planting and establishing confessional Baptist churches), foreign missions, ministerial training and publications all of which are often beyond the scope of one local church.

2. Provide a forum of fellowship and helps for men and churches who are learning about Confessional Calvinism.
3. Record the history of Confessional Baptist Churches in Georgia, in order to commend a faithful heritage.
4. Forward other such efforts as the Association may also deem appropriate.

II. The Standards of the Association

A. Articles of Faith

1. While we hold tenaciously to the inerrant, infallible and sufficient Word of God as found in the sixty-six books of the Bible (this being our final source of faith and practice), we embrace and adopt the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 as a faithful expression of the doctrine taught in the Scriptures.
2. Full subscription to this Confession is the doctrinal position of this Association (see Appendix #1).
3. At the General Assembly, a messenger of each member church must publicly affirm in writing his conscientious commitment to the Articles of Faith of the Association.

B. Articles of Association

This Constitution is the governing standard of our Association. Therefore, actions of the Association must comply with it. Any article in this Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of messengers present and voting at an officially called business meeting, when the proposed amendment has been distributed in writing to every member church at least sixty days before the vote is taken. Amendments shall be incorporated into this Constitution after they have been approved.

C. Policies

The Administrative Council or a member church may propose new policies and amendments. Such proposals must be submitted in writing to the Administrative Council. The Council will send these proposals to all member churches at least sixty days prior to a properly called meeting.

Properly submitted proposals may be amended at the meeting in accordance with GACB Rules of Parliamentary Procedure (see Appendix #2). A two-thirds vote of messengers present and voting will be required for passage. Policies shall be appended to the Constitution after they have been approved.

The Administrative Council shall have authority to adopt operational and procedural policy, but not positional (i.e., positional papers) or major policy.

III. The Authority of the Association

A. Source of Authority

The Association exists by virtue of the corporate authority of its local churches.

B. Limitation of Authority

1. All cooperation in Association efforts by member churches shall be strictly voluntary. The Association will make no demands of a member church beyond its purpose of association.
2. The Association has authority to determine whether its commendation shall be given to or withheld from an applicant church. It also has power to withdraw commendation from a member church. The

Association cannot take anything from a local church but that which it gives to the church, namely, its conscientious commendation.

3. The Association may not interfere with the affairs of its member churches. The Association will only offer advice to a member church when requested to do so by a majority of duly elected officers, or by congregational request made in accordance with a church's own constitution or by-laws. When requested by a church, the Association will give advice to the church but has no power to enforce its judgment. The Association will not respond to the requests of individuals or groups within churches unless brought through a member church.

C. Authority to Conduct Business

The Association has authority to establish bank accounts in order to receive and to disburse funds for accomplishing its purposes and functions. The Association may own property and conduct business through its elected officials or appointed committees.

IV. Membership in the Association

A. Scope of the Association

Baptist churches in the Southeastern United States may become members of the Association.

B. Requirements for Membership in the Association

To become a member a church must:

1. Adopt and fully subscribe (see Appendix #1, What Is 'Full Subscription?', by Dr. James Renihan), to the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, and holding to any explanatory positional papers adopted by the Association.
2. Be organized with a constitution and/or by-laws and functioning according to the standards of the 1689 Confession with at least one church officer.
3. Agree to abide by the Constitution of the Association.
4. Secure the recommendation of at least one member church which knows the petitioning church well.
5. Commit to make contributions to the general fund, as the Lord prospers, for the well-being of the Association.
6. Commit to sending messengers annually to the General Assembly.
7. Commit to regularly pray for sister churches in the Association.

C. Procedures for Attaining Membership in the Association

1. A church requesting membership in this Association must apply in writing to the Administrative Council of the Association, with affirmation of congregational approval and the recommendation of at least one member church. In order for the approval of the Association, applications for membership must be received at least ninety days before the General Assembly.
2. When the Administrative Council is satisfied that the applying church is in agreement with the doctrinal standards and meets the other requirements of the Association, it will recommend the church to the General Assembly for admission. Copies of the application, with all appropriate correspondence, will be sent to all member churches at least sixty days before General Assembly. Member churches may

then submit any objections to the Administrative Council, but any objections must be received within fifteen days of the date on which the notification letter is sent.

3. At the General Assembly, messengers of the applying church must appear in order to give satisfactory evidence of the church's faith, practice, and willingness to support wholeheartedly this Association. Once this is sufficiently demonstrated, the applying church shall be received into membership by the three-fourths vote of all messengers present and voting at General Assembly, unless there are exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Membership Committee, but not less than 60 days prior to the General Assembly.

D. Associate Membership

1. We recognize that there are men in Southeastern United States who are at various stages in reformation. Since a purpose of this Association is to promote the Calvinistic Confessional roots of Baptists in the southeast and fellowship of like-minded men, officers who subscribe to the 1689 Confession, but serve a church that does not subscribe may be an associate or non-voting member of the Association. Such men would have the right to participate in theological discussions and have a voice in the Association, but no power of vote.

2. Associate member status requires,

- a. Submission of a completed application for membership
- b. Recommendation by an officer of a member church
- c. Satisfactory meeting with Membership Committee who will ascertain the man's
 - i. experience of grace.
 - ii. Call to the gospel ministry or status as a gifted brother (reference to the 1689 LBC, Chapter 26, paragraph 11: "that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Spirit for it, and approved and called by the church, may and ought to perform it").
 - iii. Full subscription to the 1689 Baptist Confession.

E. Termination of Membership from the Association

1. By Withdrawal

Any member church desiring to withdraw from the Association may do so by submitting to the Administrative Council chairman a letter of resignation stating the reasons. The Association retains the right to comment on the resignation of a member church.

2. By Exclusion

- a. The Association may exclude a member church or associate member from its membership. Such action should be taken when one of the following persists in marking a church or its officers:
 - i. Deviation from the doctrinal standards of the Association.
 - ii. Unrighteous behavior.
 - iii. A lack of interest in the Association, i.e., failure to send messengers to two consecutive annual General Assemblies or failure to contribute to the general fund for two consecutive years, or lack of attendance or interest by an associate member without prior explanation given to a member of the Administrative Council.

- b. When exclusion of a member church or associate member is under consideration, written notice of intent shall be given to the church, or the associate member in question by the Administrative Council. Such notice of intent must be sent to the church or associate member in question before a proposal for exclusion may be circulated among member churches. An opportunity shall be given for the church to challenge the Council's action prior to publication of any proposal for dismissal.
- c. If within a reasonable time no response is forthcoming from the church in question, or if the council agrees unanimously that the response of said church or associate member is inadequate, a proposal for exclusion at the next properly called convention may be circulated to all member churches.
- d. Such action may only be taken after the Administrative Council has sought diligently to resolve the issues in a biblical manner and after such efforts have been ineffective.
- e. The General Assembly will exclude a member church or associate member upon passage of the Council's recommendation by a three-fourths vote of messengers present and voting and in accordance with the above stated procedure. When a church's membership has been removed, written notice of this decision and the reasons for it must be given to the excluded church.

V. The Privileges and Duties of Member Churches of the Association

A. The Commendation of Churches in the Association.

Each member church enjoys the privilege of being recognized and commended by the Association as a true and orderly church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, each member church must be committed to promoting the peace and good name of every other member church.

B. The Communion of Churches in the Association.

It is expected that the member churches will communicate with and pray for each other regularly, will send messengers to General Assembly, and will enter the fellowship of Association gatherings. Fellowship requires a willingness to communicate to officers of sister churches any information concerning their church's actions which becomes of legitimate interest to other congregations.

C. The Cooperation of Churches in the Association.

In advancing the cause of Christ, member churches are encouraged to support the cooperative efforts promoted by the Association. This includes financial contributions to the work of the Association.

D. The Counsel of Churches in the Association

In difficult matters, member churches ought to be willing to seek and to receive the counsel of sister congregations and be willing to give counsel when requested. The Association will follow the procedures outlined in chapter 26 of the Baptist Confession of 1689.

Details of specific cases brought to the Association shall be published only as far as is necessary in the judgment of the Association.

Failure to exhibit the expectations of this article will be a concern to the Association and, in extreme cases, may constitute grounds for removal from the Association.

VI. The Administration of the Association

A. General Assembly

1. Calling of Meetings

Messengers from member churches will convene at least once a year for a General Assembly. Ordinarily notice will be given to all member churches as to time, place and purpose at least ninety days in advance. Prior to the meeting, member churches shall receive copies of any agenda to be proposed and names of nominees for the Administrative Council. Additional sessions may be called by the Council, in which case all member churches must be notified at least thirty days in advance.

2. Representation at Meetings

General Assembly is a representative assembly of the member churches. Churches are encouraged to send as many members to General Assembly as possible. Each church is entitled to an equal voice in the business of the Association. To that end each church may appoint two men who are in good standing as voting messengers at General Assembly. All messengers of member churches, all associate members, and all council and committee members shall fully subscribe to the confession (as defined in Appendix #1) and affirm all officially adopted associational position papers.

3. Conduct of Meetings

Association business shall be conducted according to the Association's rules of parliamentary procedure (see Appendix #3).

More than fifty percent of the churches must have messengers present to constitute a quorum at a business meeting of the Association.

4. Responsibilities of the Association Business Meeting

- a) Election of Administrative Council members and Coordinator (if one should be needed).
- b) Approval of minutes of General Assembly.
- c) Approval of financial reports.
- d) Admission or exclusion of member churches.
- e) Annual affirmation of 1689 Confession by signature of messengers of member churches and associate members.
- f) Approval of amendments to the Constitution.
- g) Adoption of budgets to fund the work of the Association.
- h) Adoption of policies relating to the work of the Association.
- i) Conduct business arising from our mutual love and concern for each other and the glory of God.

B. Association Officers

1. The ruling body of the Association shall be made up of the voting messengers of the member churches. The messengers shall elect not fewer than three nor more than fifteen members to an Administrative Council. The churches may submit nominees to the Administrative Council four months before the General Assembly. The Administrative Council will then present the final list of nominees to be voted on at the General Assembly.

2. The Administrative Council shall be made up of members with staggered two year terms who may serve up to four consecutive terms. They must be chosen from those who are or have been church

officers and who are presently members of Association churches. Council members shall annually reaffirm publically in writing their full subscription to the doctrinal standards of the Association (see Appendix #1).

3. At their first meeting after each General Assembly, the Administrative Council will choose a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer. The officers of the Association shall serve as trustees for any property held by the Association.
4. All minutes of the Administrative Council must be sent to all member churches.
5. Other officers and committees may be appointed as necessary, at the direction of the Association, for the performance of specific tasks on behalf of the Association.
6. The Association may employ an administrator and such support staff as necessary.

C. Incorporation

The Association will incorporate in the state of Georgia.

D. Dissolution

In the event of dissolution, no member church or individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any assets of this Association. Any assets of the Association at the time of dissolution shall be used to pay any outstanding debts. Any remaining assets shall be distributed to non-profit Christian organizations or ministries chosen by the remaining members at the time.

VII. Closing Statement

Ephesians 3:20-21 "Now to Him who is able above all things to do exceeding abundantly what we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, to Him is the glory in the assembly in Christ Jesus, to all the generations of the age of the ages. Amen."

Appendix # 1

What Is "Full Subscription?" Submitted by Dr. James M. Renihan

Confessional subscription employs three main terms in its nomenclature: absolute, strict/full, and loose. ARBCA has adopted the middle position. According to Dr. Morton H. Smith, "strict or full subscription takes at face value" the terminology used in adopting a confession of faith.

In an article entitled "The Case for Full Subscription" (in *The Practice of Confessional Subscription*, ed. by David Hall, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995; pages 185-6), Dr. Smith provides some helpful insights [albeit in a Presbyterian context with a much more developed tradition of discussion of the issue than among Baptists]. He says, "Note some things that full subscription does not mean. First, it does not insist that all of the teachings of the Confession . . . are of equal importance (just as not all of the teachings in the Bible are of equal importance). The full subscriptionist recognizes that some doctrines are more foundational than others, in accord with the Biblical example. Positively, the full subscriptionist believes that in professing that the Confession . . . [is] his confession, he is subscribing to all of the doctrines in the Confession . . . they are all part of the system of doctrine Second, full subscription does not require the adoption of every word of the Confession . . . but positively believes that we are adopting every doctrine or teaching of the Confession"

One should note the language found in the agreement signed by the messengers of the founding churches in Mesa, Arizona in March, 1997; in the ARBCA constitution; and in the application for membership. The first states, "We declare that our primary rule of faith and practice is the inerrant Word of God, and adopt as our subordinate standards the excellent document commonly known as the London Baptist Confession of 1689, and the Constitution of this Association." The second states, "While we hold tenaciously to the inerrant and infallible Word of God as found in the sixty-six books of the Bible (this being our final source of faith and practice), we embrace and adopt the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 as a faithful expression of the doctrine taught in the Scriptures. This Confession is the doctrinal standard of the Association," and in the third the applying church signs this statement: "We accept the London Confession of Faith of 1689 as an accurate and reliable expression of what the Scriptures teach and the faith we confess." In each case, the member churches commit themselves to the Confession as a whole. We maintain the primacy of the Scriptures, and "embrace and adopt" the Confession as a truthful expression of our convictions with regard to the details of Scripture.

Taken at face value, these words imply, even though they do not explicitly state, strict, or full subscription. This does not mean that we treat every doctrine in the Confession as if it were equally important, but we do commit ourselves to all of the doctrines of the Confession. In addition, as Dr. Smith says so well, "full subscription does not require the adoption of every word of the Confession or Catechisms, but positively believes that we are adopting every doctrine or teaching of the Confession or Catechisms." This is an important distinction, and needs to be understood. It is possible for an individual, a church, or an association to be cautious about the wording used to express a specific doctrine without denying the doctrine that wording seeks to define. Full subscription honestly adopts all of the doctrines expressed in the confessional formulation. In the case of the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America, this means that by subscribing to the document commonly known as the London Baptist Confession of 1689, we receive all of the doctrines contained in it as true, founded on the Word of God.

(This statement was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly at La Mirada, CA in 1999.)

Appendix #2

A Theological Position Paper Concerning the Divine Impassibility of God

Adopted by Unanimous Consent by the Messengers of the Member Churches September 22, 2017

The *Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* asserts that God is “without body, parts, or passions” (2LCF 2.1). As an association of churches, we affirm that the position taught by the *Confession* is the traditional and classical doctrine of divine impassibility, which is defined as:

[That divine attribute whereby] God does not experience emotional changes either from within or effected by his relationship to creation. He is not changed from within or without; he remains unchanged and unchanging both prior and subsequent to creation.¹

We further affirm that *only* the classical doctrine of divine impassibility is compatible with the doctrine of God as revealed in Scripture and as articulated in *The Baptist Confession of Faith*. Therefore, full subscription to our *Confession* requires adherence to classical impassibility without any reservations of conscience.

Our God is the great unchangeable “I AM” (Exodus 3:14) who does not experience inner turmoil or pain, for nothing can disrupt His infinite happiness, whether coming from without or enacted from within. Nor does God repent or change His mind, for as the Prophet Samuel said “...he is not a man, that he should repent” (1 Samuel 15:29b, KJV). Indeed, it is precisely because God does not have passions or affections like a man that Israel was not consumed for their sinful rebellion against Him, for He says through the Prophet Malachi, “I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob” (Malachi 3:6). Therefore, Scriptures that speak of God changing His mind (1 Samuel 15:11), experiencing inner turmoil (Genesis 6:6), or acquiring knowledge He previously did not have (Genesis 18:20-21; 22:11-12), must be interpreted as anthropomorphic or anthropopathic language. By using such expressions God is accommodating Himself to our capacity by speaking in analogical language, revealing His immutable attributes as if He were a passionate and mutable creature. We affirm that the Second Person of the Godhead took on human passions in His incarnation, but that these passions exist exclusively in His human nature, not in His Divine essence (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:14-16). We also affirm that, just as the Bible uses anthropomorphic and anthropopathic language without qualification, even so it is right and proper to use such unqualified language in the preaching and teaching of the Word.

We reject all forms of *Open Theism* and *Process Theology* as heretical departures from the historic and orthodox Christian faith. We also reject the erroneous and dangerous teachings of *Qualified Impassibility*, whether in the form of positing a duality in God between His transcendence and His imminence; or by asserting that God does indeed have passions which are perfectly governed by Him according to His own sovereign decree. These teachings are exegetically unsound and deny the doctrines of divine simplicity and impassibility affirmed by our *Confession of Faith*, and therefore are outside the boundaries of full subscription. The confessional position is not that God has passions outside of His essence which He perfectly governs, but that God has no passions that need to be governed. All that is in God (always and in all circumstances) is God. God is all that God is all the time. He says what He says and He does what He does because He is who He is.

For a further articulation and defense of our position we recommend the following sources:

1. ARBCA, *A Position Paper Concerning the Doctrine of Divine Impassibility*; <http://www.arbca.com/divine-impassibility> (Accessed April 6, 2017)
2. Samuel Renihan, *God Without Passions: A Primer*; (Palmdale, CA: RBAP, 2015).
3. Samuel Renihan, *God Without Passions: A Reader*; (Palmdale, CA: RBAP, 2015).
4. Ronald S. Baines, Richard C. Barcellos, James P. Butler, Stefan T. Lindblad, James M. Renihan, eds., *Confessing the Impassible God: The Biblical, Classical, & Confessional Doctrine of Divine Impassibility*; (Palmdale, CA: RBAP, 2015).
5. Peter Sanlon, *Simply God: Recovering the Classical Trinity*; (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2014).

¹ ARBCA, *A Position Paper Concerning the Doctrine of Divine Impassibility*; <http://www.arbca.com/divine-impassibility> (Accessed July 14, 2017)

Appendix #3

Rules for Parliamentary Procedure at the General Assembly & Business Meeting of the Southeastern United States Association of Confessional Baptists.

In our General Assemblies ecclesiastical and business meetings, matters shall be transacted in a biblical and ecclesiastical manner. Therefore, our General Assemblies should not be bound to observe detailed parliamentary rules. These may be proper in other gatherings, but do not fit into the pattern of church assemblies which demand a large measure of freedom in discussion and action.

A few general rules of order, however, will insure all things are done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). These rules are in keeping with the mind-set of our Particular Baptist forefathers and the London Baptist General Assemblies of the 17th century.

On the morning of the first day of the General Assembly, the messengers of the member churches shall be recognized and seated. Any associate members, fraternal delegates and other visitors, or guests, who wish to be formally recognized, shall then be acknowledged and welcomed.

The General Assembly shall consist of worship services, sermons, reports from the churches, missionaries, and theological institution, committees appointed by the Association (viz., Memorial Committee, Financial Committee, Historical Committee . . .) a Business Meeting, and any other matters the churches deem necessary.

I. Calling the General Assembly to Order

- A. The pastor of the host church shall call the General Assembly to order.
- B. Following the decision of the Administrative Council, the pastor shall nominate the recommended man as the Chairman of the General Assembly.

II. The Chairman of the General Assembly

- A. The Chairman elect shall come to the podium and assume the Chair of leadership.
- B. He shall nominate a Secretary of the General Assembly, who should be seconded and approved by a 2/3 vote.
- C. He shall ask the Secretary to call the roll of the messengers of the member churches.\
- D. He shall nominate a Vice-Chairman, which should be seconded and approved by a 2/3 vote. The Vice-Chairman would only temporarily assume the Chair, should the Chairman need to relinquish it: for example in order to speak.
- E. He shall insure that all business is transacted properly and expeditiously and that messengers observe the rules of order and decorum.
- F. He shall welcome fraternal delegates, or other guests of the General Assembly, and shall read greetings and regrets received.
- G. He shall place before the General Assembly every motion made and seconded. He shall clearly state every question before a vote is taken.
- H. In case he feels impelled to express himself on a pending question, he shall temporarily relinquish the Chair to the Vice-Chairman while doing so. Once he has spoken, he shall again assume the Chair.
- I. He may speak, while holding the Chair, to state matters of fact or to inform the General Assembly regarding points of order.
- J. He shall have, and duly receive, the prerogative of declaring a motion or person out of order. In case his ruling is disputed, the General Assembly shall sustain or reject the ruling by majority vote.
- K. The Chairman shall not vote on a motion. When a vote is a tie, the Chairman may cast the deciding vote.
- L. The Chairman shall not preside in any matter that concerns himself.

M. The Chairman rules on all points of order. His ruling may be reversed by a majority of the General Assembly if any messenger dissatisfied with the ruling of the Chair appeals to the floor.

N. The Chairman shall close the General Assembly with appropriate remarks and with prayer, or call on one of the messengers to close in prayer.

III. The Vice-Chairman of the General Assembly

A. Should the Chairman need to permanently step down from the Chair at the General Assembly, the Vice-Chairman shall assume all his duties and privileges.

B. The Vice-Chairman shall render all possible assistance to the Chairman as circumstances may require.

IV. The Secretary of the General Assembly

A. The Secretary shall keep an exact record of the General Assembly proceedings. This shall contain:

1. Opening and closing of the General Assembly and roll call of messengers;
2. All main motions whether carried or lost; all appeals whether sustained or lost;
3. All decisions of the General Assembly;
4. The Treasurers Report and adopted Budgets of the Association;
5. The names of fraternal delegates, observers or visitors, and others who spoke.

B. The record shall not contain:

1. Any motion rejected, except it be a main motion;
2. Any motion that is withdrawn.

C. The Minutes shall be examined and proofread by the Administrative Council before being sent to all the member churches.

V. The Messengers of the Churches to the General Assembly

A. Each member church may have up to two men as voting messengers.

B. Late messengers are seated only if they raise their hand, are acknowledged by the Chairman, and recorded by the Secretary.

C. Only seated messengers shall be allowed to vote. Fraternal delegates and Associate Members are allowed to speak as recognized by the chairman.

VI. Manners of Addressing the General Assembly

A. Definitions

1. Appeal

An appeal is a procedure by which a decision or action of a General Assembly or Chairman is brought to the appropriate General Assembly for review in the light of the Holy Scriptures, the Association's Confession of Faith, Constitution, or existing policies. An appeal may be made immediately during a meeting or at another time in writing sent to the Administrative Council.

2. Communication

A communication is a document presenting information, ideas, thoughts, opinions, complaints, or objections for consideration by the General Assembly. (A communication is distinguished from an overture in that an overture proposes specific action, and a communication does not.) One type of communication is a protest, which

expresses a complaint or objection to a decision or course of action agreed upon by the General Assembly. A General Assembly is not required to take any action with respect to a communication. Any communication must be submitted to the Administrative Council before being brought to the General Assembly. The Administrative Council shall not have veto power over any local church's desire to submit a communication to the General Assembly.

3. Overture

An overture is a formal written request sent to the General Assembly requesting adoption or amendment of a policy or other legislative action taken by the General Assembly. Any overture must be sent by a member church and submitted to the Administrative Council before being brought to the General Assembly. The Administrative Council shall not have veto power over any local church's desire to submit an overture to the General Assembly.

4. Report

A report is a document of an appointed Association committee indicating the work performed in response to its mandate and presenting recommendations for General Assembly action.

B. Any of these may be part of the business of a General Assembly.

VII. Closed Sessions of the General Assembly

An Executive Session shall ordinarily mean a session of the General Assembly at which only the messengers recognized in our Rules for Parliamentary Procedure are present. The General Assembly shall not exercise the right to go into executive session except in unusual circumstances, or delicate situations of discipline, or when such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honor or the welfare of certain churches.

VIII. Motions Made in the General Assembly

A. A Main Motion is a motion that presents a certain subject for the General Assembly's consideration or action.

1. It is acceptable under the following conditions:

- a. If the mover has been recognized by the Chairman;
- b. If it is seconded by a messenger of the General Assembly;
- c. If it has been recognized as acceptable by the Chairman;
- d. If, at the request of the Chairman, it is presented in written form.

2. It is not acceptable under the following conditions:

- a. If it conflicts with the Holy Scriptures, our Association's Confession, Constitution, or existing policy.
- b. If it is substantially the same as a motion already rejected by the General Assembly.

B. A Motion to Amend

1. A motion to amend is a proposal to alter a Main Motion in language or in meaning before action is taken on the motion.
2. A motion to amend is permissible and is called a Secondary Motion.
3. A motion to amend may propose to strike out, to insert, or to substitute certain words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs in the Main Motion.
4. A motion to amend is out of order if it nullifies the Main Motion or is not germane to it.
5. Only one motion to amend a Main Motion is in order at one time. Hence a motion to amend an amendment is out of order. Rather, persuasive argumentation for an alternative Secondary Motion should be presented, a vote

on the standing Secondary Motion should be taken, and, presuming defeat of the standing Secondary Motion, a different motion to amend should be presented.

C. A Motion to Defer or Withhold Action

1. When the General Assembly deems advisable, it may decide to table a motion temporarily. Tabling a motion implies that the General Assembly will resume consideration on the motion at a later hour or date.
2. If a General Assembly prefers not to take action regarding a matter, it may adopt a motion to withhold action.

D. Objection to a Ruling of the Chairman

If any messenger is not satisfied with the ruling of the Chairman, the matter is put to the General Assembly for decision. The General Assembly will vote to sustain or overrule the Objection.

E. Right of Protest

It is the right of any messenger or church to protest against any decision of the Chair or of the General Assembly. Protests should be registered immediately, during, or following the session of the General Assembly in which the matter concerned was acted upon. Protests must be registered individually, not in groups, to the Secretary.

Messengers may, if they feel the need, ask to have their negative vote recorded. Such requests must be made immediately after the vote is taken.

F. Call for a Division of the Question

At the request of one or more messengers of the General Assembly, a motion consisting of more than one part must be divided and voted upon separately, unless the General Assembly decides that this is not necessary.

G. Other Motions

Other customary motions are also permitted including motions to recess, to adjourn, to table, to take from the table, for the Question, to postpone indefinitely, to raise a point of order, to repeal, to reconsider, etc.

IX. Discussion in the General Assembly

A. At the Business Meeting, or any other given meeting of the General Assembly, discussion can and may be held regarding certain subjects or matters of interest to the Association.

B. Discussion is allowable if:

1. The Administrative Council deems it necessary or desirable;
2. A speaker is recognized and given permission by the Chairman.

C. The rules for discussion are as follows:

1. If a messenger having obtained the floor should fail to adhere to the point of order under discussion or should become unnecessarily lengthy in his remark, the Chairman shall call his attention to these faults and insist on pointedness and brevity.
2. If any member has spoken twice on the pending subject or issue, others who have not yet spoken twice shall ordinarily be given priority by the Chairman.
3. The Chairman may set a time limit on discussions.
4. When the Chairman believes that a subject has been discussed or debated sufficiently, or the discussion is not unto edification, he may propose cessation of that particular topic of discussion.
5. If the majority of the General Assembly sustains his proposal, discussion shall cease or if it is a voting matter, the Question shall be called for and the vote shall be taken.

6. Any messenger of the General Assembly, when he deems a matter to have been discussed or debated sufficiently, may move to close the discussion by calling for the Question. Those who call for the Question shall be recognized in the same manner as others who gain the floor of the General Assembly. The vote on the motion to cease discussion shall be taken at once. Should a majority be in favor of ceasing discussion or debate, the discussion shall cease.

X. Voting in the General Assembly

The various methods of voting are:

A. By voice (Aye or No). This is the ordinary method of voting.

B. By raising the hands. Whenever the Chairman is unable to determine from the aye or no votes which opinion has prevailed, or if the Chairman's judgment is questioned by any messenger of the General Assembly, the Chairman shall request the messengers to raise their hands in favor of or opposed to the motion. The Secretary shall count the hands and report his finding immediately to the General Assembly.

C. By polling the messengers of the General Assembly. Whenever the Chairman is unable to determine from the aye or no votes which opinion has prevailed, or if the Chairman's judgment is questioned by any messenger of the General Assembly, the Chairman shall request the Secretary to poll or call the roll of the messengers of the churches and give an immediate report to the General Assembly.

D. By ballot. In critical cases of discipline and other matters of critical nature and of great importance it is advisable that the General Assembly decide to vote by ballot.

XI. Revision of these Rules

These Rules for Parliamentary Procedure may be suspended, amended, revised, or abrogated by a majority vote of the General Assembly.

END