

September 17, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ of the Churches of the KNCSB,

In March 2021, a Constitution and Bylaws Special Committee consisting of Sandy Peterson (Chair), Joe Funderburk, David Gibbs, Voyt Lynn, and Janette Payne, together with David Manner and Peg Davis from KNCSB staff, was tasked with performing, “a comprehensive review of the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists Constitution, By-Laws, and Mission Board Bylaws and recommend amendments to these documents.”

Since receiving this charge, the special committee has worked diligently toward that end, and in partial fulfillment of our task, we present the attached proposed Constitution and Bylaws for consideration by the Convention in Annual Meeting, October 11-12, 2021.

As we began to analyze current Constitution and Bylaws documents, it became readily apparent that significant overhaul was needed. The current documents often lacked organization and reflected fragmentation from years of piecemeal editing. There were also various anachronisms that needed to be updated. Most importantly, some foundations upon which significant structural components of our Convention are built were lacking or have proven to be difficult to maintain.

We believe that you will find that our proposal provides great continuity with the current Constitution and Bylaws while presenting carefully considered solutions to many of its problems. However, because we have reorganized much of the material, the proposal appears significantly different from the current documents. Consequently, it is our recommendation to the messengers of the 75th Anniversary Annual Meeting, October 11-12, 2021, that we strike the existing KNCSB Constitution and Bylaws documents and replace them with these proposed Constitution and Bylaws. Although our committee’s work is not yet finished, this proposal marks an important first step in revising our Constitution and Bylaws such that they can be efficient and effective for the future of KNCSB.

To help the messengers to the KNCSB Annual Meeting identify and consider some of the changes we are recommending in our proposal, we have highlighted below those major changes which we believe are most significant. In navigating the attached “Constitution & Bylaws Committee Proposal,” please be aware that our proposal consists of twenty-eight pages comprised by four different documents as shown below.

CONTENTS OF CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS COMMITTEE PROPOSAL

Proposal Pages 1-6..... Committee’s proposed revisions to the KNCSB Constitution and Bylaws

Proposal Page 7.....Implementation notes on how to effect certain changes which would be necessitated by the adoption of the proposed revisions to the KNCSB Constitution and Bylaws

Proposal Pages 8-15.... Current KNCSB Constitution and Bylaws

Proposal Pages 16-28... Comparative Analysis between the current KNCSB Constitution and Bylaws documents and the Committee’s proposed revisions to the KNCSB Constitution and Bylaws (analysis performed by Microsoft Word software).

Most Significant Changes in the Constitution & Bylaws Committee Proposal

Article III – Statement of Faith.

Regarding defining BF&M 2000 as our Statement of Faith

Rationale: Please note that this statement does not require affiliated congregations to adopt the *Baptist Faith and Message* 2000 as their own statement of faith to maintain affiliation. It simply provides clarity as to which edition of the Baptist Faith and Message KNCSB would point to should the need arise to clarify our doctrinal beliefs. This statement would cause KNCSB to use the *Baptist Faith and Message* 2000 as the doctrinal statement with which newly petitioning congregations are asked to give evidence of being in harmony.

Article IV – Membership Section 1.

Regarding the Designation of Partner and Associate Churches (Annual meeting delegates).

Rationale: Throughout the years of KNCSB, we have used membership information in the ACP to identify the number of messengers allowed to represent the churches at the annual meeting. Often, the office will have to call churches to get this information at the last minute to seat messengers. We propose a simpler process.

Allocating a flat number of messengers based upon a church's affiliation with KNCSB would be a simpler and more efficient approach. In this scenario, churches have either the status of partner or associate. Partner churches may have up to twelve messengers; associate churches may have up to two messengers.

In the age of encouraging more participation at the annual meeting, this would provide for a broad diversity of messengers and interest in the equipping work KNCSB does.

Instead of a mission having only the status of "guests" under the current bylaws, the associate congregation may have two voting messengers.

Article IV – Membership Section 2.

Regarding the number of messengers allowed for each Partner and Associate Congregation.

Rationale: It may seem that twelve messengers from any one partner church may seem too many. Under the current bylaws, if a larger church wants to bring all the messengers allowed, it can have no more than twelve messengers.

For example, under our current bylaws, a church with a membership of 550 resident members, will have three messengers for the first fifty resident members, and one for every fifty thereafter, or a total of thirteen messengers, capped at 12. So, this is not a change for the larger churches.

This is a change for churches which may not have a large membership. Under the current bylaws, a church of 272 resident members, will have three for the first fifty, and five for the next 222 resident members, for a total of eight messengers.

The dilemma under these two scenarios is not the first three messengers. It is determining how many additional messengers allowed. Hence the rub. By moving to the Partner Church designation, all Partner Churches may have up to twelve messengers at the outset.

Associate Churches shall be entitled to two messengers. This may include a wide variety of churches, including mission churches or church plants. If a newly planted SBC congregation wants to attend the Annual Meeting, they should be invited to attend and vote.

Article VI – Officers, Trustees, Executive Director-Treasurer Section 3

Regarding the succession to the office of KNCSB President in the event of a vacancy.

Proposal: “*Should the President vacate the office for any reason, the Vice-President shall assume the vacated office. If both President and Vice-President offices are vacated at the same time, the Mission Board shall conduct elections to fill the unexpired terms for both offices. If the office of Parliamentarian is vacated, the President shall bring a nomination to the Executive Committee for approval. All other vacated offices shall be filled by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Mission Board members present and voting at a regular or called meeting as they deem necessary.*”

Rationale: The current practice is not optimal whereby the Vice-President, and/or Recording Secretary, and/or Assistant Recording Secretary simply “step(s) up” into the next office in the event of any vacancy. The nature of each office is different and carries different responsibilities. While we do believe that it is reasonable and beneficial to the Convention to expect that one serving as Vice-President should be prepared to serve as President, it must not be assumed that an individual willing and able to hold the office of Recording Secretary or Assistant Recording Secretary would be willing or able to assume the responsibilities of any other office. Consequently, we recommend that succession be limited to the Vice-President becoming President in the event of such a vacancy. Other officer vacancies, excepting a vacancy of Parliamentarian, may be filled via election by the Mission Board, where a candidate’s willingness and ability to fill a particular office may be better determined through the election process.

Article VII – Executive Committee Section 1.

Regarding the service of the Past President on the Executive Committee and Mission Board.

Proposal: “*The Executive Committee shall be a standing committee of the Convention, comprised of the Convention officers, the immediate Past President having served at least one full term, and one member of the Mission Board from each affiliated Association, to be elected by the Convention.*”

Article VIII, Section 1, (a), 2.

Proposal: “*The Mission Board shall be comprised of the following: ...The immediate Past President having served at least one full term....*”

Rationale: Currently, the KNCSB Constitution provides that, “The immediate Past President shall also be a member of the Mission Board in an ex-officio capacity provided at least one full term as President has been served” (cf. Article VI, Section 1, (b)). The committee feels that it is important that both the Executive Committee and Mission Board retain the counsel of the individual who most recently completed a full term as President prior to the one currently holding the office. This will typically help to give both bodies enhanced stability with a longer-term understanding of what has been done in the past and how it has been accomplished. This also has the benefit of giving the Executive Committee an odd number of members so as better to guard against deadlocked voting.

Article VIII.

Regarding the consolidation of Mission Board and Executive Committee information.

Proposal: See the Report.

Rationale: In currently adopted documents, information regarding the Mission Board and Executive Committee is scattered throughout the Constitution and Bylaws as well as another document titled, *Mission Board By-Laws*. This material is not well organized. In various documents. It seems that there was an anticipation that the KNCSB Mission Board would incorporate as another entity (thus having its own bylaws, etc.). Further, there is not a consistent understanding of whether the Executive Committee is a committee of the Mission Board which would report to the Mission Board, or whether it is a standing committee of the Convention that reports to the Convention yet informs and collaborates with the Mission Board. We have sought to provide clarity to these things.

First, the Mission Board is not an independently incorporated body; it is a board of the KNCSB. Material that had been separated out into *Mission Board By-Laws* has been organized and incorporated as appropriate into our Constitution and Bylaws. Article VIII has been organized into sections dealing with composition, responsibilities, and meetings of the Mission Board.

The Executive Committee has been defined as a standing committee of the KNCSB. Thus, it is rightly able to report to the Convention in Annual Meeting while providing information to the Mission Board and collaborating with the Mission Board. We felt it important to make provision on the Executive Committee for all affiliated Associations, and a plan to implement this has been prepared. Further, we strove to clarify that, in general, the Executive Committee is responsible for the Convention's administration while the Mission Board is responsible for the Convention's adherence to its mission.

The committee will continue to work into the next year to ensure that these Convention structures are functioning well and providing optimal guidance and administration for KNCSB and its ministries.

Article X, Section 2.

Regarding the identification of associations affiliated with KNCSB.

Proposal: *“KNCSB recognizes and affirms the right of churches to associate together; however, only associations which are recognized by the Convention and herein listed as being affiliated with KNCSB are entitled to representation on the KNCSB Mission Board and KNCSB Executive Committee.”* (Note that the twelve current associations within KNCSB are listed by name).

Rationale: KNCSB deeply values the vital partnerships that we have with the Associations within our Convention. This is reflected both in current practice and in the committee's proposal, as our Associations play a defining role in fundamental Convention structures. In the committee's proposal, Associations are guaranteed representation on the Mission Board, the Executive Committee, and the Nominating Committee. As a result, it is important that KNCSB retain the right to determine whether an association of churches ought to be entitled to such representation. KNCSB recognizes and affirms the twelve affiliated Associations listed. Recognition of any new association of churches as being affiliated with KNCSB and thus entitled to representation on the Mission Board, Executive Committee, and Nominating Committee would require a two-thirds vote of messengers at an Annual Meeting.

Article VII – Executive Committee Section 4.

Proposal: The Executive Committee serving as Resolutions Committee for the Annual Meeting

Rationale: At the Annual Meeting, normally resolutions come in at the last minute, have no opportunity to be fully investigated and debated by the Resolutions Committee, and may result in the adoption of a Resolution which may NOT be in the best interests of KNCSB.

By having proposed Resolutions be submitted by August 1 to the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee will have optimal time and resources for thought and debate on the matter and determine its best conclusion.

Proposal: The Order of Business Committee will also serve the function of the Time, Place, Preacher Committee.

Rationale: At the Annual Meeting, the Order of Business Committee does all the planning for the convention throughout the year prior to the convention. This will give appropriate time to consider any changes necessary to be done if the convention needs to change the place, time, or Preacher.

Article X – Partnerships Section 3.

Proposal: Move WMU from a stand-alone article to a section under Article X - Partnerships.

Rationale: WMU is the only SBC program singled out in the Constitution or By-laws. The committee was not aware of a need to keep it as such or to treat WMU differently than other programs.

Affirming and including WMU under Article X - Partnerships seems a more appropriate location.

The 2020 constitution defines WMU as a department of KNCSB, but there are no other departments listed or defined in the constitution.

The current Section 2 of Article VII insures the autonomy of the WMU organization “subject to the approval of the Convention.” The committee was not sure that KNCSB has any oversight of WMU. Being in harmony with KNCSB is true of every partnership the Convention forms. The proposed change affirms WMU and recognizes the autonomy of WMU.

The Bylaws Committee,

Sanford Peterson, Chair