

CONSTITUTION
OF
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF BELIZE

AMENDED OCTOBER 7, 2006

CONSTITUTION OF THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF BELIZE

PREAMBLE:

Endeavoring to follow the teaching of Philippians 2:2, "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." We therefore join ourselves together in a voluntary association of Baptist churches. This Constitution shall be secondary to and in subjection to the principles espoused by the Holy Bible in guiding the conduct of the business of the Baptist Association of Belize.

NAME:

This association shall be known as the Baptist Association of Belize. (Registered as the Baptist Church of Belize with Government Ordinance # 12 of 1976, October 9, 1976 Appendix A)

OBJECTIVE:

The objective of this Association shall be the promotion of spiritual teaching and the maintenance of the doctrines as enshrined in the Holy Bible by:

- (1) Spreading the Gospel Message in ever-widening circles within and without the borders of the country of Belize
- (2) Taking positive steps to increase and sustain Christian tenets.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Association shall be:

- (1) To encourage voluntary inter-church cooperation.
- (2) Promotion of common interest, viz.: Anniversary celebrations, Bible camps and conferences, joint services, and joint statements.
- (3) The coordination of special campaigns and the calling of special speakers for such campaigns.
- (4) Assistance with legal and public matters and other church needs. (No officer may speak for the Association on controversial matters without the consent of the Executive Committee)
- (5) Cooperation with other evangelical conservative church assemblies and/or mission societies.
- (6) Mutual agreement on, and attainment of long range goals, viz.:
 - (a) The winning of as many people as possible to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (b) The training and encouragement of all believers in Christian service and growth.
 - (c) The establishing of churches throughout the country.

INTERPRETATION:

- (1) Association refers to Baptist Association of Belize.
- (2) Tenet refers to the doctrines and principles of Christianity as taught by the inerrant Word of God - the Holy Bible.
- (3) Messengers refer to those representatives sent to all General Meeting of the Association by the several local bodies comprising the said Association and having voting rights on any and all questions / issues brought forward in the meeting.
- (4) Statement of Faith refers to Articles II of this Constitution.
- (5) Distinctives refer to Appendix B.

(6) Church membership refers to active born-again baptized members within local Baptist churches comprising the Association.

(7) The Executive Committee serves in the role of Elders and Committee of Management for the purpose of understanding the Ordinance of Incorporation of the Baptist Church of Belize. The Executive Committee shall also serve as the Board of Trustee of the Association.

CHARTER

AUTHORITY: The sole authority by which this Association exists, is found in the Scriptures which teach the voluntary cooperation of all New Testament Churches, viz. : the assistance rendered by the church of Antioch to the church at Jerusalem (Acts 11: 29-30).

ARTICLE I

Section 1: Admission:

Any Baptist church of like faith and practice in this country may be admitted to the Association upon official application and majority vote of member churches, and the fulfillment of all requirements that may be requested.

Section 2: Dismissal / Withdrawal:

(a) Any member church of this Association may withdraw at any time, without the consent of the other churches.

(b) If any member church of the association fails to hold true to the doctrines and practices of the Baptist churches, it shall be dismissed by majority vote of the messengers of the Association.

(b.1) Such failure shall be of substance and shall be distinctly put to the meeting in specific terms. Frivolity shall be avoided at all cost.

Further, a motion must be procedurally made and seconded before dismissal shall become effective.

(c) Any individual member of such church (a and b above) who may be serving as a member of a committee within the Association shall relinquish such post forthwith.

Procedure:

1. Chairperson of region shall consult with the church in question to determine the extent of the problem and attempt to resolve it.
2. If this fails, the situation shall be referred to the President and he shall consult with the church within two (2) weeks to effect such resolution.
3. If this fails, The Executive Committee shall consult with the church within two (2) weeks of the President's consultation with said church.
4. If this fails, such matter shall be brought up to the general assembly (Annual General Meeting) at which time further attempts shall be made to resolve the matter.

Section 3: Duties

It is the duty of all members to elect and send messengers to all Association meetings and to cooperate as much as possible in all matters. Each church is expected to make financial contributions to the Association on a regular basis.

ARTICLE II -- STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe in...

1. **ONE GOD:** Holy, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, subsisting in a mysterious trinity- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Deut. 6:4; II Cor. 13:14).

2. **ONE WORD:** The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, given by inspiration of God and our only infallible rule of faith and practice (II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1: 19-21).

3. **ONE CONDEMNATION:** There being no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:10-26; Rom. 6:23; John 3:36; Ezk. 18:4).

4. **ONE SAVIOUR:** The Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, in His essential deity, virgin birth (Matt. 1:23), sinless life (I John 3:5), vicarious death, physical and bodily resurrection from the grave and His ascension into heaven from whence He shall return personally to set up an earthly kingdom (John 1:1-4, 14-19; Isa. 7:14; Acts 3:12-26; Heb. 9:24; I Cor. 15:12-28; I Thes. 4:13-18; Acts 1:11; Rev. 19:19-20, 20:1-6; Titus 2:11-14).

5. **ONE ATONEMENT FOR SIN:** Made by Jesus Christ in a substitutionary and sacrificial death on the cross, sufficient for all, taking every legal obstacle out of the way of all, and on these grounds to be offered to all, and that all must be born again or be forever lost (Heb. 2:9; Rom. 5:10; II Cor. 5:18-21; Mark 10:45; I Pet. 2:24).

6. **ONE SPIRIT:** God the Holy Ghost, through whose sovereign agency in regeneration, the soul, dead in sin, is made alive in Christ, and through whose sovereign agency in sanctification, the soul is changed more and more into the divine image from glory to glory (John 16: 7-15; II Cor. 3:18; I Cor. 3:16; John 14:16-17).

7. **ONE LIFE:** The life hid with Christ in God - the life eternal, begun when a sinner believes and receives Him, and continues thereafter by the effectual and sovereign grace of God (Phil. 1:6; Eph. 1:13; John 1:12; Rom. 10:9-10).

8. **ONE CHURCH:** (a) Consisting of the universal church which is the body of Christ, and the members of which God has from the beginning chosen in Christ unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

(b) The local church, which is a company of living believers in Christ, meeting in a sincere confession of faith and association for worship, work, and fellowship (Acts 2:41-42,47; I Cor. 1:2)

9. **ONE COMMISSION:** The great evangelistic commission given by Jesus Christ to the disciples and the continuing church (Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8)

10. **ONE SATAN:** Both tempter and accuser who exists in personality and reality (Rev. 12:9-10; Matt. 4:2-11; John 8:44; Eph. 6:12; I Pet. 5:8).

11. **TWO DESTINIES:** Heaven and Hell: That heaven is a place of eternal life with Christ and that hell is a place of eternal separation from God (Rev. 20:1-15, 21-22; Heb. 9:27; John 3:35, 3:16, 14:1-3).

12. We believe in the "**blessed hope**", the personal return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:8; Matt. 22:44; Acts 1:11).

13. We believe that the *ordinances* of the Gospel are **Baptism** and the **Lord's Supper**. Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer in Christ "in the name of the Father and of the Son,

and of the Holy Ghost," and symbolizes the believer's death, burial and resurrection with Christ to walk in newness of life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of His broken body and shed blood for the remission of sin and symbolizes the fact that the believer identifies himself with Christ. This ordinance should be partaken only by those whose faith is in Christ.

ARTICLE III A Delegate Body

1. **Messengers:** In an effort to spur membership to active participation, up to four (4) voting members from any single local church shall be selected by the individual local church to

be messengers to the Association's meeting. Churches having a membership of over seventy-five (75) shall be allowed an additional messenger for every twenty-five (25) members beyond the seventy-five (75) mark.

In addition the pastors and their wives will also have voting rights.

Finally two (2) votes respectively shall be allotted to missions working with the Association and the wives of those representing the Missions will also have voting rights.

1. Each messenger shall be issued with a special voting card at / before the commencement of all General Meetings. These cards must be turned in at the end of each General Meeting.

3. Each un-constituted church shall be treated as any other with voting rights and financial obligations. However, every effort ought to be made by that local body to become constituted at the earliest.

ARTICLE III B OFFICERS

The officers of the Association shall be the president, vice-presidents, who shall be the serving chairpersons of the existing regions, secretary, executive secretary treasurer, and the chairperson of the Legal Affairs Committee.

Each officer of the Association shall have one vote; with the exception of the President whose vote will only be exercised in the event of a tie.

ARTICLE IV MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS

Sixty percent (60%) of member churches shall constitute a quorum.

There shall be an Annual Meeting of the Association during the last quarter of the year at which time the Officers and

various other personnel shall be elected. Extraordinary Meetings may be called on the decision of the Executive Committee and shall be treated as a General Meeting. There shall be a reasonable period of notice given in writing to all member churches prior to the Extraordinary Meetings.

Venues of meetings will rotate from Region to Region beginning with the Central then the Western then the Southern and then the Northern.

The specific local church within the Region where the next meeting is to be hosted shall be decided at the particular Region's final meeting at the close of the year. The particular venue shall be announced at the Annual Meeting in the last quarter of the year.

Elections shall follow the order as recommended by the Policy Manual and this Constitution.

ARTICLE V REGIONAL DIVISIONS

1. There shall be up to five (5) Regions for the effective work of the Association viz. Southern Region comprising Baptist Churches of the Toledo and Stann Creek Districts; Central Region comprising Baptist Churches of the Belize District; Northern Region comprising Baptist Churches of the Corozal and Orange Walk Districts; Western Region comprising Baptist Churches of the Cayo District and an Eastern Region comprising Baptist Churches in San Pedro Town, Caye Caulker and other populated islands East of Belize's Coastline but within its boundaries.
2. Standing Committees shall be elected by the Regional Bodies as deemed necessary to function effectively.
3. The chairpersons of each Standing Committee of each Regional Body shall be the persons who will form Associational Committees when needed for the specific task involved to coordinate the various activities.

4. Regional Bodies shall meet quarterly but reserve the right to hold additional meetings deemed necessary provided that all member churches are notified two (2) full weeks prior to the propose date of the meeting.

5. Officers and Standing Committees shall be elected prior to the Annual Meeting of the Association. The names and addresses of the elected officers should be presented to the Secretary of the Association for information and record.

ARTICLE VI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Executive or Management Committee of the Association shall be

1.1 Voting Members

- (a) President
- (b) Vice-presidents
- (c) Secretary
- (d) Executive Secretary Treasurer
- (e) The Chairperson of the Legal Affairs Committee
- (f) Heads of Missions
- (g) Home Missions Representative
- (h) Youth Ministry chairperson
- (i) Women Ministry chairperson
- (j) Men Ministry chairperson
- (k) Social Ministries (Human Needs) chairperson
- (l) Christian Education chairperson
- (m) Theological Education chairperson
- (n) Board of Education chairperson
- (o) Evangelism and Missions chairperson

1.2 Non-voting Members

One (1) missionary per mission per region.

2. Officers of the Executive are limited to persons holding posts
(a) - (e) in Article VI 1.1

3. Term of office:

Each officer/Ministry leader shall serve a period of two (2) years at which time he/she may be re-elected. This cycle may go on indefinitely, except in the case of the Executive Secretary Treasurer or others whose term of office is clearly set out.

The Executive may act on a motion brought up by one of its members to remove after requesting the resignation of any of its members who (i) is not present at two (2) consecutive executive meetings, (ii) is on discipline from his/her local church or (iii) has compromised the witness of the church through his/her testimony/behaviour. The Executive shall appoint via the President, an interim replacement until the next Annual General Meeting when elections for the post must be held.

ARTICLE VII CONDUCT AND QUALIFICATIONS

1. Persons on discipline from their local churches shall be ineligible to hold any post in the Association. If any serving member of the Association is placed on discipline by their local church, he/she shall relinquish any such post held in the Association.
2. Members of the Executive must be born-again baptized Christians and active five (5) years in the faith and in good standing with their local churches for the year immediately prior to the election.
3. Members of the Executive must be willing to serve and be accountable to all churches within the Association.
4. Vice-presidents shall be given the titles First to Fourth and shall deputize for the President or any other member of the Executive as the need arises.
5. There shall be a rotation of the order that Vice-presidents fall into so that a First Vice-president is not always from the same region.

6. The President of the Baptist Association of Belize shall be an ordained and practicing Baptist pastor.

7. The President and Vice-presidents:

a. They shall not be under twenty-five (25) years of age.

b. They shall not be younger than five (5) years in the faith and a Baptist for the same period.

8. There must have been a display of leadership ability exhibited and such shall incorporate family and social skills.

ARTICLE VIII DUTIES OF OFFICERS

A. The President

1. The President shall preside over all meetings of the Association and the Executive, provided it is not a meeting to discuss the President.

2. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Association and Regional Bodies.

3. The President shall present himself at every Region within a two (2) year period. Such a presentation shall be, but not limited to the particular Region's Quarterly Business Meeting. At such a time he is to report to the meeting any matter of interest within the Association and be available to answer question on the operation of the Association.

4. The President shall at all times inform the first Vice-president of his absence out of the country and of his return.

5. In the event that the office of the President becomes vacant due to:

(a) resignation

(b) relinquishment

(c) incapacitation

(d) death,

(a) The Vice-Presidents shall act as president in accordance with rank i.e. First through Fourth.

(b) A new president shall be elected at the next Annual General Meeting or the next Extraordinary General Meeting called.

(c) Upon election of the new President, Vice presidents shall be given the titles First through Fourth and shall deputize for the President or any other member of the executive as the need arise.

6. The President shall appoint Vice Presidents First through Fourth.

7. The President shall lead in the review and acceptance, amendment and or withdrawal of "Practices and Procedures" at the first meeting of the National Executive.

B. The Vice-Presidents

1. The Vice-presidents shall deputize for the President in accordance with rank i.e. First through Fourth.

2. Vice-presidents may also be called to deputize for any member of the Executive.

3. Although not a Vice-president, the Vice-chairperson of a Region shall act as a Vice-president whenever that Region's Chairperson is unable to be present at the Association's or its Executive Meeting. Please note, that as such he may not be asked to deputize as one of the Vice-presidents.

C. The Secretary

1. The Secretary is responsible to take notes at all meetings of the Association and it's Executive. These shall be presented as minutes at the following meeting.

D. The Executive Secretary Treasurer

Principal Function: To supervise and coordinate the activities and programmes of the Baptist Association of Belize and to maintain effective communication with its members.

He/She shall:

1. Be administrator of the (Baptist Association of Belize) BAOB office.

2. Monitor, coordinate, and evaluate programmes and projects.
3. Promote communication between regional bodies.
4. Be responsible for the circulation of all correspondence of the Association via most expedient mode of communication in respective regions.
5. Function as recording secretary in the absence of the secretary.
6. Guide in the preparation of the annual budget.
7. Supervise expenditure of the annual budget.
8. Obtain an annual audit of accounts.
9. Arrange, in consultation with the President, meetings of the Executive, Committees and General Assembly.
10. Liaise between Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, other fraternal Baptist bodies and other Christian groups.

The office of the EST is a two (2) years contract that is reviewed at the end of the two (2) years for renewal. It is not an elected office. One must apply, be interviewed and appointed by the Executive for as long as she/he performs satisfactorily for the organization.

E. Chairperson of the Legal affairs Committee.

The Chairperson shall:

1. Organize and preside over proceedings of all ordinations.
2. Lead the committee's efforts to train and assist pastors to become marriage officers.
3. Keep an up-to-date file of all national laws related to the "Church" and explain these to pastors.
4. Coordinate with the President in the request to Government for an ordained Pastor to be licensed as a Marriage officer.
5. Oversee the preparation of identification cards for all pastors, Pastors in training, Deacons, and Missionaries in the association.
6. Prepare official listing of all pastors, Pastors in training and Missionaries in the association annually.
7. Provide advice to the National, Regional Executives as well as member churches of the association. All such advice should be given after consultation with accredited legal counsel and in consultation with National Executive.

8. Prepare for and supervise all elections for members of the National Executive at Annual General or Extraordinary meetings.

The Legal affairs Committee shall be comprised of:

1.1 Voting Members

Chairperson

President

Executive Secretary Treasurer

Three members at the request of the chairperson after consultation with the President.

1.2 Non- Voting Members

Accredited Legal counsel (s)

ARTICLE IX AMMENDMENTS

This Constitution shall be subjected to amendments as deemed necessary for the attainment of the objectives as stated therein provided that:

1. Amendments shall only be ratified at a General Meeting of the Association.

2. There is a three month interval between the presentation of recommendation for amendment(s) and the time that Amendment(s) is/are decided on.

3. Sixty percent (60%) of the votes cast must be in favour for the amendment(s) for it/them to be carried.

4. Voting shall be by secret ballots.

APPENDIX A

"An Ordinance for the incorporation of the Baptist Church of Belize."

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives (H.R.) and the Senate of Belize and by the authority of the same as follows:

This Ordinance may be cited as the Baptist Church of Belize Ordinance.
Gazetted 9th of October, 1976.

INTERPRETATION: 2 The "Church" means the Baptist Church of Belize in Belize.

"Corporation " means the corporation constituted by section 3 of the Ordinance.

CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT CONSTITUTED A BODY

CORPORATE: 3 (1) The Chairman, and/or Elders, and duly elected members to the Committee of Management of the said Church for the time being and their successors in office shall be constituted a corporation by the name and style of " The Baptist Church of Belize ".

(2) The corporation shall have perpetual succession, and use a common seal, which may from time to time be altered, and by the same name it may sue and be sued, plead and be impleaded, in all Courts of law and equity.

GENERAL POWERS OF THE CORPORATION: 4 The Corporation shall exercise all the powers and perform all the functions and duties directed and empowered or intended to be performed by such chairman, and/or Elders, and members of the Committee of Management.

THE CAPACITY OF THE CORPORATION: 5 The Corporation shall have full power:

(a) to acquire and hold within this country, by purchase, devise or otherwise, all land and tenements whatsoever of every tenure

and also personal estate and to convey assign, demise, or dispose of such real and personal estate;

(b) to borrow and take up at interest any sum or sums of money for the purpose of erecting or improving churches, manses, dwelling-houses, or other buildings, and for that purpose, to mortgage by deed and under the said corporate seal such portions of lands and tenements as may be necessary for securing the repayment of such moneys, with interest thereon;

(c) to take, hold, employ, and invest all such real and personal estate as they deem advisable, but only for the purpose of the said church; and

(d) to assist in the formation and building of such additional congregations of the Baptist Church of Belize in other localities in this country as may be necessary or advisable due to internal growth. This assistance may take whatever form decided upon by the said Chairman and /or Elders, and members of the Committee of Management and shall include financial aid or advisory consultations whichever may be deemed desirable or expedient.

CHURCH PROPERTY VESTED IN CORPORATION: 6

All lands or other property whatsoever belonging to the Church shall be vested in the corporation.

POWER TO MAKE BY-LAWS: 7 The corporation shall have power to make by-laws for their own internal management and control, and such by-laws shall be binding on every member thereof, save and except to prohibit members or followers from performing all civic duties such as voting, jury service and the like.

SAVING OF CROWN AND OTHER RIGHTS: 8 Nothing in this Ordinance shall affect or be deemed to affect the rights of Her Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors or of any bodies politic or corporate or of any other persons, except such as mentioned or referred to in this Ordinance and those claiming by, through, from or under them.

APPENDIX B

Basic Beliefs of Baptists

Bible - The Bible is the infallible, inspired Word of God and is man's only authority (I Timothy 3:16).

Autonomy of the local Church - The Church is a chosen people and each local body is separate and independent of each other as far as government and discipline is concerned (Acts 12:25-13:13).

Priest - Every believer is granted the privilege of priesthood and can gain an audience with God (I Peter 2:9)

True believer - Only those who are "born again" should be received as members of the Church (John 3:3).

Immersion - The Scriptural mode of water baptism is by immersion (Acts 8:38).

Separation of Church and State - The Church and State must be completely separate (Mathew 22:21).

Two ordinances - Jesus Christ delivered to the Church two ordinances: baptism (Mathew 28:18, 19) and the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:25, 26).

APPENDIX C

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES

1. Motions.

- A. All business shall be presented by a motion made by one member and seconded by another. If the mover desires or the moderator requires it, the motion may be submitted in writing.
- B. No discussion can properly be had until the motion is made, seconded, and stated by the moderator.
- C. A motion, having been discussed, must be put to a vote unless withdrawn, laid on the table, referred, or postponed.
- D. Only one question can properly be before the meeting at any one time. No second motion can be allowed to interrupt one already under debate, except a motion to amend, to substitute, to commit, to postpone, to lay on the table for the previous question.
- E. These subsidiary motions just named cannot be interrupted by any other motion nor can any other motion be applied to them except, that to amend, which may be done by specifying some time, place or purpose.
- F. Nor can these motions interrupt or supersede each other only that a motion to adjourn is always in order except when a member has the floor or when a question is being taken.

2. Speaking.

- A. Any member desiring to speak on a question should rise in his place and address the moderator, confine his remarks to the question, and avoid unkind and disrespectful language.
- B. A speaker using improper language, introducing improper subjects, or otherwise out of order, shall be called to order by the moderator and must either conform to the regulations of the body or take his seat.
- C. Any member having the floor will not be interrupted by another member, except the moderator, until he has finished speaking.
- D. The moderator will not take active part in the debate or introduce motions unless he first surrenders the chair to an alternate. He may restate or clarify the question.

E. **Point of Order.** Any member who believes that a speaker is out of order, or that the discussion is proceeding improperly, may, at any time raise a point of order. He must distinctly state his question or objection which the moderator will decide.

3. Voting.

All questions shall be settled by a majority vote except as otherwise provided in these By laws.

4. Procedures.

In the conduct of meetings of this Association, informal, fair, and democratic procedures is preferred to legalistic formality whenever practical, but the rules contained in " Robert's Rule of Order, Revised" , shall govern the meetings in all cases which they are applicable and which are not inconsistent with the By-laws of this Association.

Property of the Baptist Association of Belize

**Amendments Approved by General Membership
at Lagoon Road Baptist Church
Annual General Meeting Saturday, October 7th 2006**