

THE CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the historic Baptist faith and practice, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body in its relation to other churches of the same faith and order, we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I. NAME

This body shall be known as the Trinity Baptist Church of Kerrville, Texas, located in Kerr County, Texas, which was incorporated April 21, 1970, charter No. 274994 under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, with its office and principal place of business at the church meeting place at the corner of Bluebell and Jackson Roads in Kerrville, Texas.

ARTICLE II. SEAL

The official seal of the church shall be circular in form and have inscribed thereon the open Bible as its center and the words "The Trinity Baptist Church, Kerrville, Texas, Organized April 12, 1950" around the circumference.

ARTICLE III. MISSION STATEMENT

Trinity Baptist Church is a Body of baptized believers empowered by the Holy Spirit to worship, evangelize, disciple, serve, and have fellowship in the name of Jesus Christ and to the glory of God.

ARTICLE IV. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of the "Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963, which is herein incorporated as an integral part of this Constitution and which is hereinafter set forth in eighteen sections in this Statement of Faith.

Section 1: The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasurer of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. It reveals the principles by which God judges us and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.

Section 2: God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience.

The eternal God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes,

but without division of nature, essence, or being.

- a. **God the Father:** God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.
- b. **God the Son:** Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself the demands and necessities of human nature and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, partaking of the nature of God and of man and in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and every present Lord.
- c. **God the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand the truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, He calls men to the Savior and affects regeneration. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which men serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the assurance of God to bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

Section 3: Man

Man was created by the special act of God, was created in God's own image, and is the crowning work of His creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God and fell from his original innocence; his posterity inherits a nature and an environment inclined toward sin, and as soon as they are capable of moral action become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image and in that Christ died for men; therefore, every man possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

Section 4: Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, sanctification, and glorification.

- 1) **Regeneration:** Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal by principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God.

- 2) **Sanctification:** Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purpose and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual perfection through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.
- 3) **Glorification:** Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

Section 5: God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is a glorious display of God's sovereign goodness and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God accepted in Christ and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comfort, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Section 6: The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, who observe the two ordinances of Christ, who are committed to His teachings, who exercise the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Work, and who seek to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation, members are equally responsible. Its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. The New Testament speaks also of the church as the body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages.

Section 7: Baptism

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in the newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, baptism is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

Section 8: The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church by partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

Section 9: The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should be employed in exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. On the Lord's day Christians should refrain from worldly amusements and should from secular employment. (Work of necessity and mercy excepted.)

Section 10: The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular Kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

Section 11: Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

Section 12: Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort is a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

Section 13: Education

The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is coordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian schools is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people. In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, college, or seminary is limited by the preeminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

Section 14: Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual, all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship of the gospel, and a binding stewardship of their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions and should recognize all these as having been entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

Section 15: Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of the people in the most effective manner. Members of the New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

Section 16: The Christian and the Social Order

Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in his own life and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus. The Christian should, in the spirit of Christ, oppose every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

Section 17: Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ, they should do all in their power to put an end to war. The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in the affairs of men, and nations and the practical application of His law of love.

Section 18: Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and State should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no state should favor any ecclesiastical group or denomination more than others. Civil government is ordained of God. It is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies that the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate

opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by civil power.

ARTICLE V. THE 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 a covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

For the advancement of this church: To 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 spirituality and prosperity, to sustain its worship, ordinances, disciplines, and doctrines.

As Christian stewards: 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.

In our homes: To maintain family and private devotions, to educate our children in biblical principles, and to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

Before the world: To walk circumspectly in the world, to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

Toward one another: To watch over one another in Christian love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense but always ready for reconciliation and, mindful of the rules of our savior, to secure it without delay.

When we move: To commit that when we leave this area 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.

ARTICLE VI. CHARACTER

Section 1: Polity

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, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as is practical and in order to involve itself and its members in an effective program of Christian missions, this church will cooperate with and support such organizations likewise committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Section 2: Doctrine

This church accepts the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein the scriptures indicated in the Statement of Faith, set forth in Article VI of this Constitution.

ARTICLE VII. CONSTITUTION REVISION

- A. The proposed amendment must be presented in writing and read aloud at a regular business meeting of the church at least thirty days prior to the time the church votes on the amendment.
- B. The membership must be notified either by public announcement through the bulletin, by mail, or in the Sunday service of worship within a week after the proposed amendment is presented to the church. The announcement must include a statement of the time and place of the meeting at which the proposed amendment is to be considered and a statement of the proposed amendment.
- C. To amend the Constitution and any part thereof shall require a three-fourths vote of those members present and voting.