

**CONSTITUTION
& BY-LAWS**



**CARIBBEAN BAPTIST
FELLOWSHIP**

*Adopted 1995
First Revision 2001
Second Revision, General Assembly, Guyana 2014*

PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CARIBBEAN BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

In recognition of our personal faith in Jesus Christ which unites us in fellowship and service; and desiring that this body, the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, be governed by the tenets, ideals and standards as set down in Scripture and commonly embraced by historic and authentic Baptist bodies around the world; and seeking to conserve those inherent liberties of each member body while granting freedom of action to the said body in its relations with other groups of like faith and order; we declare and establish this constitution.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Baptists have existed in various territories of the Caribbean since the 1780's. For reasons deeply-rooted in Caribbean history and geography, which contributed to insularity rather than unity, there was very limited opportunity for meeting each other and working together.

At the eleventh Congress of the Baptist World Alliance held in Miami, Florida, U.S.A. in June 1965, and at the instance of the Reverend Dr. Ruben Lopes of Brazil, a proposal to launch a five-year programme of evangelism in the Americas and the Caribbean was accepted.

The "Crusade of the Americas" served to bring Baptists of the Caribbean region closer and revealed the need as well as the opportunity and possibility for a closer working relationship.

At the invitation of the Jamaica Baptist Union, a meeting of Caribbean Baptist leaders was held at the Baptist Conference Centre in Duncans, Trelawny, Jamaica, June 1-3, 1969, where thirty-seven representatives of fourteen territories voted to recommend the formation of an organization to be known as the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship.

The organization was formally constituted at a meeting held at the Conference Centre of the Florida Baptist Convention, Lake Yale, Florida, U.S.A., on April 13, 1970, comprised of the following thirteen member bodies: Bermuda Baptist Mission, Bahamas National Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention, Jamaica Baptist Union, Puerto Rican Baptist Association, St. Kitts Baptist work, Guadeloupe Baptist Mission, the Guyana Baptist Mission, Haitian Baptist Convention, Cayman Islands Baptist Mission, St. Thomas (U.S.V.I.) Baptist Association, St. John's (U.S.V.I.) Baptist Association, the Baptist Union of Trinidad & Tobago and the Trinidad Baptist Mission.

Application sent to the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee for recognition of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship as a regional entity in that body was formally approved at the BWA meeting held in Tokyo, Japan in July 1970.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CARIBBEAN BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

ARTICLE I – NAME

The official name of this organization shall be the **CARIBBEAN BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP**, hereinafter referred to as the CBF.

ARTICLE II – DECLARATION OF FAITH

The Caribbean Baptist Fellowship is a voluntary association of Baptist entities bound together by the following commonly-held tenets of faith and practice:

Belief in:

1. A sovereign and loving God who reveals Himself as Creator of the universe and Supreme Lord of history and human destiny; who redeems humankind through personal faith in Jesus Christ; and who enables each believer and the church to fulfil their mission in the world through the work of the Holy Spirit;
2. The Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God and the final authority in all matters of faith, conduct and practice;
3. The Church as a community of believers who:
 - are united through personal faith in Jesus Christ;
 - observe the two scriptural ordinances of believers' baptism and the Lord's Supper;
 - acknowledge the centrality of preaching in the proclamation of the gospel;

- covenant together to obey the teaching of Jesus Christ as revealed in Holy Scripture;
- subscribe to the autonomy of the local Church and are committed to voluntary association and cooperation at various levels for the advancement of the kingdom of God; and
- believe the scriptural teaching that every Christian is commissioned and equipped by the Holy Spirit to participate in the mission of the Church to advance the kingdom of God on earth.

ARTICLE III – MISSION, GOALS AND FUNCTIONS

The Mission of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship is to encourage and facilitate the coming together of Caribbean Baptists at national and regional levels for worship, and for shared witness and ministry. To this end the CBF shall provide its member bodies with opportunities to be inspired, motivated, encouraged and equipped for service; and shall be an agent through which they can pool and channel their human and financial resources towards carrying out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and expressing in word and deed the love of God for every person within the Caribbean region and beyond.

In keeping with its Mission the CBF shall be committed to achieving the following goals:

1. The deepening of the spiritual life of all Christians;
2. The proclamation of the love of God for every person;

3. The making known of the truth that only through faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ, can there be true progress in the social, physical, economic and spiritual life of individuals, communities and nations.
4. Participating in the equipping of member bodies and churches to enable them to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ in their time and place.

In accordance with the above stated mission and goals, the CBF shall endeavour to fulfil the following purposes and functions:

1. Promote fellowship, cooperation and service among Baptists throughout the Caribbean, by means of correspondence, called meetings, study and the promotion of appropriate activities for the development of Christian maturity, ministry and witness.
2. Produce and promote the use of appropriate and culturally-relevant literature and media materials for the spiritual nurture of our people and the growth of our churches.
3. Encourage and coordinate efforts in evangelism, mission and church development designed to result in the strengthening of existing churches and the planting of new congregations.
4. Serve as a channel of communication, understanding and cooperation among Baptists within the region.
5. Seek as far as possible to come to the speedy assistance of persons in need both at regional and international levels.
6. Advance the study of Baptist beliefs, polity and practices.
7. Actively pursue the safeguarding of human rights, including religious liberty, justice and individual freedoms.

8. Be faithful to the biblical prophetic role and the historic Baptist tradition in addressing moral, social, economic and political issues as they affect human life and well-being.
9. Serve as the regional expression of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), encourage participation in its programmes and ministries and be a channel of communication between the BWA and the member bodies of the CBF.
10. Undertake such additional functions as the CBF may decide upon from time to time.

ARTICLE IV – ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1. MEMBERSHIP

The consenting Baptist groups listed in Historical Background, Item 5, and those admitted henceforth in the manner described below, shall constitute the member bodies of the CBF. Application for membership on the standard form must be in the hands of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer at least three months prior to the regular meeting of the Executive which will study and make appropriate recommendations to the General Assembly or Mid-term Assembly. Such application must normally be supported by the two member bodies nearest to the applicant's location. Said application must be approved by majority vote at a regular meeting of the General Assembly or Midterm Assembly.

SECTION 2. REPRESENTATION

Each member body of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship shall be afforded direct representation to the following official meetings of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship:

- The Midterm Assembly.
- The General Assembly.

Numerical representation shall be on the basis laid down in the By-laws. Representatives shall have the right to full participation through voice and vote.

SECTION 3. OTHER PARTICIPANTS

The CBF may establish the following categories of participants in its meetings, programmes and activities:

- Associate Members
- Friends of the CBF
- Observers

Such participants shall have a voice, but not vote, in the meetings of the CBF, and shall function in accordance with provisions laid down in the By-Laws from time to time.

SECTION 4. ADMINISTRATION

The affairs of the CBF shall be administered and governed through the following bodies:

- The Midterm Assembly
- The General Assembly
- The Executive
- The Officers

The composition, authority and functions of these bodies shall be as prescribed in the By-laws.

The term of service of officers, members of the executive and leaders of agencies, departments and standing committees shall normally be from one general assembly to the next. Except for the chief administrative officer, such office holders may not serve more than two consecutive terms before being required to demit office.

SECTION 5. FINANCES

All member bodies of the CBF shall be required to make financial contributions towards the cost of its operations. The CBF may from time to time designate other sources of funding as stated in the By-Laws.

SECTION 6. AGENCIES

Agencies with appropriate governing boards shall be established by the CBF as needed, and assigned specific functions. They shall be provided with the staff, facilities and resources necessary to fulfill their functions.

SECTION 7. DEPARTMENTS

Departments of Women, Men and Youth shall be established with powers to elect their own leaders and formulate their own constitutions, subject to the approval of the CBF meeting in General or Midterm Assembly.

SECTION 8. COMMITTEES

Standing Committees shall be elected for the purpose of carrying out specific functions assigned them by the CBF. The chairperson and vice chairperson of each standing committee shall be elected by the General Assembly.

Ad Hoc Committees shall be appointed as needed.

SECTION 9. MEETINGS

There shall be four statutory meetings of the Fellowship, as under:

1. General Assembly, every five years
2. A Midterm Assembly, in the second or third year following a General Assembly.

3. An Executive, annually and, in special circumstances, at the instance of the Officers.

4. The Officers, annually, and as circumstances require.

The date and place of the General Assembly and Midterm Assembly shall normally be determined by the General Assembly or Midterm Assembly upon the recommendation of the Executive at least two years in advance. Where circumstances make this impossible the Executive shall make the decision upon the recommendation of the officers. The Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall keep the constituency duly informed of these events. In order to transact business, the quorum for a meeting of the Executive shall be fifty percent plus one of those persons entitled to sit on this body. The quorum for a meeting of the Midterm Assembly and the General Assembly must be:

- at least one official representative of at least one-third of the member bodies;
- fifty percent plus one of those other persons entitled to sit in the Midterm Assembly and the General Assembly by virtue of their position as listed in By-Laws Article II, Sections 3 and 4.

The President or a Vice President and the Executive Secretary-Treasurer or someone duly appointed in this capacity must be included in the quorum for these meetings.

ARTICLE V – BY-LAWS

The General Assembly or the Midterm Assembly shall establish appropriate By-Laws to the Constitution.

ARTICLE VI – RULES OF ORDER

All meetings of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship shall be governed by the Rules of Order currently in force (as attached hereto).

ARTICLE VII – DISSOLUTION

In the event that the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship should be dissolved or should cease to exist as an organization, any and all remaining assets shall become the property of the Baptist World Alliance of which it is a regional fellowship.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments to the constitution shall be presented to the General Assembly or Midterm Assembly for consideration and decision upon any but the final day of a regularly scheduled or extraordinary meeting. Such proposals are to be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer for consideration by the Executive; subsequently distributed to all member bodies for their consideration; and tabled at a meeting of the General Assembly, or the Midterm Assembly or of the Executive in years when the General Assembly or Midterm Assembly does not meet, at least one year prior to the regularly scheduled or extraordinary meeting at which a decision may be taken. To be passed, a proposed amendment must receive a two-thirds vote of those present and voting.

BY-LAWS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CARIBBEAN BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS

A. Member Bodies

Membership in the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship (hereinafter Fellowship of CBF) shall be open to all bona fide Baptist entities in the Caribbean region on the condition that they subscribe to the declaration of faith and support the purpose and function of the Fellowship, as set out in the Constitution. Such entities shall normally consist of churches cooperating with each other and located in a given country or geographical area.

Application for membership in the CBF shall be made and dealt with in the manner laid down in the Constitution, Article IV, Section 1.

B. Associate Members

Associate Membership will be offered to Baptist churches and organized Baptist groups within the Caribbean region (inclusive of Baptist colleges, seminaries and cooperating mission organizations), as well as Baptist churches and groups in the Caribbean Diaspora with a significant number of persons of Caribbean origin in their membership, who desire to relate to and cooperate with the CBF. They shall be expected to subscribe to the declaration of faith of the Fellowship and to support its purpose and function as set out in the Constitution.

Application for associate membership shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary Treasurer for presentation to the Executive. Upon approval by the Executive, the application shall be presented to a General or Midterm Assembly for acceptance.

C. Friends of the CBF

The CBF may establish a category of supporters known as Friends of the CBF to designate and recognize individuals and churches that have shown particular interest in the work of the CBF, contributed directly to its budget, or rendered special service to the CBF. Such individuals or churches may or may not be members or affiliates of CBF member bodies.

An individual or church having met the conditions laid down in written policy guidelines shall be designated “Friends of the CBF” upon recommendation of the CBF Executive and approval of the Midterm or General Assembly. Such policy guidelines shall be prepared by the Executive and presented to the Midterm or General Assembly for approval from time to time.

SECTION 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Member Bodies

Each member body shall be expected to play a full and active role in the total life of the Fellowship. In particular, each shall be expected to:

1. Ensure representation at all duly called meetings of the Midterm Assembly and the General Assembly.
2. Make annual reports through the Executive Secretary-Treasurer, as provided for on an appropriate form or in an appropriate format.

3. Make contributions to the annual budget of the Fellowship towards the effective implantation of its program and ministry
4. Promote and implement the aims, objectives and programme of the Fellowship in its member churches and in its respective country or area.

B. Associate Members

Associate Members shall be:

1. Invited to attend all meetings of the Midterm and General Assembly, where they shall be entitled to voice, but not vote.
2. Expected to make contributions to the annual budget of the Fellowship towards the effective implementation of its programme and ministry.
3. Encouraged to promote and participate in the programmes of the Fellowship in its churches and/or institutions in their respective countries or areas.

C. Friends of the CBF

Officially designated “Friends of the CBF” shall be:

1. Invited to attend all meetings of the Midterm and General Assembly, where they shall be entitled to voice, but not vote.
2. Expected to make such financial contributions towards the programme and ministry of the CBF as may be laid down in the approved policy guidelines, such contributions being a condition for maintaining the status of “Friend of the CBF”.

3. Encouraged to participate in the programmes and ministry of the CBF and serve as ambassadors of the CBF in their respective churches and countries.

SECTION 3. WITHDRAWAL

Failure of a member body, without due cause and explanation, to attend and participate in duly called meetings of the Fellowship, to make annual reports, and to contribute to the annual budget over a period of three consecutive years may be interpreted as withdrawal from the Fellowship. The Officers and Executive shall make appropriate efforts to restore the body to active participation. If these efforts fail, the Executive may recommend to the Midterm Assembly or the General Assembly that the body be dropped from the list of members of the Fellowship.

ARTICLE II – ADMINISTRATION

The composition and responsibilities of the administrative organs of the fellowship shall be as under:

1. The Officers
2. The Executive
3. The Midterm Assembly
4. The General Assembly

SECTION 1. OFFICERS

A. Qualification:

To be elected an officer, a person must be a member in good standing of a church affiliated to a member body of the CBF. Should the officer cease to be a member of such a church during

his term of service he will be required to demit office at the next scheduled meeting of the Executive.

B. Composition:

The officers of the Fellowship shall be the President, three Vice presidents and the Executive Secretary-Treasurer. The immediate past President shall remain an Officer for the year immediately following the one in which he/ she demits office.

C. Election:

1. The Presidents and Vice Presidents: shall be elected at the General Assembly. In the event that the sitting President, for any reason whatsoever, shall be unable to continue serving in the Office of President, the Officers of the CBF shall be required to meet and identify one of the Vice Presidents to fulfill the functions normally related to the Office of the President until the next regular meeting of the Executive or Midterm Assembly. The Midterm Assembly shall be asked to fill the said position ad interim, that is, until the next General Assembly. The President and Vice Presidents may be re-elected to a second consecutive term of office.
2. The Executive-Secretary-Treasurer: (hereinafter EST) The candidate for appointment as EST shall be selected by the CBF Executive in the manner laid down in the relevant policy and shall be presented to the General Assembly or Mid-term Assembly for appointment and thereafter to the BWA Executive and General Council for appointment as BWA Regional Secretary, whereupon he/she will assume the responsibilities of the Office. In the event that the EST, for any reason whatsoever, shall be unable to continue in Office, the Executive of the CBF shall be required to meet and appoint a locum tenens to

carry out the duties of the EST until a new EST is elected.

An election to fill the Office of an EST who demits office during his/her normal term of service may take place at a regular meeting of the Midterm Assembly or General Assembly. Notices of such an election shall be given to member bodies of the Fellowship at least three months prior to the date of the meeting at which the election will occur.

There shall be an appropriate policy approved by the CBF at a Midterm Assembly or General Assembly outlining the tenure, terms of service, and the procedures for the appointment and termination of service of the EST.

D. Responsibilities:

The Officers shall deal with matters delegated to the Officers by the Executive, Midterm Assembly or the General Assembly. They will also respond to emergencies which may arise between meetings of the Executive, such as a natural disaster in the region, or a conflict situation involving a member body. They may invite to their meetings in an advisory or functional capacity, such persons as may be needed from time to time to assist them in specific matters under consideration.

Specific functions of each officer shall be as under:

1) The President

Principal Function: To be responsible for the proper conduct of all meetings of the CBF and to ensure that all transactions are carried out and individual responsibilities discharged, according to the requirements of the Constitution and By-Laws, and the decision of the Executive, General Assembly and the Midterm Assembly

He/she shall:

- Preside at all official meetings of the Fellowship, namely, the Officers, the Executive, the Midterm Assembly and the General Assembly
- Be actively involved in the formulation and promotion of programs and policies designed to enhance the work and witness of the Fellowship
- Act as the representative of the CBF at meetings of member bodies, normally in response to the official invitation of such member bodies
- Act as the representative of the CBF at meetings in which the Fellowship is involved or interested

Appoint:

- (i) Resolutions Committee
- (ii) Memorial Committee
- (iii) Other Special Committees
- Serve as ex-official on the Boards of the Agencies of the CBF
- Shall normally be the representative of the CBF on the Executive Committee and General Council of the BWA.

2) The Vice Presidents

Principal Function: To assist the President in the efficient and effective discharge of his/her responsibilities in accordance with the prescriptions of the Constitution and By-laws and the decisions of the General Assembly and the Midterm Assembly.

He/she shall:

- Sit with and assist the President at all official meetings of the Officers,
- The Executive, The General Assembly and the Midterm Assembly.
- Preside at meetings of the Officers, the Executive, The General Assembly and the Midterm Assembly of the Fellowship, in the event of the known unavoidable absence of the President.
- Discharge such duties and responsibilities as the President may have cause to delegate from time to time.
- Assume the role of President (acting), for the current term should the President be unable, for any reason whatsoever, to carry out the normal duties of that Office.
- Be actively involved in the formulation of programs and policies designed to enhance the work and witness of the Fellowship.
- Take active steps to promote the overall work and witness of the Fellowship in their respective countries and areas.

3) Executive Secretary-Treasurer

Principal Function: To supervise and coordinate the activities and programmes of the CBF and maintain effective communication with its member bodies.

He/she shall:

- Be administrator of the CBF Office
- Monitor, coordinate and evaluate programmes and projects

- Promote communication between member bodies
- Guide in the preparation of the annual budget
- Supervise expenditure of the annual budget
- Obtain an annual audit of accounts
- Arrange, in consultation with the President, meetings of the Officers, Executive, General Assembly and Midterm Assembly
- Liaise between the CBF, other fraternal Baptist bodies and other Christian groups
- Supervise the establishment and maintenance of a website for the CBF
- Be Regional Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance upon approval of that body.

SECTION 2. THE EXECUTIVE

A. Composition:

The Executive of the CBF shall be comprised of:

- The Officers
- The Recording Secretary
- The Directors of Agencies
- The Chairpersons of Board of Agencies
- The Presidents of Departments
- The Chairperson of standing committees of the CBF

- The President of each Member Body or, in his/her absence, another leader named by that Body and authorized to speak for the Body.
- Consultants serving the CBF in an official capacity, by invitation of the Officers
- The General Secretary and President of the Baptist World Alliance
- Any member of the BWA Presidium or head of a BWA Department elected from a BWA member body belonging to the Fellowship.

B. Responsibilities:

- a) To act on behalf of the General Assembly and Midterm Assembly when these bodies are not in session, within the parameters of the Constitution and By-Laws.
- b) To receive and consider applications to the CBF for membership, Associate Membership or designation as “Friends of the CBF”, and to recommend appropriate action on such applications to the General Assembly or Midterm Assembly.
- c) To receive and consider reports, recommendations and proposals from the agencies, departments, committees, and any projects or programmes of the CBF, and clear them for presentation to the General Assembly or Mid-term Assembly.
- d) To conceptualize plans and programmes for the Fellowship and make recommendations to the General Assembly or Midterm Assembly on matters relating to the interest of the CBF

- e) To make recommendations to the Midterm Assembly with regard to leadership, filling of vacancies or other necessary changes in leadership which may arise between General Assembly meetings.
- f) To serve as the budget committee of the CBF responsible for the preparation of the annual budget under the guidance of the Executive Secretary- Treasurer
- g) To serve as the programme planning committee for the General Assembly and Midterm Assembly meetings or to delegate such responsibility to a special committee named by the Executive for this purpose.
- h) To recommend to the Midterm Assembly or General Assembly the appointment of such special committees as may be deemed necessary, to nominate the chairperson and members of such committees and provide such committees with their terms of reference.
- i) To give attention to all matters of legitimate interest and concern of the CBF and its member bodies that do not fall under the agencies, departments or committees.
- j) To deal with other matters referred to the Executive by the Midterm Assembly or General Assembly

C. Recording Secretary:

Election: He /She shall be elected at the General Assembly.

Principal Function: To make correct records of the transactions of all official meetings of the Executive, the Midterm Assembly and the General Assembly and of any Officers' Meeting, which he / she may be, asked to attend in the capacity of Recording Secretary.

He / She shall:

- a) Record and prepare minutes of all meetings which he/ she attends in the capacity of Recording Secretary.
- b) Dispatch the completed original of all minutes to the Executive-Secretary-Treasurer within two months of the close of each meeting.

SECTION 3. THE MIDTERM ASSEMBLY

A. Composition:

The Midterm Assembly of the CBF shall be comprised of:

1. Members of the Executive as listed in Section 2.
2. Representatives of member bodies as under:
3. Membership up to 999 – Two representatives
4. Membership up to 1000-4999 – Three representatives
5. Membership 5000 and over – Four representatives

B. Responsibilities:

- a) To act on behalf of the General Assembly when it is not in session, within the parameters of the Constitution and By-laws.
- b) To receive and approve applications for membership, Associate Membership and designation as Friend of the CBF.
- c) To consider reports and recommendations/proposals from the Officers, the Executive, agencies, projects, programmes, departments and committees of the CBF.
- d) To receive reports from the member bodies

- e) To propose plans/programs and make recommendation to the General Assembly related to the interest of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship.
- f) To make interim decisions with regard to leadership vacancies occurring between general assemblies.
- g) To appoint a Search Committee to identify and recommend a suitable candidate for the position of Executive Secretary-Treasurer, and to elect such a candidate to office in keeping with the approved policy.
- h) To appoint a Nominations Committee of the Fellowship two years before the General Assembly to recommend to the General Assembly to the Executive Persons to serve as Officers recording secretary, accounts manager, chairpersons and vice chairpersons of standing committees and, in consultation with agency directors, chairpersons and member of boards of agencies.
- i) To approve the annual budget.
- j) To receive and approve the annual audit.
- k) To receive and act upon correspondence directed to the Fellowship.
- l) To receive notices of motion and to consider resolutions submitted through the Resolutions Committee.
- m) To furnish the Baptist World Alliance with an evaluation of the work of the Executive Secretary-Treasurer once in each BWA quinquennium.

SECTION 4. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. Composition:

The composition of the General Assembly shall be the same as the Midterm Assembly except that the member bodies shall be entitled to representation as under:

1. Membership up to 999 – Three representatives
2. Membership 1000-4999 – Five representatives
3. Membership 5000 and over – Seven representatives

B. Responsibilities:

- a) To receive and approve applications for membership, Associate Membership and designation as Friend of the CBF.
- b) To receive and consider reports and recommendations from the Officers, Executive Midterm Assembly, agencies, programmes, projects, departments, and committees of the CBF.
- c) To receive reports from the member bodies of the Fellowship.
- d) To approve the annual budget.
- e) To receive and approve the annual audit report.
- f) To approve plans and programs for the work of the Fellowship.
- g) To approve policies concerning the work and operation of the Fellowship.

- h) To elect officers and other persons as provided by the Constitution and By-Laws.
- i) To receive notices of motion and to consider resolutions submitted through the Resolutions Committee.
- j) To provide opportunities for inspiration, education, mutual encouragement and support, and the sharing of information and concerns.
- k) To provide opportunities to celebrate our common faith and calling in Jesus Christ.

SECTION 5. GENERAL

A. Cost of Attending Meetings

The cost of travel, accommodation and hospitality for representatives of member bodies attending the Midterm assembly and the General Assembly meetings shall be borne by the respective sending bodies.

B. Voting

All members, Executive, General Assembly and Midterm Assembly shall be entitled to both voice and vote save that the President may exercise a casting vote only in the event of a tie.

C. Other Participants

1. Observers

Representatives of Cooperating Baptist Bodies/ Churches which are not members of the CBF and bona fide members of member-body churches shall be accorded observer status. They shall be seated at the General Assembly and Midterm Assembly meetings and accorded voice at the discretion of the Chair but shall not be entitled to vote.

2. Associate Members

Representatives of Associate Members of the CBF shall be seated at meetings of the Midterm and General Assembly and shall be accorded voice, but not vote.

3. Friends of the CBF

Officially designated “Friends of the CBF” shall be seated at meetings of the Midterm and General Assembly and shall be accorded a voice, but not vote.

ARTICLE III – AGENCIES

SECTION 1. AGENCIES IN GENERAL

A. Establishment

The CBF shall by decision of its General Assembly or Midterm Assembly establish such agencies as may enable it to fulfill its purpose and functions, affect its programmes and serve its member bodies.

Each agency shall be established to fulfill a particular purpose or purposes and shall be provided with the personnel, budget and other resources needed to carry out its mission. The agency shall be accountable to the General Assembly and Midterm Assembly for the total discharge of its responsibilities and the achievement of stated goals and objectives, in accordance with approved policies and procedures.

B. Management

- C. 1. Director: each agency shall have a director appointed by the CBF through its General Assembly or Midterm Assembly. He/she shall be given full authority and shall have final responsibility for the management of the agency’s affairs in

accordance with a job description and approved policies and procedures. The Director shall be accountable to a board of trustees. (Hereinafter—the Board)

2. Board of Trustees: each agency shall have a Board of Trustees. The Chairperson and members of the Board shall be appointed by the General Assembly in keeping with approved policies and procedures. In determining its composition due regard shall be given to:
 - a. The regional composition of the Fellowship
 - b. The location of the agency
 - c. The individual's knowledge, skills and interests in relation to the work of the agency.

Responsibilities of the Board

The Board shall perform the following functions in accordance with approved policies and procedures:

- a) Receive and act on reports and recommendations presented by or through the Director.
- b) Examine and approve plans, policies and procedures presented by the Director.
- c) Make recommendations to the Director to promote greater effectiveness of the agency.
- d) Receive financial reports and audits on the operation of the agency, and approve budgets submitted by the Director for recommendation to the executive of the CBF.
- e) Carry out periodic reviews of the service of the Director and other personnel accountable to the Board and make recommendations to the CBF regarding the extension or

termination of their service, in accordance with approved policy.

A. Meetings

A meeting of the Board of each agency shall be held at least annually. Meetings of the officers and extraordinary meetings of the Board may be called at the instance of the Chairperson as circumstances require.

B. Annual Report

An annual report of the work each of each agency shall be presented by the Chairperson of the Board through the Director to the Executive, Midterm Assembly or general Assembly.

SECTION 2. - CARIBBEAN CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS

The CBF publications agency, doing business as Caribbean Christian Publications, shall carry out the following responsibilities:

- a) Produce and publish biblically-sound, culturally-suitable Bible study materials for the churches affiliated with the CBF as well as other churches which may find the materials appropriate for their use.
- b) As time and resources allow, provide other printed materials which churches affiliated with the CBF may require for carrying out their programmes and ministries or which may be of interest and relevance to the wider Caribbean Christian community.
- c) Promote the sale and use of materials produced by the agency, and assist churches in the effective use of their materials.

ARTICLE IV DEPARTMENTS

C. Establishment:

The CBF shall establish departments for men, women and youth. These shall be known as:

1. The CBF Men's Department
2. The CBF Women's Department (also known as the Caribbean Baptist Women's Union)
3. The CBF Youth Department

D. Entitlements:

Each department shall be entitled to do the following:

1. Establish a constitution, subject to the approval of the Executive of the CBF.
2. Elect a president who shall serve on the Executive of the CBF, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary. These persons must be members in good standing of a church affiliated to a member body of the CBF. Should any officer cease to be a member of such a church during his term of service he shall be required to demit office at the next scheduled meeting of the CBF Executive.
3. Raise its own funds to finance the programme of the Department.
4. Plan and finance its own general and special meetings.

E. Term:

The term or tenure of the officers of departments shall not exceed that of the CBF Officers, though the dates of their tenure may not coincide with those of the CBF Officers.

D. Responsibilities:

The main areas of responsibility of these Departments shall be:

- a) Leadership training for representatives of member bodies of the CBF with special responsibilities for their respective areas of church work.
- b) Promotion and facilitation of the formation and strengthening of men's, women's, and youth groups in churches affiliated with the CBF.
- c) Promotion and facilitation of regional meetings for purposes of worship, fellowship, training and education.
- d) Promotion and facilitation of the observance of special days in the calendar of the CBF and the BWA as applicable to Men, Women and Youth, respectively.
- e) The raising of awareness and the encouragement of appropriate action on matters affecting these respective groups in areas such as the family, church, society, gender, inter-generational issues, sexuality and social problems. Where feasible, unified, thematic approaches across all three departments shall be pursued.

D. Reports:

Each department shall submit an annual report along with a statement of income and expenses for the preceding year to the Executive of the CBF through the Executive Secretary-Treasurer. A program outline consisting of goals and budget for the ensuing year, along with any request for funds from the CBF, shall also be submitted to the Executive through the Executive Secretary-Treasurer.

ARTICLE V - COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. STANDING COMMITTEES IN GENERAL

A. Establishment:

The CBF shall establish standing committees as needed and shall assign specific functions to each committee.

B. Chairpersons: Election and Responsibilities:

- 1) The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of each committee shall be elected by the General Assembly and shall normally serve until the next regular meeting of the General Assembly.

They must be members in good standing of a church affiliated to a member body of the CBF. Should any officer cease to be a member of such a church during his term of service he shall be required to demit office at the next scheduled meeting of the CBF Executive.

- 2) Should the Chairperson for any reason be unwilling or unable to complete his/her period of service, the Executive, acting through the President and EST, shall request the Vice Chairperson to assume the role of chairperson or if deemed necessary, take the initiative to secure an acting appointment or locum tenens. Such action shall be reported to the next meeting of the Midterm Assembly for confirmation.
- 3) The Chairperson shall be responsible for the efficient and effective leadership and functioning of the committee. Working with and through the appropriate committee, he /she shall:

- a) Take the initiative in determining programmes for the committee in keeping with the objectives and policies of the CBF.
- b) Set achievable targets and goals to be accomplished
- c) Provide motivation, coordination and control to ensure the successful achievement of approved objectives, goals, and action plans within the approved and available budget.
- d) Submit to the Executive through the EST, not later than May 31:
 - i. A written annual report of activities and achievements
 - ii. Written objectives, goals, action plans, and requested budget support for the ensuing year.
- e) Represent the Committee on the Executive of the CBF.

C. Composition:

Each committee shall be comprised of a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson elected by the CBF and one to three other persons named by the Chairperson in the consultation with the Officers of the CBF. Committee members shall be members in good standing of a Baptist Church affiliated with a member body of the CBF.

D. Meetings:

Committees shall normally meet annually and usually in advance of the meeting of the CBF Executive, so that matters from the Committees can be presented to the Executive. Within the limits of its resources the CBF shall bear reasonable travel and accommodation expenses for one meeting per year of each committee.

Opportunity shall be given in each Midterm Assembly and General Assembly meeting for each committee to meet with the attendees from the wider constituency who have an interest in the work of the committee and in furthering its objectives.

In between meetings, contact shall be maintained with the wider constituency through a contact persons designated by each Member Body.

Tenure:

The chairperson and Vice chairperson shall not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office.

**SECTION 2. STANDING COMMITTEES
IN PARTICULAR**

The following standing committees shall be appointed by the CBF at each regular meeting of the General Assembly:

- A. Christian Education and Stewardship
- B. Mission and Evangelism
- C. Communications
- D. Disaster Response and Human Needs
- E. Ministerial Training
- F. Any other standing committee, which the CBF may deem necessary from time to time.

B. Christian Education and Stewardship Committee

The main areas of responsibility of this committee shall be leadership training for, and facilitation and promotion of:

- a) Sunday School Work, in association with Caribbean Christian Publications.
- b) Stewardship Education
- c) Church Music Education
- d) Family Life Education
- e) Special Education
- f) Other special areas of training and education needed by the churches from time to time and which do not fall under the responsibilities of the departments and other standing committees.

B. Mission and Evangelism Committee

The main areas of responsibility of this committee shall be research into, leadership training for, facilitation and promotion of:

- a) Evangelism and discipleship
- b) Mission education and involvement

C. Communications Committee

The CBF Communications Committee shall carry out the following responsibilities:

- a) Produce and distribute biblically-sound, culturally-suitable electronic and print media materials for use in churches affiliated with the CBF as well as other churches which may find the materials appropriate for their use.

Produce and broadcast, independently or in association with member bodies of the CBF biblically-sound, culturally-suitable radio and television programmes in the Caribbean region

- c) Advise and assist member bodies of the CBF and churches affiliated with them to develop effective and appropriate media strategies and programmes to promote and advance their ministries.
- d) Produce and disseminate through newsletters and/or the print and electronic media, information about plans, programmes and events relevant to the CBF constituency.
- e) Arrange for translation of documents and meeting presentations for non-English-speaking member bodies.

D. Disaster Response & Human Needs Committee

This committee shall carry out the following responsibilities:

- a) Provide training for CBF Member Bodies on how to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods and earthquakes, which affect the Caribbean region from time to time.
- b) In consultation with the President and/or EST, act promptly to assess need and provide emergency relief in the event of a natural disaster.
- c) Assess human needs related to the health and socio-economic wellbeing of people in the areas and communities served by our member bodies and churches, and serve as a catalyst in promoting a Christian response to such needs.

E. Ministerial Training Committee

- a) This committee shall carry out the following responsibilities:
- b) Effect research into the need for and availability of theological education among Member Bodies of the CBF and report finding to the CBF.

- c) Through conferences, seminars and/or the print and electronic media, provide educational and training opportunities and materials for pastors, church workers and other interested persons in areas of theology and ministry for which a need is judged to exist.
- d) Keep the CBF constituency informed of new approaches to and trends in ministry from which they can benefit or of which they need to be aware.

SECTION 3. AD HOC COMMITTEES

The CBF shall establish such special or ad hoc committees as may be needed from time to time. They shall be given appropriate terms of reference. Each such committee shall cease to function after it has completed its work and presented its final report to the CBF.

ARTICLE- VI FINANCE

SECTION 1. GENERAL

1. The main sources of funding of the CBF shall be the member bodies, associate members, Friends of the CBF, fraternal bodies working with the Fellowship, and any other funding sources which may be designated by the Fellowship from time to time.
2. General operating, capital and special/ designated funds shall be requested by the CBF of these sources through the Executive Secretary-Treasurer by the decision of the General Assembly or Midterm Assembly

3. All contributions received towards general operating and capital funds shall be deposited in a financial institution approved by the CBF.
4. All contributions received towards general operating costs and capital funds shall be apportioned and administered by the Executive Secretary-Treasurer in accordance with the decisions and approved policies of the CBF.
5. The budget year of the CBF shall be January 1 to December 31.

SECTION 2. BUDGET REQUESTS

Budget requests from agencies, departments, programme leaders and committee chairpersons shall be submitted to the Executive Secretary-Treasurer and the CBF office by May 31 of each calendar year and shall be based upon:

- a) The “zero based” financing principle, that is, no unspent portion of the budget for a given year shall be carried forward as a credit to the succeeding year unless expressly authorized by the Executive.
- b) “Action plans” or goal-oriented system of budgeting.

Unless otherwise provided for, no adjustments or variations will be allowed in the appropriation of budget funds provided for a particular agency, project, programme, department or committee and no over-expenditure will be honoured, except at the discretion of the Executive.

- a) Funds in a given budget may be reapportioned among the budget items, provided the total allocation is not exceeded and the reapportionment is done in consultation with the EST.

- b) All unspent funds within a given budget year shall revert to the Treasury and its appropriation determined by the Executive.

SECTION 4. FINANCIAL REPORTS

1. The EST shall present to the Executive, Midterm Assembly and the General Assembly the financial report of the past year and the proposed budget for the ensuing year.
2. The EST shall send a quarterly financial report to all members of the Executive and leaders of member bodies.
3. All persons responsible for budgeted funds shall submit an annual budget performance report to the Executive through the EST in an approved format.
4. The EST shall present an audit of accounts to the Executive, General Assembly and Midterm Assembly of the CBF, and shall forward a copy to fraternal bodies which makes direct contribution to the budget of the Fellowship.
5. The EST may secure such bookkeeping assistance as may be needed, provided any remuneration involved falls within the limits of available funds.

ARTICLE-VII AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the General Assembly or Midterm Assembly by simple majority vote of those present and voting. Notice of the motion to amend the by-laws must be submitted in writing to the EST who shall circulate the proposed amendment to member bodies at least two months prior to the meeting or the General Assembly or Midterm Assembly when the proposed amendment will be voted upon.

At least one day must elapse between the reading of the proposed amendment to the Midterm Assembly or General assembly and the taking of the vote on the said amendment.

CARIBBEAN BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP RULES OF ORDER FOR THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

The president or Vice President will be expected to preside at all Executive, Midterm Assembly and General Assembly meetings.

VICE PRESIDENTS & EXECUTIVE SECRETARY -TREASURER

While the Houses are in Session, both Vice President and the Executive Secretary-Treasurer shall normally be seated on the platform, to assist the President in the regular conduct of business.

DEPARTMENTS & COMMITTEES

In the instances where the subject under discussion arises from, or has direct bearing upon the work of an agency, department, project or committee, those concerned should be seated on the platform, for easy reference and consultation, to facilitate efficiency and expedition.

RESPONSES

While a presentation is being made, all responses should await the direction of the Chair. Anyone wishing to speak on the subject should signify his or her intention on a clear show of hand and await clearance from the Chair.

QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS

Questions and comments should be allowed only to persons who are “properly seated”, that is, voting members of the body in session or observers recognized by the Chair and granted the courtesy of the floor.

Ordinarily a question takes precedence over a comment. It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the “right” given to ask a question is not misused to make a “comment” instead, and that the question posed is both relevant and timely.

Comments should be constructive and concise. Normally, no one should be allowed to speak to the same subject more than once in a single session except, if in the discretion of the Chair, the person has some unique contribution to make which will facilitate the advancement and/or resolution of the discussion.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, FRIENDS OF THE CBF, AND OBSERVERS

Persons sitting as Associate Members, Friends of the CBF, and Observers, may be allowed, at the discretion of the Chair, to participate in discussions, but shall not be permitted to vote.

POINT OF ORDER

If a person rises on a point of order, the Chair shall determine whether the matter is a valid point of order and shall make an appropriate ruling.

It is proper to rise on a point of order when:

- a) The matter introduced has been dealt with already.
- b) The point raised does not relate to the subject under the discussion.
- c) The speaker or person on the floor is being unduly personal.
- d) The opportunity to ask a question is being misused or abused.

MOTION

A motion is in order when it arises from the subject under discussion. A motion can stand only when it is recognized by the Chair and is duly seconded. Such a motion can be withdrawn only after the consent of the mover and seconder is secured.

AMENDMENTS

The substantive or standing motion may be amended or altered by another motion. The motion to amend should also be seconded.

COUNTER MOTION

A counter motion is a proposal, which in word and intention, differs radically from the standing or original motion.

If it is necessary to obtain response in the form of a vote, the amended or counter motion should take precedence and be put first. A clear majority vote for either of these replaces the substantive motion. If either fails, the substantive motion must then be put.

RESOLUTIONS & NOTICES OF MOTION

b) Notice of Motion

A notice of motion is the expression of a desire to have a matter debated at a subsequent meeting. The notice should have a mover and a seconder and should preferably be submitted in writing. The notice of motion automatically becomes a resolution at the next regular meeting.

c) Resolution

A resolution is, in effect, a motion calling for immediate attention to some subject of importance. It should be submitted in writing over the signature of the Mover and the Secunder and receive clearance from the Chair before it is put to the House.

VOTING

The right to vote is reserved exclusively for members who are properly seated. Visitors and Observers, Associate Members, Friends of the CBF and visitors are not permitted to vote and should not consciously influence the vote. Each member is entitled to one (1) vote on any issue, save that the Chairman shall not exercise the right to vote unless he elects to do so in order to break a tie.

Rules of Order Adopted:

1981 Adopted 1995

First Revision 2001

Second Revision, General Assembly, Guyana 2014

