

CB Mission Northeast
Operation and Policy Manual
February 2010

The Operation and Policy Manual of Mission Northeast sets forth the guiding principles, policies, and procedures to facilitate efficient and effective fulfillment of our values, mission, and vision. This manual expands upon the principles set forth in our bylaws detailing the current operations for their practice. The Executive Board of Mission Northeast is authorized to amend this manual by majority vote as needed for the fruitful implementation of our values, mission, and vision. This manual serves as a guide for Mission Northeast Ministries but shall not negate the corporate bylaws that shall always prevail.

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The Operations of Mission Northeast

Our Purpose

In obedience to God and His Word, the Conservative Baptist movement has demonstrated an historic commitment to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. In keeping with our history we recognize that God has called us to fulfill the following Values, Mission, and Vision.

Our Values

We Value and Celebrate:

- Courageous leaders who passionately seek to equip their churches to accomplish Christ's mission.
- Healthy local churches who work to make disciples of Jesus Christ and launch new churches.
- Partnership and accountability among churches and leaders who are networked together to accomplish our mission.
- Multiplication of leaders and churches so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ radically impacts the world.

Our Mission

To serve the local church assisting them to accomplish their God-given mission to make disciples of all nations.

Our Vision

We envision a network of vibrant churches empowered by God and mobilized by passionate spiritual leaders, living out the gospel by serving their communities and making disciples of Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

Our Strategy

As a covenant community of churches Mission Northeast seeks to facilitate the networking of churches together to support and strengthen each other in the accomplishment of their God-given mission to make disciples of all nations. To that end we will focus on developing and deploying the following strategies:

- Train effective spiritual leaders
- Equip and strengthen healthy churches
- Assist one another in ministry through strategic networks
- Multiply leaders, ministries, and congregations

By God's grace and empowerment the effective implementation of these strategies will result in:

1. New Life
 - More and better disciples following Christ
 - Vital, vibrant churches
2. New Churches
 - In the least churched area of the USA
 - To the ends of the earth
3. New Leaders
 - To shepherd our congregations
 - To plant new churches
 - To go to the ends of the earth

Our Structure

It is impossible for a single individual or even a team of people to meet the needs of over 250 congregations in a seven state region that comprises 126,472 square miles. Utilizing Jethro's advice to his son-in-law we will seek to multiply the leadership of Mission Northeast utilizing a manageable span of care system (Exodus 18:17-26). The following teams will provide the leadership needed to advance our values, mission, and vision.

A Vision Team (aka: Executive Board)

Primary Focus: Keeping us accountable to our mission, values, and vision

The Vision Team also known as the Executive Board of Mission Northeast gives direction to our association through our values, mission, and vision. They set the association's policies and guiding principles as outlined in this manual to facilitate the living out of our values and the accomplishment of our mission and vision.

The Vision Team is comprised of eight elected representatives from the SuperClusters as outlined below and the Executive Director.

Network Teams

Primary Focus: Facilitating ministry together, a peer-learning environment, and care for each other

A. Geographic Networks: Geographic Networks provide opportunities for expression of our covenant relationship and coordination of our ministry together. They are a primary means for connecting our churches together with each other and with Mission Northeast. They provide a means of representation for our churches and of conducting business as directed by the Executive Board.

1. Area Fellowships are clusters of churches in a geographic area that aid in the mutual support of each other and the accomplishment of our shared values, mission, and vision. They shall initiate opportunities for mutual prayer, encouragement, study, vision casting, accountability, ministry, and outreach. Fellowships (by themselves or in cooperation with other fellowships) shall determine and develop the ministries that enable the churches to become healthy, biblical churches that expand the kingdom of God through the multiplication of disciples and churches.

An Area Fellowship shall elect two Team Leaders to facilitate the care and ministry of the Area Fellowship. They shall serve two-year terms with one term expiring each year. An individual may serve no more than six successive years without a year off.

Area Fellowship Team Leaders shall communicate, collaborate, and coordinate resources with other Area Fellowship Team Leaders, SuperCluster Representatives, and the Executive Director to facilitate the sharing of needs, ideas, and resources.

2. SuperClusters are networks of Area Fellowships within a subregion of the northeast: Northern New England, Southern New England, Downstate New York, and Upstate New York. Each SuperCluster shall provide two representatives from their region to serve on the Executive Board. They shall be elected by the Area Fellowship Team Leaders for two-year terms with one term expiring each year. They may serve no more than six successive years without a year off.

B. Focused Networks: Other networks shall be formed to meet shared needs and may transcend local geographic areas. These may include such things as shared ethnic/linguistic characteristics, church size, or shared experiences such as churches who are planting a church or going through an assessment, etc. These networks are a supplement to the geographic networks, not a replacement for them. Representation to the Executive Board is through the geographic networks.

Coaching Teams

Primary Focus: Mentoring and Coaching in their area of expertise

Coaching Teams shall be formed to provide assistance for our churches in specific ministry areas with mentors and coaches who are experts through training and experience in these areas. Coaching Teams may include areas such as Church Health and Assessment, Peacemaking, Church Transitions, Church Planting, etc.

Our Membership

This corporation is organized as an association of Conservative Baptist churches in covenant relationship. These churches have committed themselves to promote the cause of Christ throughout the world in fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), and to live out the Great Commandment together demonstrating the reality of their life in Christ (Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:34-35). The precedent of churches associating in this way is found in early church practice (Acts 15; 2 Corinthians 8:18-24; Galatians 1:2, 22; Colossians 4:13-18). It is also warranted by Christ's prayer for visible unity (John 17:20-23); by the church's identification (locally and universally) as the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:20-22); and Christian prudence and wisdom.

Covenant of Member Churches

In partnership for the gospel of Christ, to the glory of God the Father, and by the power of the Spirit, as a member church of Mission Northeast, we covenant to:

1. Faithfully uphold our core beliefs, values, and polity as stated in MNE's Statement of Faith and Bylaws.
2. Celebrate our diversity and the uniqueness of each local church ministry; graciously treating each other with love, encouraging, protecting, and supporting one another.
3. Prioritize our church's mission to be a Great Commission community energized with Great Commandment passion, seeking to reach people for Christ, impact our communities, and multiply churches.
4. Actively participate in our association by sharing our strengths, energy, and resources in ministry to each other, bringing greater health to our churches.
5. Strengthen and support our pastors and leaders by enabling their active participation in cluster fellowships, leadership development, and by using their gifts and talents to serve the greater body of Christ.
6. Generously support our association through regular financial contributions and by praying for our Regional Staff and our CB churches in our area.
7. Humbly receive the ministry of others as they seek to strengthen us and to give them permission to hold us accountable to this covenant if they perceive within us aloofness, independence, or competitiveness.

Application

A church or individual wishing to affiliate with Mission Northeast shall make application to the Executive Board in keeping with the guidelines in our bylaws. The Executive Board shall send the application to the appropriate Area Fellowship for review. This review shall include examination of the church's application, bylaws and other documentation as needed. Other appropriate steps will be taken to determine the church's (or individual's) commitment to our values, mission, vision, and covenant of churches. The Area Fellowship shall by vote make recommendation to the Executive Board regarding the approval of the application.

Removal From Membership

The Executive Board may, for due cause, dismiss a church or individual from the Association according to the following procedures:

1. The Board shall communicate with church leadership regarding the perceived infraction that could cause a dismissal from membership by means of board appointed representative(s).
2. Identifying a cause for dismissal the board shall enlist the help of the Area Fellowship to work with the church to resolve the issue.
3. Failure to resolve the issue, the Area Fellowship shall by vote recommend to the Executive Board the dismissal of the church or other disciplinary actions. Such a vote places a church under censure immediately and is no longer considered a member in good standing. All rights and privileges of membership including voting are suspended.
4. The Executive Board shall advise the church of the censure and inform them of any corrective steps that may be taken to restore them to fellowship. The church may appeal the decision of the Area Fellowship to the Executive Board whose decision is final. Failure to resolve the issue and restore to fellowship after six months from the date of censure results in the automatic dismissal of the church from membership unless otherwise extended by vote of the Executive Board.
5. When an Area Fellowship is unwilling, unable, or otherwise not suited to perform these duties in the judgment of the Executive Board, the Executive Board may appoint a task force to carry out the duties of the Area Fellowship.

Guiding Principles

Preamble

The following document is designed by the Executive Board to implement a staff-led, policy-governed model modified for the specific needs of Mission Northeast. The Guiding Principles fall into three categories: Through “Mission Principles” the board prescribes for the Executive Director the ends to be achieved by MNE. Through “Boundary Principles” the board sets constraints on the means that may be used in pursuit of those ends. (However, the board is careful not to prescribe any particular means for the Executive and the staff.) Through “Accountability Principles” the board instructs the President of the MNE as its chairperson how to maintain the linkage of the board with its constituents, the monitoring of Executive Director performance, and the integrity of the board’s own process. In any case where these Guiding Principles delegates to the Executive Director and staff a decision required by the bylaws to be made by the board or committee, the requirement of the bylaws will be fulfilled through the use of a routine consent agenda by the board.

These Guiding Principles are not intended to communicate all that we believe and practice. We affirm our commitment to an orthodox and evangelical Christian faith, the value of all persons and cultures, and the variety of legitimate ministries in God’s Kingdom. Through these Guiding Principles, we merely intend to focus the priority outcomes, the ethical boundaries, and the organizational strategy of the MNE through its board and Executive Director.

Mission Principles

*[Defining for the Executive Director **what difference** this organization exists to make **for whom** and to **what extent**]*

MP1.0 Comprehensive Mission Statement

Mission Northeast exists to serve the local church, assisting them to accomplish their God-given mission to make disciples of all nations. We currently envision a network of vibrant churches empowered by God and mobilized by passionate spiritual leaders, living out the gospel by serving their communities and making disciples of Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

MP1 .1 Component: Regional Ministries

The top priorities of the region will be church reproduction, leadership development, and church training.

MP1.1.1 Detail: Developing Leaders

Training effective spiritual leaders will be a top priority of the region.

MP1.1.2 Detail: Growing Healthy Churches

Equipping and strengthening healthy churches will be a top priority of the region.

MP1.1.3 Detail: Facilitating Strategic Networks of Churches

Assisting Churches to connect with each other for strategic ministry together will be a top priority of the region

MP1.1.4 Detail: Multiplying leaders, ministries, and congregations.

Multiplying leaders, ministries, and churches among every people group will be a top priority of the region

MP1 .2 Component: Global Ministries

A second-level priority of the region will be networking congregations and resources to grow healthy churches beyond the cultural and geographical boundaries of the Region.

MP1 .3 Component: Strategic Partnerships

A third-level priority of the region will be working with other evangelical ministries, regardless of denomination, to grow healthy churches through alliances and projects that create a win for each ministry and for the advancement of God's Kingdom.

Boundary Principles

*[Defining **the limits of acceptable means** that the Executive Director is hereby authorized to use in achieving the Mission]*

BP1.0 Comprehensive Boundary Statement

The Executive Director shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance that is unlawful, imprudent, unethical, or unbiblical.

BP1 .1 Component: Biblical and Moral Integrity

With regard to teaching and leadership the Executive Director shall not fail to uphold high standards of biblical teaching and morality.

BP1 .2 Component: Financial Planning and Budgeting

Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year shall not deviate materially from the board's Mission Principles or risk financial jeopardy.

BP1.2. 1 Detail: Sufficient Information

The Executive Director shall not allow budgeting that contains too little information to enable credible projection of revenues and expenses, separation of capital and operational items, relation of expenditures to Mission Principles, and disclosure of multiyear planning assumptions.

BP1. 2.2 Detail: Expenditures within Projected Funds

The Executive Director shall not allow budgeting that plans the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are conservatively projected to be received in that

period, unless special circumstances are adequately described including a realistic plan to make up the deficit within the following fiscal year.

BP1.2.3 Detail: Asset and Cash Margins

The Executive Director shall not allow budgeting that intentionally creates a debt to equity ratio of greater than 30% or allows cash and readily marketable securities to drop below a safety reserve of less than three month's expenses.

BP1 .3 Component: Financial Condition and Activities

With respect to the actual, ongoing financial conditions and activities, the Executive Director shall not allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from board priorities established in Mission Principles.

BP1.3.1 Detail: Expenditures

The Executive Director shall not expend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year to date unless the following debt guideline, BP 1.3.2, is met.

BP1.3.2 Detail: Borrowing

The Executive Director shall not borrow an amount greater than can be repaid by reliable, otherwise unencumbered revenues within twelve months, except for vehicles or capital investments.

BP1.3.3 Detail: Inter-fund Shifting

The Executive Director shall not make inter-fund transfers in amounts greater than can be restored to a condition of discrete fund balances by reliable, otherwise unencumbered revenue within twelve months.

BP1.3.4 Detail: Payroll and Debt Settlement

The Executive Director shall not fail to settle payroll and debts in a timely manner.

BP1. 3.5 Detail: Government Payments and Filings

The Executive Director shall not allow tax payments, if any, or other government-ordered payments or filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed.

BP1.3.6 Detail: Purchase Cap

The Executive Director shall not make a single expenditure of greater than 5% of the annual budget, aside from staff, non-discretionary expenses, and capital investments.

BP1 .4 Component: Asset Protection

The Executive Director shall not allow the assets to be unprotected, inadequately maintained, or unnecessarily risked.

BP1.4.1 Detail: Insurance

The Executive Director shall not fail to insure against theft and casualty losses to at least 80 percent of replacement value and against liability losses to board members, staff, and the region itself in an amount greater than the average for comparable organizations.

BP1. 4.2 Detail: Facilities and Equipment

The Executive Director shall not subject facilities and equipment to improper wear and tear or insufficient maintenance.

BP1.4.3 Detail: Liability

The Executive Director shall not unnecessarily expose the organization, its board, or its staff to claims of liability.

BP1.4.4 Detail: Purchases

The Executive Director shall not make any purchase 1) wherein normally prudent protections have not been made against conflict of interest; 2) of over \$1,000 without having made comparisons of prices and quality; and 3) of over \$5,000 without a stringent method of assuring the balance of long-term quality and cost.

BP1.4.5 Detail: Information Protection

The Executive Director shall not fail to protect intellectual property, information, and files from loss or significant damage.

BP1.4. 6 Detail: Auditor

The Executive Director shall not receive, process, or disburse funds under controls that are insufficient to meet the board-appointed auditor's standards.

BP1. 4.7 Detail: Secure Instruments

The Executive Director shall not purchase insecure instruments, including uninsured checking accounts and bonds of less than "investment grade" rating, except for non-rated bonds that are asset-backed with a debt-to-equity ratio not to exceed 70% and an income-to-debt ratio not to exceed 30%. The Executive Director shall not hold operating capital in non-interest bearing accounts except when necessary to facilitate ease in operational transactions.

BP1.4.8 Detail: Public Reputation

The Executive Director shall not endanger the organization's public image or credibility, particularly in ways that would hinder accomplishment of its mission.

BP1 .5 Component: Compensation and Benefits

With respect to employment, compensation, and benefits to employees, consultants, contract worker, and volunteers, the Executive Director shall not cause or allow jeopardy to fiscal integrity or public image.

BP1. 5.1 Detail: Executive Director Compensation

The Executive Director shall not change his or her own compensation and benefits.

BP1.5.2 Detail: Promise of Employment

The Executive Director shall not promise or imply permanent or guaranteed employment.

BP1.5.3 Detail: Market Value

The Executive Director shall not establish current compensation and benefits that deviate materially from the geographic or professional market for the skills employed.

BP1.5.4 Detail: Term of Compensation

The Executive Director shall not create compensation obligations over a longer term than revenues can be safely projected, in no event longer than one year, and in all events subject to losses in revenue.

BP1.5.5 Detail: Fairness of Benefits

The Executive Director shall not establish or change health or pension benefits so as to cause unpredictable or inequitable situations.

BP1 .6 Component: Treatment of Staff

With respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the Executive Director may not cause or allow conditions that are unfair or illegal.

BP1. 6.1 Detail: Personnel Policies

The Executive Director shall not operate without concise personnel policies that clarify rules for staff, provide for effective handling of grievances, and protect against wrongful conditions such as nepotism and grossly preferential treatment for personal reasons.

BP1. 6.2 Detail: Grievance

The Executive Director shall not prevent staff expressing a grievance to the board when (1) internal procedures have been exhausted, and (2) the employee alleges *either* that board principles have been violated to his or her detriment *or* that board principles do not adequately protect his or her human rights.

BP1. 6.3 Detail: Notice

The Executive Director shall not fail to acquaint staff with their rights according to these principles.

BP1.7 Component: Communication with and Support to the Board

The Executive Director shall not permit the board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work.

BP1.8 Component: Real Property

The Executive Director shall not buy, sell, or manage real property in a manner that fails to put maximum resources to work for the mission of the region and to aid the broader advance of God's Kingdom through win-win ventures with other like-minded ministries.

BP1.8.1 Detail: Maximum Resources for Mission

The Executive Director shall not allow real property of the region to remain underproductive when there is an opportunity for it to better advance the current mission priorities of the region through its usage, lease, or sale.

BP1.8.2 Detail: Advancing God's Kingdom

The Executive Director shall not sell or lease real property for general usage when a like-minded Christian ministry is willing and able to obtain it for Kingdom usage for at least 95% of its value on the open market.

BP1.8.3 Detail: Certification Prior to Sale

The Executive Director shall not finalize the sale of any real property owned directly by the region without prior certification by the board in writing that such a sale violates none of the Boundary Principles and is therefore authorized by current board policy.

Accountability Principles

*[Defining for the chairperson the standards to uphold for enforcing **the integrity and fulfillment of the board's process**]*

AP1.0 Comprehensive Accountability Statement

The accountability of the board before God, on behalf of the member churches of the MNE is to see that regional staff, through the leadership of its Executive Director, (1) achieves the fulfillment of its Mission Principles, and (2) avoids violation of its Boundary Principles.

AP1.1 Component: Connecting the Region to Its "Moral Owners"

The board shall maintain an active connection for the "moral ownership" of the region: Christ and the churches he has called this region to serve.

AP1.1.1 Detail: Devotion to Prayer and the Word of God

Under the teaching and guidance of the Executive Director, the board will continually seek the wisdom and leading of Christ as the Lord of His church. To this end, significant attention will be given to prayer and study of Scripture as a group.

AP1.1.2 Detail: Constituent Input and Feedback

The board will receive input and feedback from member churches to better understand their needs. Periodically the board will arrange an objective assessment by a competent consulting group.

AP1.1.3 Detail: Demographic and Cultural Research

The board will invest significant resources each year to enhance its understanding of the needs of people in the communities and cultures where it is planting, revitalizing, and resourcing churches.

AP1.2 Component: Maintaining the Process of the Board

The board shall conduct itself with discipline and integrity with regard to its own process of governance.

AP1.2. 1 Detail: Board Style

The board will govern with an emphasis on (1) outward vision rather than internal preoccupation, (2) encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, (3) strategic leadership more than administrative detail, (4) clear distinction of board and staff roles, (5) collective rather than individual decisions, (6) future rather than past or present, and (7) proactive rather than reactive.

AP1.2.2 Detail: Board Job Responsibilities

The essential responsibilities of the board are linkage to the people served, definition of guiding principles, and monitoring of Executive Director performance. In addition to these three essentials, the board shall exercise authority granted to it in the bylaws and not delegated to the Executive Director.

AP1.2.3 Detail: Board Member Code of Conduct

The board commits itself and its members to the following code of conduct:

- a. Members of the board must represent unconflicted loyalty to the interests of Christ regarding those whom he has called the region to serve (Matt. 28: 18-20). This loyalty supersedes any personal or group interest among or outside consumers of the region's services. A member must disclose any conflict of interest, fiduciary or otherwise, and withdraw from any decision-making affected by it.
- b. Members of the board must honor the principles and decisions of the board acting as a whole. They may not foster dissent or attempt to exercise individual authority over the staff or the organization except as explicitly stated in the guiding principles.
- c. Members of the board must respect the confidentiality of sensitive board issues and must avoid facilitating gossip or other "triangulation" against the practice of direct, biblical resolution.

AP1.2.4 Detail: Responsibility of the Chairperson for Integrity of Process

The chairperson enforces the integrity and fulfillment of the board's process. The chairperson is authorized to use any reasonable interpretation of the Accountability Principles as he or she acts to ensure the integrity of the board's process.

AP1.2.5 Detail: Responsibility of the Executive Director for Visionary Leadership

The Executive Director has the responsibility, authority, and accountability to serve as the primary leader of the region at every level: constituents, board, and staff. With respect to the board, the Executive Director will provide the primary vision and guidance on all actions except for monitoring of Executive Director performance. If a question of process arises with regard to the bylaws or guiding principles of the region, the Executive Director will defer to the judgment of the chairperson.

AP1.2.6 Detail: Use of Board Committees

Board committees, if used, will be assigned so as to reinforce the wholeness of the board's job and never to interfere with the delegation from the board to the Executive Director or with the work of the staff.

AP1.2.7 Detail: Cost of Governance

The board will invest amply in its own governance capacity through training, outside expertise, research mechanisms, and meeting costs.

AP 1.3 Component: Monitoring the Performance of the Executive Director

The board's sole official connection to the operating organization of the region, its achievement, and conduct shall be through the Executive Director.

AP1.3.1 Detail: Unity of Control

Only decisions of the board acting as a whole are binding on the Executive Director.

AP1.3.2 Detail: Accountability of the Executive Director

The Executive Director is the board's only link to operational achievement and conduct, so that all authority and accountability of staff, as far as the board is concerned, is considered the authority and accountability of the Executive Director.

AP1.3.3 Detail: Delegation to the Executive Director

The board will instruct the Executive Director through written principles that prescribe the mission to be achieved and establish the boundaries to be respected, allowing the Executive Director to use any reasonable interpretation of these principles.

AP1.3.4 Detail: Performance of the Executive Director

Systematic and objective monitoring of Executive Director job performance will be solely against region accomplishment of the board's Mission Principles and region operation within the board's Boundary Principles.

- a. The Executive Director will be required to write measurable goals each year that

- correspond to each of the board's mission principles.
- b. Each year the board shall review the results achieved by the Executive Director on each of the annual goals, as the basis of either a raise or corrective action.

Policies

Additional Financial Policies

Fiscal Year: The fiscal year shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Budgets: The Executive Board shall establish a General Fund Budget and a Church Planting Fund budget each year.