

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **Preamble**

We the members of the First Baptist Church of Troy, in order to win men, women, and children to Christ, to spread the gospel of the grace of God to the ends of the earth, to preserve and secure the principles of our faith, and to govern this body in an orderly manner for ourselves and for others who shall hereafter become members of this body, do ordain and establish this Constitution and By-Laws to which we, as members thereof, agree and voluntarily submit ourselves.

This Constitution and By-Laws will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this church in its relation to other churches of the same faith.

### **I. NAME AND LOCATION**

The name of this body shall be First Baptist Church of Troy. The location of this church is 20 Church Avenue, corner of West Main Street and Church Avenue, City of Troy, Bell County, Texas.

### **II. STATEMENT OF FAITH**

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for our statement of faith. This church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind.

### **III. CHURCH COVENANT**

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body of Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to promote the family, as God ordained, as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel for sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

We also engage to maintain family private devotions; to religiously educate our church; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to consent to the same interest taken in us by our fellow church members; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the examples of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

#### **IV. OBJECTIVES**

- A.** To be a dynamic spiritual organism empowered by the Holy Spirit to share Christ with as many people as possible in our church, community, and throughout the world.
- B.** To be a worshipping fellowship, experiencing an awareness of God, recognizing His person, and responding in obedience to His leadership.
- C.** To experience an increasingly meaningful fellowship with God and fellowship with man.
- D.** To help people experience a growing knowledge of God and man.
- E.** To be a church that ministers unselfishly to persons in the community and world in Jesus' name.
- F.** To be a church whose purpose is to be Christ-like in our daily living by empathizing total commitment of life, personality, and possessions to the lordship of Christ.

**V. RELATIONSHIPS**

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body. The decision of the church shall be final in all matters and no appeal can be made to any other ecclesiastical body or civil authority.

This church recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. In so far as is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the Bell County Baptist Association and the Baptist General Convention of Texas, affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

By accepting and joining in the fellowship of this church the present and all future pastors, staff, employees and members accept, adopt and agree to be bound by this Constitution and the By-Laws, as same may from time to time be amended, and expressly consent to the equal and corresponding rights in all members of this fellowship.

**VI. NON-PROFIT RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION**

This organization is organized and has been and shall forever be operated for the sole purpose of engaging in religious worship and promoting the spiritual development and well-being of individuals. It is open to all individuals, of all races, creeds and colors. Its assets are pledged for use in performing its religious functions. The Church is a wholly non-profit organization, and no private individual or entity shall ever profit from its assets or gain financial benefits from the Church or its property. Should this Church ever discontinue its religious function, by dissolution or otherwise, its assets are to be transferred only to a religious or charitable organization that is fully qualified as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3), Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

**VII. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Constitution and By-Laws shall become effective from and after the date of its adoption by two-thirds majority vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special business meeting, pursuant to paragraph XI of the By-Laws.

Date adopted: June 4, 1978  
Revised: November, 1984  
Revised: June, 1995

## **BY-LAWS**

### **I. Membership**

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

#### **A. Candidacy**

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular or special worship service for membership in any of the following ways.

1. **By profession of faith** - for scriptural baptism which is by immersion.
2. **By letter** - On promise or presentation of a letter of recommendation from another Baptist church of like faith and order.
3. **By statement** - An applicant may make a statement of faith; baptism, and membership when for any unavoidable reason a letter of recommendation cannot be obtained from a Baptist church of like faith and order.
4. **By restoration** - Any person whose membership has been terminated for any reason may be restored upon his presentation of evidence of repentance and reformation.
5. **By proxy** - Any applicant expressing a desire to join this church or transfer membership from a Baptist church of like faith and order, but who is unable to attend a service for any valid reason may be presented for membership.

Valid reasons for joiner by proxy are:

- a. stationed overseas,
  - b. severe illness,
  - c. physically unable,
  - d. residence in any location served by a mission effort of this church.
6. **Baptism** - Any person from another denomination who desires to become a part of this fellowship and believes as this fellowship does will be received as a candidate for baptism upon the basis of his conversion experience.

A candidate will be accepted as a member upon the unanimous affirmative vote of the church membership present and voting and completion of candidacy requirements.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. Thereafter a two-thirds vote of those church members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidate to membership.

#### **B. New Member Orientation**

A copy of these By-Laws, the Constitution, the Committee Manual, church budget and church directory will be furnished to each new member and a copy of these documents shall always be available in the church office for inspection.

**C. Responsibilities of Members**

It shall be the duty of the members of this church:

1. to attend its regular meetings.
2. to cultivate personal holiness and family devotion.
3. to sustain the public worship of Almighty God and the ordinances of the gospel.
4. to contribute to the necessary expenditures of the church, to the spread of the gospel to all nations, and to the relief of the poor.
5. to watch over and counsel one another in the spirit of brotherly love.
6. to consent to the concern and counseling of their fellow members.

**D. Voting Rights of Members**

Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or the member exercised the right to vote absentee. Any member who knows that he will be unable to attend a conference and wishes to vote absentee may deliver a ballot on the issue, unsigned, on plain white paper, sealed in an envelope with the words "Absentee Ballot" on the outside. Delivery shall be to the pastor or chairman of the Deacon Body at least one day before the scheduled conference. Such absentee ballot shall be opened and counted along with the other votes or ballots cast at the time of the conference on the issue in question. Absentee ballots will not count toward an amended motion.

**E. Termination**

Membership shall terminate upon any of the following conditions:

1. **Death**
2. **By Letter** - Letters of recommendation will be granted to Baptist churches of like faith and order upon request.
3. **Exclusion** - In case of a member's violating the covenant of fellowship, reflecting poorly upon Christian standards of morality or denying belief in the fundamental doctrines of the church, or through disciplinary proceedings as set forth below.
4. **Dropping from the roll** - Upon satisfactory evidence that a member has united with a church of another denomination, notice of the same will be given at a regular business meeting and the clerk will drop such member from the roll.
5. **Voluntary Withdrawal** - If a member voluntarily withdraws from the church and gives evidence by words or deeds of an intention not to return to fellowship, such member shall be dropped from the roll upon an affirmative vote of the majority of members present and voting at any business conference.

## F. Discipline

**Section 1:** It shall be a basic purpose of the First Baptist Church of Troy to emphasize to its members that every reasonable measure be taken to assist any troubled member. The pastor, other members of the church staff, and deacons are available for counsel and guidance. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline which governs the attitude of one member toward another.

**Section 2:** All members recognize and expressly consent to the authority of the church and their accountability as members to it. The church shall have the right to administer discipline to members either by reproof, rebuke, or withdrawal of fellowship. In all personal offenses the members shall be governed in their conduct by the provisions of *Matthew 18:15-17*. In all public offenses the church shall deal with the member according to *1 Corinthians 5*, *Galatians 6:1* and *1 Timothy 5:19-20* and *6:3-5*. Each member, expressly consents to investigation and discipline within the scope of this Constitution and By-Laws and the First Baptist Church of Troy Safe Church Policy, waiving all rights of privacy and reputation with respect to these matters.

While every member has a right to present disciplinary cases directly to the church in a regular or special conference, yet he is urged in the interest of harmony to first bring the matter to the attention of the deacons. Each member expressly consents to correlative rights in other members with respect to discipline.

**Section 3:** All matters of a disciplinary nature, affecting the fellowship of the church, must be commenced and conducted at a regular conference, or at a special conference duly convened and appointed for that purpose.

No member shall be tried unless he shall have a least ten (10) days prior notice in writing of the general nature of the charge, and have an opportunity to be present, to hear the statements or witnesses against him, and be heard in his own defense. The form, manner, and procedures of church discipline shall be that as prescribed in "McConnell's Manual for Baptist Churches" by F. M. McConnell, pp. 99-113, attached hereto and made a part hereof.

**Section 4:** No member, officer, employee, staff person or pastor shall have any civil cause of action for damages or equitable relief arising from anything done or said in connection with any disciplinary proceeding or grievance presented under any part of these By-Laws. It is a condition of employment and membership in this church that the broadest possible legal privilege and immunity from any statutory or common-law cause of action shall be conferred upon each member with respect to all other members in the event of any disciplinary proceeding, grievance, complaint, counseling, reproof, rebuke, termination or withdrawal of fellowship. Each member shall be absolutely privileged with respect to any matter presented under these By-Laws. Each member, officer, employee, staff person and pastor expressly waives all rights of privacy and waives and renounces all causes of action for invasion of privacy, negligent misrepresentation, professional malpractice, libel, slander, defamation of character, and wrongful discharge as to the church as well as to all other members, officers, employees, staff persons and pastors, based upon or arising from anything said, done or written in or as a result of any meeting of the membership, or the deacons, or any committee, or resulting from any counseling efforts of anyone connected with the church.

## **II. Church Officers**

All church officers must be active members in good standing and must be elected by the church by simple majority vote of those present and voting, except that a pastor selection vote requires a three-fourths majority. Officers of this church shall be as follows:

### **A. Pastor**

#### **Section 1: Election**

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting, called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice has been given. The pastor shall be an employee at will of the church and shall not have a guaranteed term of employment.

A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor and their recommendations will constitute a nomination. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by secret ballot, the affirmative vote of three-fourths of those members present and voting being necessary for selection of a pastor.

#### **Section 2: Duties**

The pastor is responsible for leading the church to function as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff to perform their tasks.

The pastor is leader of pastoral ministries in this church. As such he works with the deacons and church staff to:

- (1) lead the church in performing its tasks,
- (2) lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, education, ministry, and application,
- (3) proclaim the gospel to believers and unbelievers, and
- (4) care for the church's members and other persons in the community.

The pastor shall be responsible for regular and appointed times of worship services, and attention to the spiritual welfare of the membership. He shall be the church moderator and preside at all meetings of the church except as might otherwise be agreed upon by the church. He shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the church.

#### **Section 3: Denominational Responsibilities**

The pastor shall be encouraged to attend any of the denominational meeting, conventions, and conferences which in the mutual judgment of the church and the pastor are necessary for inspiration, information, and promotion. At such meetings he shall be the official messenger of our church when such representation is required.

**Section 4: Grievances**

Any grievances against the pastor shall be presented in the form of a written petition, bearing not less than ten (10) names of active members of the church, to the chairman of the deacons. The deacons shall take remedial action by first taking the matter up with the pastor.

If after having done so the matter cannot be resolved, then it shall be the duty of the deacons to present the matter to the church, together with their findings, for church action. Any bill of particulars presented by the deacons to the church for action shall be presented by the deacons to the church at a regular business meeting or conference. It shall be read to the church at the time of presentation. The pastor shall be entitled to be present and shall be given a copy.

The church shall take no action on the bill of particulars until the next scheduled regular business meeting or conference, at which time the bill of particulars shall be read to the church once more before a vote is taken. The pastor shall have the right to speak in his own behalf and to present witnesses.

On any bill relating to disciplinary action, or dismissal of the pastor a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present and voting at the meeting shall be required as a condition precedent to disciplinary action or dismissal. The manner of voting on such matters shall be by secret written ballot.

The preparation, filing, presentment and reading of any grievance or bill of particulars shall be absolutely privileged against any form of suit or civil liability directed against any member participating therein.

**Section 5: Termination**

The pastor shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. The pastor shall give no more and no less than a full advance two week's notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as pastor.

The church shall have the right to terminate the pastor's services as set forth in Section 4 above, and by paying him 60 days' salary at the time of official termination and severance.

**Section 6: Temporary Executive Powers**

In the absence of the pastor the chairman of the deacon body shall resume temporarily all administrative and supervisory duties of the pastor. He shall also be responsible for obtaining pulpit supply preachers after a pastor has resigned or been removed.

**B. Church Staff**

**Section 1: Employment of Staff**

This church shall call or employ such staff members as needed. The need for staff members shall be determined by the pastor and Personnel Committee. They shall bring a recommendation to the church that the needed position be established.

A job description shall be written for each staff member by the pastor and Personnel Committee. Vocational staff members other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by the Personnel and employed by church vote. The pastor shall have general supervision over all staff members employed or called by the church.

**Section 2: Dismissal of Staff Members**

The Personnel Committee shall act for the church when there is a need to dismiss a staff member (other than the pastor). Reasons for dismissal of the staff member shall be provided in writing for any employee or member upon request. Notice of such dismissal shall be given to the church by the Personnel Committee at the regular monthly business meeting following the dismissal. All employment by the church is employment at will, and no employee has any right to continued employment or employment for any specific term.

**Section 3: Policies and Procedures Manual**

All other matters related to vocational staff members, secretaries, and church custodians shall be administered according to the current "Policies and Procedures Manual" as set forth by the Personnel Committee.

**C. Deacons**

**Section 1: Qualifications of Candidates**

- (1) A man who serves as deacon must fulfill the scriptural qualifications of a deacon as set forth in *1 Timothy 3:8-13*.
- (2) No man shall be considered for ordination or election to the deaconship who has not, by previous service, proven himself faithful to the church covenant and is a commendable example of a Christian gentlemen in his home, business and social contacts.

**Section 2: Selection of Candidates**

- (1) The pastor and chairman of deacons are responsible for determining the church's need for more deacons. They shall bring a recommendation to the church about how many more men are needed.
- (2) After the need is acknowledged and approved by the church the names of all the men who are active members of the church shall be circulated along with a reminder of the qualifications of deacons (as set forth in Section 1 above) at least 30 days before a vote is taken.
- (3) On the day the vote is taken every member present by secret ballot shall vote for the same number of men as recommended and approved by the church to serve as deacons.
- (4) The pastor and chairman of deacons shall serve as a screening committee. The men who receive the highest number of votes, who are found to be scripturally qualified, and who are willing to serve shall be ordained as deacons.

- (5) Ordained deacons joining this church membership may be recommended to the church for election as an active deacon by the present active deacon body. The active deacon body shall decide the appropriate period of church membership for proving before recommending a man for election.

### **Section 3: Office of Deacon**

There shall be an active deacon body elected by the church. The deacons are the servants of the church and not its rulers. They shall, subject to the wishes of the church, cooperate with and assist the pastor and staff.

They shall not encroach upon the pastor's duties as spiritual leader. They shall proclaim the gospel to believers and church members and other persons in the community; lead the church to engage in a fellowship of worship, witness, stewardship, education, ministry, and application; and lead the church in performing its tasks.

### **Section 4: Term of Service**

- (1) A deacon may resign from active service and become inactive by making his request to the deacon body in writing.
- (2) The church, upon recommendation of the deacon body, may promote to Deacon Emeritus any deacon who by reason of age or infirmities, shall, after honorable service, be no longer able to render active service.
- (3) The deacon body may move a deacon from active status to an inactive status when necessary.
- (4) A deacon may be asked to resign or be terminated from being an active deacon upon the recommendation of the deacon body, and subsequent two thirds vote of the church for conduct deemed to be grossly immoral or divisive. This should only occur as a last resort. (Matthew 18:15-17)

### **Section 5: Reinstatement to Active Status**

- (1) A deacon who has requested in writing, to become inactive may be reinstated by making his request known to the deacon body in writing.
- (2) The deacon body may move an inactive deacon to active status when necessary.
- (3) A deacon who has been asked to resign or has been terminated, under the conditions stated in Section 4: Term of Service, paragraph 4, may be reinstated upon recommendation of the deacon body, and subsequent two thirds vote of the church.

### **Section 6: Deacon Body Officers**

The active deacon body shall annually select a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, and other officers as deemed necessary by said body. These officers are subject to approval by the church.

#### **D. Moderator**

The pastor shall be the moderator at all business conferences, unless he is disqualified by interest. In the absence or disqualification of the pastor, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence or disqualification of both, the clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be elected. The term "disqualified by interest" means that an officer of the church, or his job performance, is the direct subject of discussion and possible action by the church body. It does not imply that the officer would act unfairly, but to remove even the appearance of unfairness no person shall act as moderator when his own job or performance is the subject of potential action of a direct and specific nature. Incidental involvement, such as the pastor presiding at a general budget meeting, will not disqualify.

#### **E. Clerk**

The clerk shall be elected annually. The clerk's duties shall be:

- (1) To keep a correct record of all the actions of the church except as otherwise herein provided.
- (2) To keep a register of the names of members, with dates of admission, dismissal or death together with a record of baptisms.
- (3) To issue letters of dismissal voted on by the church.
- (4) To prepare the annual church letter for the association.
- (5) To preserve and file all communications and written official reports.

Parts of these duties may be delegated by the clerk to other persons as approved by the church.

#### **F. Treasurer**

The treasurer shall be elected annually. He shall be a person with some knowledge of accounting. He shall be bonded. The treasurer's duties shall be:

- (1) to receive and preserve all church monies.
- (2) to disburse church funds as outlined in the adopted budget and as directed by specific action by the church.
- (3) to maintain accurate records of all church finances.
- (4) to prepare and present a written itemized financial report for the preceding quarter to the church at the quarterly business meeting.
- (5) to prepare an annual financial report to be included in the annual church letter for the association.

Parts of these duties may be delegated by the treasurer to other persons as approved by the church.

### **G. Trustees**

The Deacon Officers of First Baptist Troy will act as trustees for the church. They will hold in trust the church property. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote of the church authorizing each action.

It shall be the function of the trustees to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where the signatures of trustees are required.

No trustee shall have personal liability upon any obligation of the church, and they act in a representative capacity only.

### **III. Committees**

There shall be two types of committees: standing and special committees.

#### **Section 1: Standing Committees**

Standing committees work throughout the year. The policies concerning membership, terms of office, qualifications of members, organization, procedures, and specific duties shall be found in the current "Committee Manual". Additional standing committees may be added by church vote.

(1) **Committee on Committees**--purpose is to nominate qualified members for church committees. They are responsible for preparing and/or revising the "Committee Manual."

(2) **Personnel Committee**--purpose is to nominate volunteer church officers and organizational workers and assist the church in matters related to employed personnel. They are responsible for preparing and/or revising the "Policies and Procedures Manual for Church Staff."

(3) **Building and Grounds Committee**--purpose is to assist the church in matters related to the maintenance and improvement of all church properties.

(4) **Hospitality Committee**--purpose is to assist the church in all church-wide fellowships and in the maintenance of the church kitchen.

(5) **Baptismal Committee**--purpose is to assist the pastor in preparing and conducting the baptismal services.

(6) **Evangelism Committee**--purpose is to assist the church in planning and carrying out a program of evangelism and outreach.

(7) **Constitution and By-Laws Maintenance Committee**--purpose is to regularly update and maintain the ready availability of accurate copies of the current Constitution and By-Laws of the church.

**(8) Finance Committee-** The purpose of this committee is to promote stewardship responsibility, to assist the church in handling its financial matters, and to prepare the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year and submit the budget to the church for approval. This committee shall consist of five members. The church treasurer will serve on this committee as an ex-officio non-voting member. When the Finance Committee is acting in the role of preparing the budget proposal, the Chairman of Deacons would serve as moderator, with the right to vote when a tie-breaker is encountered.

Specific duties include:

- (1)** Establish written guidelines for handling church financial matters which shall include:
  - a. Expenditures:
    1. Methods of purchasing.
    2. Bookkeeping procedures and form of report to church.
    3. Bringing recommendations to the church concerning needed adjustments to the budget.
    4. Those who shall have authority to sign checks for the church.
  - b. Collections:
    1. Specific manner to count, record and deposit all monies collected so that no one person has to bear the responsibility of establishing the accounts.
    2. Staff involvement in the collection of monies
- (2)** Bring recommendations to the church concerning the pastor's salary and benefits.
- (3)** Make budget proposals for all other items not clearly defined or presented by those representing the organizations or committees who are supposed to submit their requests/recommendations for the coming fiscal year.
- (4)** Promote stewardship responsibilities among the fellowship.
- (5)** Adequately protect the church on treasurer bonding and all other necessary insurance.
- (6)** When required to prepare the proposed budget as described, this committee shall prepare the entire church budget. Each organization and committee shall submit recommendations for budget items related to their specific tasks. This committee shall discuss any changes of budget proposals with the committee or organization involved before any permanent changes are made to the proposal. This proposed budget shall be presented for church action at the business meeting of the month prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year. The approved budget may be adjusted in part, or as a whole at any time upon recommendation of the Finance Committee and approval of the church in regular conference.

It is understood that membership in this church involved stewardship obligation to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts.

## **Section 2: Special Committees**

Special committees have unique jobs to do that terminate at a specific point in time. Special committees may be appointed by the pastor, nominated by the Committee on Committees, or elected in some special way by the church. All special committees are to have a written description of their responsibilities before they take office. All special committees must be approved by the church at any regular or special business meeting. The one special committee currently is:

### **(1) Pulpit Committee**

The purpose of this committee is to seek out and recommend to the church a suitable pastor for this church when a vacancy occurs. It shall be composed of two women and three men, **and one male and one female alternate.**

Election: Nominations will be made by secret ballot, at a special meeting called for this purpose. Each member shall be asked to write their choice of 5 members, two of which must be women, for nomination to the committee. NO two members of the same immediate family may be elected for membership on the Pulpit Committee. These names will be tabulated and the top 6 men and the top 4 women will be submitted as nominees to the church at a later called meeting. The congregation will vote again for 5 members, two of which must be women, and the top 3 men and the top 2 women shall be elected to the committee. **The next man and woman having received the most votes will be asked to serve as alternate committee members.** The committee shall follow the procedure for election of a pastor as set forth in Article II A, Section 1: "Election." The committee will be terminated when the church calls a new pastor who accepts the call. (As amended by church vote on May 14, 1995.)

**Alternate committee members will meet regularly in prayer and consultation with the committee and shall provide counsel, without voting privilege; share the prescribe responsibilities of committee members; remain active in church services (will not customarily travel with committee or be absent from church services); will replace a committee member who permanently relinquishes committee service, such action being announced to the church body. Alternate committee members will not be replaced without church vote.** (As amended by church vote on September 22, 1996.)

#### **IV. Program Organizations**

All organizations of the church shall be under church control, all officers being elected by the church and reporting monthly to the church.

##### **A. Sunday School**

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the direction of the Sunday School Director for the study of God's Word.

The tasks of the Sunday School shall be:

- (1) To teach the biblical revelation;
- (2) Reach persons for Christ and church membership;
- (3) Perform the functions of the church within its constituency;
- (4) Provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

##### **B. Church Music Program**

There shall be a church music program under the direction of the Music Director. Such officers and/or organizations shall be included as needed. The music tasks shall be:

- (1) Teach music;
- (2) Train persons to lead, sing, and play music.
- (3) Provide music in the church and community.
- (4) Provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

##### **C. Other Program Organizations**

Other program organizations, such as Women on Mission and Baptist Men, may be established as the church decides. A written description of these organizations and their tasks is to be prepared before the program begins to function.

###### **a. Christian Training**

There may be a Christian Training Organization conducted under the direction of a Christian Training Director. The tasks of the Christian Training Organizations shall be:

- (1) To orient new church members;
- (2) Train church members to perform the functions of the church;
- (3) Train church leaders;
- (4) Teach Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian history, and church policy and organization;
- (5) Provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and denomination.

**b. Women on Mission**

There may be a Woman's Missionary Union with such officers and organizations as needed. The tasks of the Woman's Missionary Union shall be to lead the church to:

- (1) Teach missions;
- (2) Engage in mission action;
- (3) Support world missions through praying and giving;
- (4) Provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

**c. Baptist Men**

There may be a Brotherhood with such organization as needed. The tasks are to lead the church to:

- (1) Teach missions.
- (2) Engage in mission action, support world missions through praying and giving.
- (3) Provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

**V. Ordinances**

**A. Baptism**

A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; who professes him publicly at any worship service; and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism.

- (1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water.
- (2) Baptism shall be administered by the pastor or whoever the church shall authorize.
- (3) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship.
- (4) A person professing Christ and failing to be baptized after a reasonable length of time shall be counseled by the pastor and/or staff and deacons. If negative interest is ascertained, he shall be deleted from those awaiting baptism.

**B. Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate his second coming.

- (1) The Lord's Supper shall be observed quarterly, preferable the first Sunday of the quarter, or as otherwise scheduled.
- (2) The pastor and deacons shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.
- (3) The deacon body shall be responsible for the physical preparations for the Lord's Supper.

## **VI. Church Meetings**

### **A. Worship Services**

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship of Almighty God. These meetings will be open for the entire membership and for all people. These services shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

### **B. Special Services**

Revival services and any other church meetings which will be essential in the promotion of the objectives of the church shall be placed on the church calendar upon approval by the church.

### **C. Regular Business Meetings**

Regular business meetings shall be held on the second Sunday night of each month unless otherwise scheduled by the church.

### **D. Special Business Meetings**

A specially called business meeting may be held to consider special matters of a significant nature. A one-week notice in writing, of the subject, date, time and location must be given for the specially called business meeting unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical. Special meetings may be called by the pastor or deacon body.

### **E. Quorum**

The quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

### **F. Parliamentary Rules**

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, is the authority for Parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church, except as provided in paragraph I, F, Section (3) hereof, on page of these By-Laws.

## **VII. Church Finances**

### **A. Budget**

It is understood that membership in this church involves stewardship obligation to support the church and its causes with regular proportionate gifts.

The budget committee shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and denominational expenses. This proposed budget shall be presented for church action at the business meeting of the month prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year. The approved budget may be adjusted in part, or as a whole, at any time upon recommendation of the Stewardship Committee and approval of the church in regular conference.

### **B. Accounting Procedures**

All funds for any and all purposes shall pass through the hands of the church treasurer and be properly recorded on the books of the church.

A system of accounting that will adequately provide for the handling of all funds shall be the responsibility of the Stewardship Committee.

### **C. The Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1 to December 31.

## **VIII. Church Operations Manual**

Church policies and procedures shall be described in the church operations manual. This manual shall be kept in the church office and made available to any member of the church. This manual shall be maintained by the pastor.

Changes in policies and procedures may be initiated by any church member or organization. Additions, revisions, and deletions of church policies requires a recommendation to the church officer or organization, including committees, to whose areas of assignment the policies relates, for evaluation. Procedures may be added, revised, or deleted by recommendation of the appropriate officer or group.

## **IX. Church Property and Records**

The assets, money, property and records of the church shall at all times remain the property of the church and shall not inure to the benefit of any individual. Withdrawal, severance, termination, or separation from the church by any member or group of members shall not entitle such member or members to any property or funds of the church, nor to any records of the church, and the proper repository for all such shall be the accounts, files and buildings of the church, as the case may be. No member, inclusive of the pastor, employees and staff shall ever use church funds or property for personal use or benefit nor shall the credit of the church ever be pledged by or for the benefit of any individual. The church acts only as a body and through its designated agents.

Any group, person, or persons seeking the use of any facilities of First Baptist Church Troy whose beliefs, actions, and/or lifestyle are outside the Constitution and By-Laws or the teachings of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message will be denied the use of any facilities of First Baptist Church Troy.

## **X. By-Laws To Control**

These By-Laws shall in all instances control over any custom or usage, as well as over any conflicting provision of any church manual, policy statement or directive.

## **XI. Amendments**

Changes in this Constitution and By-Laws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided each proposed amendment shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment have been furnished to each member present. Amendments to the Constitution shall be by two-thirds vote of all members of the church present and voting. Amendments to the By-Laws shall have a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.

Date Adopted: June 4, 1978

Revised: November, 1984

Revised: June, 1995

Revised: October, 1998

Revised: June, 2001

Revised: January 2010

Revised: April 27, 2014

**McCONNELL'S  
MANUAL for BAPTIST CHURCHES**

by F. M. McConnell, D.D.  
The Judson Press, Philadelphia, 1926

**VI. CHURCH DISCIPLINE**, (pg. 99-113)

Every organization which continues and develops strength to accomplish the purpose of its being must maintain an orderly discipline. An army without discipline is at the mercy of the enemy. A nation without practical patriotism producing a law-abiding citizenship is at the mercy of the advocates of anarchy. A school without discipline trains its students in lawlessness. A church must maintain discipline or be held in contempt both by the lovers of righteousness and the promoters of evil. Hence Paul wrote, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40; see also Eph. 4:11,12; 1 Cor. 14:33; Titus 1:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-23). All the apostles constantly taught the churches the value of good order and how to maintain it.

To prevent disorder and worldliness on the one hand, and keep from turning the business meetings of a church into trial-court scenes on the other, requires wise management and a degree of statesmanship. Both extremes should be avoided as if they were pestilences.

Constructive, spiritual preaching is the best means of church discipline. The best way to combat disease is by keeping the body full of red, healthy blood, and the best way to combat worldliness in a church is by maintaining earnest spirituality in all the departments of its work.

There are two kinds of discipline: (1) Formative and (2) corrective.

Of these two kinds of discipline, the first is vastly more important. The word means "giving shape to: tending to mold that which is plastic or pliable." When a church molds the pliable lives of its members into full-grown men and women in Christ it is accomplishing its best discipline for them.

All the departments of the church should be conducted so as to mold the workers into better, stronger church-members. The Sunday Bible school, the young people's organizations, the Missionary Union, the men's Brotherhood, all the organizations which instruct, train, and keep active the members of the church help along this formative discipline.

That pastor is wise who hunts worthy tasks for his people. When a member gets to the place where he has a partnership-consciousness with foreign and home missionaries, evangelists, and those who manage or promote Christian institutions, that member will have little place in his heart for worldliness and little time for wrong-doing.

*Corrective discipline* is that which a church administers to those who violate their solemn covenant and commit sin, to the hurt of other members or the cause of Christ.

There are two kinds of offenses recognized in the New Testament--*personal* and *general offenses*. They require different methods of dealing.

The good that any church does in any community depends very largely upon the favorable esteem in which it is held by the people on the outside. The words of Paul to Timothy concerning a bishop, pastor, apply with perhaps greater force to the church organization: "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:7). The members of a church should, therefore, avoid public scandal which would hurt the standing of the church in its community.

**Personal Offenses.** It was doubtless for this reason that the Master gave directions for settling personal differences between members of a church. His law is found in *Matthew 18:15-22*.

From this passage we learn:

1. Sin is both against God and an individual when it injures that individual.
2. When the sin, or injury, is personal and private the injured should go at once (the "go" is imperative) to the one who has done the injury, and show him his fault. It is never best to write him about it. The word "show" does not mean to upbraid him, but to lay the case before him in all possible clearness, so that he may see the wrong he has done.
3. In connection with this passage it is well to consider, also, the duty of one who has reason to believe that a brother has been injured by him and is offended at him. We find the law of Jesus for such cases in *Matthew 5:23, 24*.

This is also to be a very private matter between the two. It is taken from the synagogue, or temple, worship as an illustration of the duty of a sincere worshiper. The connection of the gift with the worship is natural, for in all of the Old Testament the financial support of the priesthood, the teachers of religion, was inseparably connected with the act of worship. Such support proved the sincerity of the heart. A worship that did not cost the worshiper anything was considered insincere.

How wholesome this teaching is! To follow what the Master says would cover a multitude of sins.

4. If the injured goes to the one doing the injury, and that one sees his fault and repents of it, the injured party should immediately and fully forgive him. Then the matter would end.

5. But if the one doing the injury will not see and acknowledge his fault, or repent of it, a second step is to be taken.

Up to this time the utmost privacy has been maintained, in the hope that the wrong-doing might not become known and injure the church, or the wrong-doer, in the eyes of others. When such private effort at supporting righteousness fails, then the injured party is commanded to get one or two others to go with him to the offender. They should, of course, be prudent, good men; not relatives, or partisans of the one requesting their service; but men loving truth and right, whose testimony would stand if offered by him. Their duty would evidently be twofold: To assist in getting the offender to acknowledge his wrong and make amends; and secondly, to testify before the church concerning the case and the conduct of the parties at variance, if it should be brought to the church.

In the administration of justice among the Jews the testimony of the accused was allowed on behalf of himself, to offset the testimony of any witness who might be against him; hence, the saying, "One witness is no witness." It was, therefore, necessary to have two or three witnesses for the persecution in order to convict. So, if the matter was to be brought before the church, one or two others were necessary as witnesses, for surely no church should be less fair than a Jewish court.

6. When the injured party fails to get a personal reconciliation, and when he fails to get a reconciliation by taking one or two others with him, it becomes his duty to take it to the church. This should be done at a regular meeting of the church. The effort to prevent the harm that might be done by making the matter public is altogether praiseworthy, and it should keep all of the parties from talking about the case to others, before it is made public by bringing it to the church. However, when a public trial is the only thing that can secure justice, it ought to be had in an orderly, proper way.

The charges should be clear and explicit, the testimony presented fairly, and everything done for the purpose of promoting justice and righteousness. If the parties concerned show animosity toward each other, their spirit should not be shared by the church. All the members whose duty it is to pass upon the case should maintain a judicial attitude, be as impartial as jurors or judges; not regarding the person or condition of either party to the contention. Every member should try earnestly to reach a just, fair, and impartial decision on the merits of the case, having in view only the triumph of truth and justice. If the truth prevails, it will work out, finally, for the good of the church and all concerned.

7. If the offending party will hear the church and yield to the decision of the members assembled, there should be a complete, immediate reconciliation. Apologies should be offered, or restitution made, and the injured party should forgive heartily, sincerely, and publicly, at once. If such should be the happy termination of the affair, all the members of the church should assure the wrong-doer of their sincere fellowship and prayers for his future spiritual prosperity.

8. But if he will not hear the church and do right, then fellowship should be withdrawn from him, and he should be regarded the same as an outsider who never had any connection with the church whatever. The language of Jesus is clear and strong on this point. When one is excluded from the fellowship of a church, it is disloyalty to Jesus Christ and the church for any of the members to extend such comfort and sympathy as would minify or alleviate the effect of the exclusion. He should be treated as an outsider in every sense. Of course, he should be made to feel that the church would immediately forgive him if he repented and desired to return to the church in the proper way.

**General Offenses.** A general offense is one which is of such a character that the cause of Christ is injured in such a manner that it becomes the duty of the church, as a body, to seal with the offender.

General offenses may include denial of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, violation of one or more of the Ten Commandments, or the laws of the country, and disturbing the harmony and peace of the church.

Two things should be kept in mind when dealing with persons accused of a general offense: One is that the accused should be saved, if possible, to the church and righteousness; the other is that the good name and standing of the church must be preserved.

To an extent the principle of private, fraternal treatment laid down by the Master, in dealing with personal offenses, should govern when a member is accused of a general offense. It is against the church and, therefore, against every member. Hence, the pastor, deacons, or any member of the church may endeavor, with propriety to reclaim the one going astray. It is their duty to do so. There should be the most earnest effort put forth to save the erring member.

In doctrinal matters very few people go very far wrong all at once. They usually drift into heresy. Their drifting may be observed by the other members. It should cause concern and sincere grief. The spiritually minded should undertake to restore such in the spirit of meekness. (*Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25.*) They should go to him and admonish him and endeavor in all Christian love to show him the truth.

If efforts do not avail, if he persist in the heretical beliefs and becomes opposed of the power and influence of the truth, the church must cut loose from him. "A heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." However, we should learn the lesson from modern surgery that the main effort should be to save and not destroy. Too many surgeons and too many churches have been hasty in performing operations on members of the body. Of course, good surgery removes the offending member when it endangers the life or permanent health of the body, and good church discipline acts the same way; but courageous sanity instead of nervous haste should guide.

In dealing with general offenses there should be such fairness and Christian consideration shown the accused that all reasonable people would justify the church in its course. Haste and unwise management of the case often produce factional feelings hurtful to the harmony and fellowship of other members. This should be avoided, if possible. There should be much earnest prayer. The spirit of Christ should prevail all through.

If all efforts to reclaim the offending member fail, charges should be brought against him in the church. They should state specifically and clearly his offense, and he should be given a copy of them. A general charge such as "unchristian conduct," or "conduct unbecoming a Christian," or "covenant-breaking," is not sufficient. The general charge may be made, and then the particulars set out; but the accusation should be specific. There should be a time set for trial and the accused member should be given every reasonable opportunity to establish his innocence. The church should rejoice if he is able to prove himself innocent. If, on the other hand, he is not able to do so, or if he defies the church, or attempts to dominate the situation and treat the church with contempt, the membership, in sorrow but in fidelity to the truth and justice, must withdraw fellowship from him regardless of consequences.

Sometimes when a member on trial sees that he is found out and his guilt is going to be established, he becomes penitent, confesses and asks forgiveness. Such confessions are seldom sincere. The members should endeavor not to be swept off of their feet at such a time. There is a wide-spread impression that "when confession is made the church has to forgive." Such is not the case. The church should exercise due caution. When the repentance is evidently sincere and the member on trial admits his guilt and humbly promises to live right if forgiven by the church, then the church may forgive; but there is no compulsion on its part to do so. If the members have any doubt of his sincerity and the genuineness of his repentance, they may very consistently refuse forgiveness at that time. It is altogether proper to stop proceedings and give the accused time to show his repentance, at least for a month or two. If then he shows by a consistent life that he was sincere in his promise to amend, the church should forgive fully and joyfully. Dr. J. M. Pendleton, in his **Church Manual**, pp. 141, 142, advocated immediate exclusion without trial, of those accused of offenses of an infamous or scandalous character. I cannot agree with him. It seems to me that a church should be as considerate of an accused person as our courts are of those accused of crimes against the civil government. It would appear, also, that the more serious the accusation the more harm might be done the accused if he were innocent. Furthermore, an amount of evidence that would justify exclusion without trial, would certainly convict in a trial and fully sustain the church in excluding the offender. *1 Corinthians 5:1, 5*, cited by Doctor Pendleton, does not sustain his position. It does not say that the Corinthian church should take such drastic action without taking proper steps to prove what was "reported." Every man is entitled to a fair and impartial trial by any organization of which he is a member. The Bible is just; but it is merciful even to the greatest sinners.

In the trial of a member the proceedings should be orderly and calculated to obtain justice. The church should attend to its own business in its own way. Bringing in attorneys, or court-stenographers, or anything that would influence the members in either eliciting and considering the facts, or their decision in the case, should not be tolerated by a church.

The proceedings should be about as follows:

1. The church should be in its business meeting with moderator and clerk present ready to proceed in an orderly way.

2. The accused should have had due notice and an opportunity to be present.

3. If he is not present and no one knows of providential hindrances the records in the case should be read by the clerk and the evidence to sustain the charges submitted. Then, if the church deems the evidence sufficient to sustain the charges, fellowship would be withdrawn and a proper record made. If the church does not deem the evidence sufficient to sustain the charges, the case should be dismissed.

4. If the accused is present, the clerk will read the record thus far in the case, including the charges, and the accused will have an opportunity to make his answer. If he says that he is not guilty of the accusation, the church will present the evidence it has in support of the charges. The accused will then present his side of the case and introduce evidence supporting him.

5. After all the evidence is submitted and explained so that it is understood by the membership, a vote of the church is taken on the question "Shall the charges be sustained?"

6. If a majority votes in the affirmative the moderator declares the charges sustained. If a majority votes in the negative, the moderator declares that the charges are not sustained and the case is dismissed.

7. If the charges are sustained, it is then in order to have a motion to withdraw fellowship. Such a motion should be passed by a unanimous vote. If a minority votes in the negative, they should be asked if they will be reconciled to the exclusion of the accused. If they reply that they will not be reconciled, then the church should withdraw fellowship from them. If, on the other hand, they will be reconciled to the exclusion of the accused, such an agreement on their part should be satisfactory to the church. On all matters of fellowship there must be unanimity in church action.

After a member is excluded, all the others should treat him as having been justly dealt with. There should be no sympathetic expressions which could be construed as upholding him and condemning the church. Such sympathy is disloyalty to the church of Christ. All the members should desire and for his restoration; but they should desire it only on the basis of repentance and confession.