

CONSTITUTION OF THE EASTERN CONFERENCE OF ORGINAL FREE WILL BAPTIST

ARTICLE I

This conference shall be called the Eastern Conference of the Original Free Will Baptists of South Carolina.

ARTICLE II

The officers of this conference shall be: a moderator, an assistant moderator, a clerk and treasurer, an assistant clerk, reading clerk, and an Ordaining Council consisting of three (3) duly ordained ministers to be elected or re-elected yearly.

ARTICLE III

The Executive Committee of this conference shall consist of: The Moderator, Assistant Moderator, the Clerk-Treasurer, Assistant Clerk-Treasurer and Reading Clerk. The Moderator shall be the chairman and the Clerk shall be the secretary to keep minutes of meetings.

ARTICLE IV

Any brother desiring to be licensed or ordained must have a letter of recommendation from the church of which he is a member. Said church must be a member of the Original Free Will Baptists of South Carolina.

ARTICLE V

A minister coming from another conference or association must come by letter from his former conference or association.

ARTICLE VI

Each minister duly licensed or ordained of said conference may have the privilege to vote.

ARTICLE VII

This constitution shall be revised at any annual conference by a vote of two-thirds majority.

RULES OF DECORUM

1. The Association shall be opened and closed with prayer.
2. There shall be no conversation by the members, one with another as to interrupt business while in session.
3. Every member speaking shall first rise and address the moderator.
4. No member shall interrupt another member while they are speaking.
5. We shall admit no other title while in session but that of "Brother" or "Sister."
6. Every member speaking shall attend to the subject under consideration.
7. No member shall speak more than twice on any one subject.
8. Every motion made and seconded shall be attended unless withdrawn by the person who made it.
9. No member shall absent himself from the body without leave of the moderator.
10. On motion made where the vote of the body is taken a majority shall prevail.
11. The moderator shall have the same privilege to speak as any other member, provided the chair is filled.
12. Any members transgressing the above rules shall be admonished by the moderator.
13. Not less than nine members shall constitute a quorum.

STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

SECTION 1- STATEMENT OF FAITH

- (A) **The Bible.** The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament was given by inspiration of God and are our infallible rule of faith and practice.
- (B) **God.** There is one living and true God, revealed in nature as the Creator, Preserver, and Righteous Governor of the universe; and in the Scriptures as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet as one God, infinitely wise and good, whom all intelligent creatures are to love, adore, and obey supremely.
- (C) **Christ.** Christ is God manifest in the flesh in His divine nature truly God, in human nature truly man. The mediator between God and man, once crucified, He is now risen and glorified and is our ever-present Savior and Lord.
- (D) **The Holy Spirit.** The Scriptures assign to the Holy Spirit all the attributes of God.
- (E) **The Government of God.** God exercises a wise and benevolent providence over all beings and things by maintaining the constitution and laws of nature. He also performs special acts, not otherwise provided for, as the highest welfare of men requires.
- (F) **The Sinfulness of Man.** Man was created innocent but by disobedience fell into a state of sin and condemnation. His posterity, therefore, inherits a fallen nature of such tendencies that all who come to years of accountability, sin and become guilty before God.

- (G) **The Work of Christ.** The Son of God by His incarnation, life, sufferings, death and resurrection effected for all redemption for sin that is full and free and is the ground of salvation by faith.
- (H) **The Terms of Salvation.** The conditions of salvation are: (a) Repentance or sincere sorrow for sin and hearty renunciation of it. (b) Faith or the unreserved committal of one's self to Christ as Savior and Lord with purpose to love and obey Him in all things. In the exercise of saving faith, the soul is renewed by the Holy Spirit, freed from the dominion of sin, and becomes a child of God. (c) Continuance in faith and obedience until death.
- (I) **Election.** God determined from the beginning to save all who should comply with the conditions of salvation. Hence, by faith in Christ, men become His elect.
- (J) **Freedom of Will.** The human will is free and self-controlled having power to yield to the influence of the truth and the Spirit or to resist them and perish.
- (K) **Salvation Free.** God desires the salvation of all; the Gospel invites all; the Holy Spirit strives with all; and whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely.
- (L) **Perseverance.** All believers in Christ, who through grace persevere in holiness to the end of life, have the promise of eternal salvation.
- (M) **Gospel Ordinances.** Baptism, or the immersion of believers in water, the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be perpetuated under the Gospel. Feet Washing, an ordinance which teaches humility and reminds the believers of the necessity of a daily cleansing from all sin, is to be ministered to all true believers.

- (N) **Tithing.** God commanded tithes and offerings in the Old Testament; Jesus endorsed it in the Gospel (Matthew 23:23); and the apostle Paul said, "*Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.*" (I Corinthians 16:2). Both the Old and the New Scriptures teach tithing as God's financial plan for the support of His work. We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established the tithe as a basis for giving, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of the tithe or offering once the gift has been made (Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; I Cor. 16: 2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:17-18; I John 3:17).
- (O) **The Christian Sabbath.** The divine law requires that one day in seven be set apart from secular employments and amusements for rest, worship, holy works and activities, and personal communion with God.
- (P) **Resurrection, Judgment, and Final Retribution.** The Scriptures teach the resurrection of all men at the last day. They that have trusted Christ as their Savior will come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have rejected Christ into the resurrection of damnation; then the wicked will "*go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*"
- (Q) **The Church.**

The Local Church

1. The local congregation of believers is the only visible form of the "church" founded by the direct authority of Scripture. Free Will Baptists, therefore, recognize the local church as the sole source of authority possessed and exercised within the visible church.
2. The local church is an independent and self-governing body, with full authority to transact its business, choose its pastor and officers, receive, discipline, and dismiss members, hold free title to all its properties and conduct all its internal affairs.

(R) **Separation.** We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord; and, that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations are commanded of God (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11).

(S) **The Second Advent of Christ.** We believe in that "blessed hope," the personal, Imminent return of Christ Who will rapture His Church prior to the seven-year tribulation period. At the end of the Tribulation, Christ will personally and visibly return with His saints, to establish His earthly Mēssianic Kingdom which was promised to nation of Israel (Ps. 89:3-4; Dan. 2:31-45; Zech. 14:4-11; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev. 3:10; 19-21:6; 20:1-6).

(T) **Civil Government.** We believe that God has ordained and created all authority consisting of four basic institutions: (1) the home; (2) the church; (3) the state and; (4) employment. Every person is subject to these authorities, but all (including the authorities themselves) are answerable to God and governed by His Word. God has given each institution specific Biblical responsibilities and balance.

(U) **Human Sexuality.**

1. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. Any employee of the church becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy as a result of consensual intercourse, outside of the marriage relationship, shall be terminated from employment. (Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1:26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4).
2. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and woman. (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23)

(V) Family Relationships

1. We believe that men and women are equal in position before God that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to be the leaders (pastors and deacons) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church. (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; I Tim.2: 8-15; 3:4-5, 12).
2. We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love the wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are an heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including scriptural corporal correction. (Gen.1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1-7).

- (W) Separation** We believe that all the saved should live in such a manner as not to bring reproach upon their Savior and Lord. God commands His people to separate from all apostasy, and all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations, and to refrain from immodest and immoderate appearances. (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; I John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11; Lev. 19:28; I Cor. 6:19-20).
- (X) Divorce and Remarriage.** We believe that God hates divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the office of pastor or deacon. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; I Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).
- (Y) Abortion.** We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental well-being of the mother are acceptable. (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5; 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jer. 1:5; 20:15-18; Luke 1:44).

(Z) **Missions.** We believe that God has given the church a great commission to proclaim the Gospel to all nations so that there might be a great multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic group, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. As ambassadors of Christ we must use all available means to go to the foreign nations and not wait for them to come to us. (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20).

(AA) **Lawsuits Between Believers.** We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church to resolve personal disputes. We believe the church possess all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between members. We do believe, however, that a Christian may seek compensation for injuries from another Christian's insurance company as long as the claim is pursued without malice or slander. (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Eph. 4:31-32).