

C O N S T I T U T I O N
OF THE
TAMPA BAY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION
ARTICLE I

ORGANIZATION

SECTION 1. NAME: The name of this Association shall be “Tampa Bay Baptist Association.”

SECTION 2. COMPOSITION: This Association shall be composed of messengers elected annually by the Baptist churches cooperating with the Association. The Executive Committee of the Association shall transact all business of the Association when the Association is not in session.

SECTION 3. MISSION: The mission of the Tampa Bay Baptist Association is to glorify God by working with churches in carrying out the Great Commission in Tampa Bay and beyond.

SECTION 4. PURPOSE: The purpose of the Tampa Bay Baptist Association, which is organized as a self-determining, autonomous body, is to personally encourage and equip pastors, pastoral staff, and church leaders and to establish environments for mutual encouragement and support amongst all pastors and church leaders so that the following specific purposes are fulfilled.

The specific purposes are:

To assist churches to be effective in evangelism, outreach, church planting, discipleship, prayer, purity, marriage/family and stewardship.

To encourage the establishment of missions and new, healthy churches.

To provide additional ministries for churches and their members when resources permit.

To work with the Southern Baptist Convention and Florida Baptist Convention with the understanding that the Association is a self-determining, autonomous body.

SECTION 5. AUTHORITY: Under no circumstances shall this Association attempt to assume authority over the churches, but shall, at all times, recognize the absolute freedom and independence of the churches.

The Association is not an ecclesiastical body. It shall recognize the underlying principle that the matter of cooperation belongs exclusively to the voluntary sphere of method, expediency, and common sense; however, a church may request counsel from the Association.

The Association has the power to refuse recognition of messengers from the individual churches that are not in accord with the doctrine, principles, policies, and practices of the Association.

ARTICLE II
CONDITIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. ADMISSION: Any congregation within the geographical area of the Tampa Bay Baptist Association may submit its request for membership. A written request must be made to the Executive Director of Missions, who will present the request to the Credentials Committee (see Credentials Committee - Article 5, Section 2). The pastor or congregation shall furnish evidence of its adherence to Biblical doctrine and Christian principles as

expressed in the current Baptist Faith and Message, adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. In addition, the church shall indicate its intent to support the mission work of Southern Baptists by contributing monthly to the Cooperative Program and the Associational Budget. All congregations desiring admission to the TBBA will need to be sponsored by an existing associational church for a period of no less than one year. Upon approval of the Credentials Committee and the Executive Committee, said congregation will then be received at the next Annual Celebration when their request will be reviewed again for full acceptance.

SECTION 2. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: Note: The Florida Baptist Convention requires new missions/churches to contribute a minimum of 8% to the Florida Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program and 2% to the Associational budget to receive financial assistance in the maximum amount.

SECTION 3. WITHDRAWAL: Any church wishing to voluntarily withdraw itself from membership in the Tampa Bay Baptist Association shall submit a written request to the Executive Director of Missions, who shall present such request to the Credentials Committee. Then the Credentials Committee shall present such request to the Executive Committee for action. The request will be communicated at the Annual Celebration.

SECTION 4. DISMISSAL: Any member church which obviously and deliberately departs from Biblical doctrines and Christian principles as stated in the current Baptist Faith and Message, or indicates intent to no longer participate in the Association may be dismissed in the following manner:
Upon presentation of such information to the Executive Director of Missions, he shall seek to lead the church into full cooperation with the doctrines and principles of the member churches. If the church does not respond positively to such encouragement, the Executive Director of Missions may recommend dismissal to the Executive Committee. A majority vote of the Executive Committee members present is required for dismissal. Also, a majority vote of the messengers present at the Annual Celebration is required for dismissal.

SECTION 5. REPRESENTATION: Each church of the Association shall be entitled to three (3) messengers, and one (1) additional messenger for every fifty (50) resident members, except that no church shall have more than twenty-one (21) messengers. A church having one or more missions is encouraged to include one messenger from each mission in their total number.

ARTICLE III EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SECTION 1

MEMBERSHIP: The Executive Committee of the Association shall consist of the General Officers of the Association; the pastors of the churches; other professional church staff members; one lay person may be selected by each church (and reported in the Annual Letter to the Association); the Association Department Directors; professional staff members employed by the Association as defined in the Personnel Policy Handbook; and ministers who have retired but who have served in the Association, when elected by the church where they hold membership. The Director of the Baptist Collegiate Ministry at the University of South Florida shall be a member by virtue of his position. Twenty-seven (27) shall constitute a quorum. The General Officers of the Association shall be the officers of the Executive Committee.

SECTION 2. DUTIES: The Executive Committee shall carry out the will of the Association as expressed by that body in regular session and transact all business of the Association ad interim. The Executive Committee shall meet at such time and in such places as shall be determined by the committee itself.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

SECTION 1. OFFICERS: The officers of this Association shall be Moderator and Moderator Elect, (who shall serve as Moderator the following year) and be elected annually from the messengers of the Association and The Secretary-Treasurer, who shall be the Executive Director. All nominees for Moderator and Moderator-Elect shall be registered messengers from their church at the time of election and shall have given their prior consent to being nominated. Except in the event of filling a vacancy, their terms of office shall begin immediately at the close of each Annual Association Celebration. No one may serve as Moderator of this Association for more than one year without the lapse of at least one year. In case of a vacancy, the Executive Committee will be charged with the responsibility of filling the office.

SECTION 2. DUTIES OF OFFICERS: It shall be the duty of the **Moderator** to preside over the meetings of the Association, including the Executive Committee. He shall have the power to appoint special committees as needed. The Moderator shall be ex-officio member of all committees.

The **Moderator-Elect** shall perform all the duties of the Moderator in the absence of the Moderator and shall be responsible for promoting attendance of the members at the Executive Committee meetings.

The **Secretary-Treasurer** shall take charge of all money for Associational purposes, holding the same subject to the orders of the Association. He shall make a report of all receipts and disbursements at each meeting of the Executive Committee and at each Annual Celebration. The Secretary-Treasurer shall also superintend the printing and distribution of the annuals of the Association.

ARTICLE V COMMITTEES AND THEIR DUTIES

A. SELECTION OF COMMITTEES

The **Nominating Committee**, composed of five members, shall select members of all committees and chairpersons of all committees. These persons shall be active members of churches affiliated with the Tampa Bay Baptist Association and their names shall be presented to the Executive Committee and Annual Celebration of the Association for approval. All committees shall be on a three year staggered rotation, with about one-third of the members rotating off each year. No individual shall serve on a given committee for more than three consecutive years without at least one year break in service. Members elected to fulfill a vacancy on a standing committee with the remaining term less than two years, shall be eligible for an additional three year term without a one year break in service.

The committee shall be responsible for filling all committee vacancies during the year with the approval of the Executive Committee. In addition, the Nominating Committee shall nominate the members for the various corporate positions as required.

B. MINISTRY COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. The **Stewardship Committee**, composed of five members, shall prepare a budget for the Association and present it at a meeting of the Executive Committee and for final approval at the Annual Celebration.

SECTION 2. The **Credentials Committee**, composed of six members, is responsible for investigating any church requesting membership in the Association. The pastor of the requesting church will be required to provide a copy of his congregation's Constitution & Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and current church budget at least thirty days prior to the requested meeting with the Credentials Committee. At the meeting with the committee the pastor will answer questions regarding doctrine, cooperation, and church polity.

SECTION 3. The **Administrative Committee**, composed of six members, three of whom are the most recent past moderators and three members who are on a rotating basis. This committee will assume the following responsibilities:

- A. To assist the Associational Executive Director as an advisory Council on matters pertaining to leadership in the Association.
- B. Assure that appropriate personnel reviews are accomplished yearly for all Associational personnel.
- C. Maintain and update the personnel manual including policies and procedures for paid staff.
- D. Work with the Associational Executive Director in preparing updated position descriptions for all personnel.
- E. Work with the Associational Executive Director in establishing personnel salaries and benefits to then be recommended to the Stewardship Committee.
- F. With input from the Executive Director/Treasurer the committee will bring recommendations for hiring or dismissing professional staff.

SECTION 4. The **Conference Center Committee** is composed of at least 7 members, in addition to the Director(s) of the Tampa Bay Baptist Conference Center, and the pastor of Palm Avenue Baptist Church. The Committee will work together with the TBBCC Director(s) to provide counsel and to determine strategies to support and improve the Conference Center ministry. The TBBCC Director(s) shall present a proposed budget to the Associational Director of Missions who will present it to the Stewardship Committee.

SECTION 5. The **Foundation Committee**, three or more shall be lay persons, shall receive and manage bequests to the Association. The committee shall be responsible for informing churches and individuals concerning stewardship of one's estate. These members will be elected yearly and not be rotational.

SECTION 6. Other committees may be added as needed and approved by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VI STAFF

The association shall employ an Executive Director, who shall be an ex-officio (voting) member of all committees. The Executive Director shall give a minimum of one month's notice of resignation to the Executive Committee. In the event of a vacancy in this position, the Moderator shall appoint a special committee who shall prayerfully seek out and present the proper person to the Executive Committee for approval.

The Association, as it deems wise and appropriate, shall employ additional professional staff members whose job descriptions and budget salaries shall be presented to the Executive Committee for approval by the Executive Director.

The retirement schedules and vacation schedules for all professional staff members of the Association are in the Personnel Policy Handbook, approved by the Executive Committee. No professional staff member may be terminated at an Executive Committee meeting without one month's prior written communication to all the Executive Committee members.

Office staff, custodial help, etc. shall be employed the Executive Director as budgeted by the Association. Personnel will abide by general personnel policies approved by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VII INCORPORATED BODIES

SECTION 1. The Association recognizes the work of the Tampa Bay Baptist Association, Inc. consisting of the Moderator of this Association, the Credentials Committee Chairperson, the Executive Director and two members-at-large elected by the Association. The Tampa Bay Baptist Association, Inc. is incorporated as holding company for real estate owned by the Association.

SECTION 2. The Association recognizes the work of the Tampa Bay Baptist Foundation, Inc. which is equipped legally in the State of Florida and approved by the IRS to serve as a foundation for the receipt of property, money, etc.

ARTICLE VIII GENERAL

SECTION 1. This association shall meet annually at such time and place as may be agreed upon at the preceding session of the Association, or by the Executive Committee.

SECTION 2. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall be recognized as standard authority for the settlement of all questions of parliamentary nature coming before the Association.

SECTION 3. This constitution may be amended at any Annual Celebration of the Association by a two-thirds vote of the messengers, provided that notice of such change shall have been presented to a regular meeting of the Executive Committee.