

TRI-COUNTY SOUTHERN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this Constitution to govern the Tri County Southern Baptist Association of Churches (Hereafter known as "Tri County Southern Baptist Association") in an orderly manner as established in I Corinthians 14:40, while pursuing its purpose to resource the unique God-given vision of every affiliated congregation in fulfilling the Great Commission both locally and globally.

ARTICLE I - NAME

This Association will be called the Tri County Southern Baptist Association, a Missouri not for profit corporation.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of Tri County Southern Baptist Association is to encourage, assist, and resource the local church to fulfill the Great Commission.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section One: General principles.

A church may affiliate with Tri-County Southern Baptist Association if its faith and practice are in agreement with the basic beliefs held in common by this Association of Baptist churches. The historic Baptist Faith and Message statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention, June 14, 2000, best describes the basic beliefs held in common by this Association of Baptist churches. Each church shall cooperate in spirit, financial support, and involvement with the other affiliated churches in achieving the stated purpose of the Association.

Section Two: Process For Affiliation.

A church may seek to affiliate with the Association by presenting an Application for Affiliation, Statement of Cooperation, a copy of the church's Articles of Incorporation and Constitution and By-laws, and the requesting church's Statement of Faith to the Administrative Team. The Administrative Team will review the submitted documents and meet with the petitioning church's pastor and after considering the facts, will follow one of two courses:

1. Place the church desiring fellowship in the Association on "watchcare" status for one year. At the end of the watchcare year the Association will vote on the petitioning church's entrance into the Association at the Annual Meeting. Churches shall be received into membership by a three-fourths vote.
2. Notify the petitioning church that, in the opinion of the Administrative Team, it does not at this time meet the requirements of the Association for admittance into its fellowship and state the reason(s) for

that opinion. If the Team determines that the petitioning church is not ready for admission into the Association, the Team can hear the appeal of the petitioning church.

Definition of “watchcare” status:

1. During watchcare the church and pastor are invited to attend Association meetings and send representatives to Executive Board meetings, in a cooperative manner, but as non-voting members.
2. The church is invited to cooperate with the Association in every way looking forward to full membership.
3. Watchcare shall last for a period of one year.
4. During this year of watchcare, the Administrative Team will evaluate the petitioning church in matters pertaining to doctrinal integrity, manner of its organization, cooperation, unity with sister churches in the Association, and all other pertinent areas of importance.
5. The petitioning church may begin its year of watchcare at whatever time designated by the Administrative Team.
6. The petitioning church shall have access to all Associational resources upon recommendation of the Administrative Team for watchcare.
7. At the end of the watchcare year the Association will vote on entrance into the Association at the Annual Meeting. Churches shall be received into membership by a three-fourths vote.

Section Three: Cases of disharmony.

If a church requesting affiliation has originated out of “disharmony” with another church in the Association, the Administrative Team will meet with the leadership from both churches try to determine if they can work together in unity. The Administrative Team may suggest conditions to be agreed upon by both churches to bring about reconciliation. If no basis for unity can be found, the Administrative Team will consider the petitioning church’s application for affiliation according to Section Two.

Section Four: Receiving mission churches.

Mission churches who have been under the sponsorship of a mother church may apply for membership as a church if the mother church has voted to release the mission church and the mission church has been constituted as a church. The Administrative Team will consider the mission church’s application for affiliation according to Section Two.

Section Five: Withdrawing fellowship.

Neither the Association, the Executive Board nor Administrative Team shall exercise authority over the

Association’s constituent churches. However, if a church affiliated with the Association engages in doctrinal discrepancies with the Association or ceases to cooperate with the Association, the Association reserves the right to withdraw fellowship from the church. Questions concerning doctrinal discrepancy or Associational cooperation shall be considered by the Administrative Team before being brought to the Association. The determination to withdraw fellowship will be made upon recommendation of the Administrative Team by a three-fourths vote of the messengers present at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE IV - MEETINGS OF MESSENGERS

Section One. Meetings: This Association will meet regularly at such time and place as it may determine.

Section Two. Annual Meeting: An Annual Meeting of the messengers shall be held at a specified time and place published in the associational calendar. The meeting shall include prayer, praise, proclamation, election of officers, adoption of the annual budget, and any other pertinent business the Association must address. Any new business items must be presented to the Administrative Team at least one month prior to the "Annual Meeting."

Section Three. Messengers: Tri County Southern Baptist Association shall have one classification of messengers who have been duly elected by the cooperating churches who comprise the association. Each church of one hundred (100) members or less will be entitled to three (3) messengers and one (1) additional messenger for each fifty (50) resident members or fraction thereof, provided that no church will have more than (7) messengers. Names of elected messengers must be provided by start of the opening session of the annual meetings. Messengers serve for one year and may be re-elected should the church decide to do so.

Section Four. Annual Reports: Each church will be encouraged to make an annual report to the Association, through the current annual MBC/SBC profile giving the financial condition, and statistics of the church and any other information that might be of value in helping the association of churches fulfill its purpose.

Section Five. Voting Rights: Each messenger shall be entitled to one vote on each item of business at an Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE V - LEADERSHIP

OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION: The elected officers of this Association will be: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. These officers will be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Association by nomination from the Administrative Team, and by a majority of those messengers present and voting. Each of these officers will take office at the close of the annual meeting.

ARTICLE VI - EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section One. MEMBERSHIP: The Executive Board shall be composed of the pastor and one other person elected by each affiliated congregation, members of the Administrative Team, and officers of the association. Paid staff members of the Association shall have input but do not carry a vote.

Section Two. MEETINGS: The Executive Board shall have at least two meetings each year other than the annual meeting. The Administrative Team may call special meetings for a specific purpose by giving at least seven days' notice. Notice shall be given to affiliated churches. These churches are responsible for notifying their Board Members.

Section Three. AUTHORITY: The Executive Board is governed by all provisions of this Constitution and established Policies and Procedures. This Board has full power and authority to conduct the business of the Association between Annual Meetings when called upon by the Administrative Team to do so.

Section Four. REPORTING: The Executive Board shall supply a written summary of their decisions and actions at the Annual Meeting.

Section Five. QUORUM: The members of the Executive Board present at any called and noticed meeting shall constitute a quorum for that meeting.

Section Six. MANNER OF ACTING: The act of a majority of the members of the Executive Board present at a meeting shall be binding on the association, unless a greater percentage is required by established policies and procedures for a specific vote.

ARTICLE VII - ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Section One. MEMBERSHIP: The Administrative Team of this Association will include the following members: elected officers, Team leaders of Priority Focus Teams, Director of Missions, and three at-large members. The three at-large members shall be elected at the annual meeting to a three year term, and may not serve more than two consecutive terms.

Section Two. DUTIES: The duties of the Administrative Team will be to transact all business of the association between annual meetings, to monitor all monies of the Association, recommends the Annual Financial Plan to the annual meeting, and to make a full report of all the meetings and business transactions to the Association at its annual meeting.

Section Three. MEETINGS AND QUORUM: The Administrative Team shall meet as requested by the President of the Association or any two other members of the team, or the Director of Missions. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the Administrative Team.

ARTICLE VIII - PRIORITY FOCUS TEAMS

Section One. ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITY FOCUS TEAMS: The duties of the Priority Focus teams are the responsibility of the messengers to the Annual Meeting or the Executive Board. These Teams shall be empowered to carry out the assignment given to them by the Association and the Administrative Team. The details regarding the name, membership, and responsibility of each Priority Focus Team shall be found in established policies and procedures.

Section Two. TERM OF OFFICE: Each member of a Priority Focus Team shall continue to serve at his or her passion. Should a Team Member become a detriment to the Team or the Association that person may be removed by a majority of Team Members voting.

Section Three. TEAM LEADERSHIP: Team Members shall select one member of each Priority Focus Team as Team Leader and one member as Associate Team Leader at the first scheduled meeting each year.

Section Four. VACANCIES: Since Team Members serve at their passion, vacancies in membership will be filled by others with like passion.

Section Five. QUORUM: Unless otherwise specified in established policies and procedures, a quorum shall consist of those members present. The act of the quorum shall constitute the action of the Team.

Section Six. RULES/GUIDELINES/PROTOCOLS: Each Priority Focus Team shall establish its own guidelines, protocols, scheduled meetings, and rules. They must be consistent with this document to be considered valid. Any conflict shall be resolved by using this document as the authority.

Section Seven. VOTING RIGHTS: Those members of affiliated churches who attend Priority Team meetings have the right to exercise their vote in a Priority Team meeting. Consensus decision-making based upon established procedures and protocols will be encouraged in Priority Team meetings. All Priority team members must be actively involved in an affiliated church of Tri County Southern Baptist Association.

ARTICLE IX - AUTHORITY

Section One. The Association has full authority for carrying on its work to fulfill provisions of this Constitution including the right to receive and disburse funds, own property, and carry on any other activities necessary for implementation of its purpose.

Section Two. The Association has no authority over any church or the right to interfere with the rights and autonomy of the churches, recognizing that each church is sovereign and independent in all its matters. Therefore, the Association is not responsible for individual decisions of its affiliated churches. The basis for operation in the Association is in the spirit of voluntary cooperation in work and fellowship.

Section Three. The Association is at liberty to consult with any of the churches on matters related to the work of ministry.

Section Four. The Association has jurisdiction over the seating of any and all messengers and may refuse to seat messengers from any church that it deems to be unsound in faith, practice, or conduct based on a recommendation from the Administrative Team.

ARTICLE X - RECORDS

The Association shall keep correct and complete books and records of accounts and shall keep minutes of the proceedings of its meetings and shall keep at the associational office a record giving the names of messengers and their respective churches. Any member of an affiliated church may inspect all books and non-confidential records (except identifiable employee, litigation, and other closed records) of the Association for any proper purpose at a convenient time for all parties. The treasurer shall be bonded and the financial books shall be audited annually.

ARTICLE XI - FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Association shall begin on the first day of January and close on the 31st day of December each year.

ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended at any Annual Meeting of the Association by a two-thirds vote of the messengers present and voting, providing the proposed changes be presented in writing in a previous Executive Board Meeting, or at a specially called meeting for that purpose. The proposed amendments

shall be provided and included in the Book of Reports given out at the Annual Meeting.

ARTICLE XIII - PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

All business of the Annual Meeting of the Association will be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order (Revised)*.

ARTICLE XIV: VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Section 1. Meeting with Digital Participation: The Association may permit the members of the Administrative Team and Executive Board to participate in a meeting by, or may conduct the meeting through use of, any means of communication by which all Team/Board members participating may simultaneously hear and speak to each other during the meeting. A Team/Board member participating in a meeting by this means is deemed to be present in person at the meeting. Votes cast digitally during or after such meeting are subject to the normal quorum rule.

Section 2. Digital Voting without Meeting: If a special circumstance arises whereby the Administrative Team or Executive Board is required to vote on a matter but a special meeting cannot reasonably be called, in the opinion of the President of the Association, then an electronic vote is authorized, provided:

- A. Proxy voting is prohibited.
- B. In the case of a matter before the Executive Board, the vote is authorized in advance by the Administrative Team.
- C. The quorum for the ballot without meeting is the number of those participating in the meeting.
- D. A telephone conference call, or other electronic means, such as "web conferencing," whereby collaborative interaction is possible, is provided to discuss the question.
- E. Every Team/Board member has an opportunity to cast a vote by electronic means.
- G. The President of the Association reviews and certifies the vote total, and that the quorum requirement has been met.

Section 3. Cancellation of Meetings. In the event of a catastrophe, disaster, condition endangering life or health, or other grave emergency likely to affect a meeting, the Administrative Team, by majority vote (cast electronically, if needed) may cancel a previously scheduled regular or special meeting, giving reasonable notice to all Executive Board members, and may either reschedule the meeting date, time and place, conduct the meeting electronically, or may make provision for any extensions of terms of officers and leadership roles, and other adjustments or actions necessary for compliance with law or governing documents.