

# **SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE CONSTITUTION OF ORIGINAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCHES, INC.**

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the ministers and delegates composing the South Carolina Conference of Original Free Will Baptist Churches, Inc., do hereby adopt this Constitution that we might further the cause of the Gospel according to the teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The Conference shall be known as the South Carolina Conference of Original Free Will Baptist Churches, Inc., established in 1818 and incorporated under the laws of South Carolina in 1995.

## **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

### **Section A - General Purpose**

It shall be the purpose of this Conference to promote unity, fraternity, fellowship and cooperation; to encourage and engage in larger Christian enterprises which cannot be carried out by a single church; to combine and direct the energies of Free Will Baptists within its bounds in one sacred effort to encourage and promote the general spread of the Gospel and other causes within its program.

### **Section B - Specific Purpose**

The Conference shall fulfill its general purpose through the support and recognition of various organizations within the denomination and the Conference: Church Training Service, Master's Men, Women's Auxiliary, Youth Camp, and other organizations or conferences for the promotion of evangelism and Sunday School.

## **ARTICLE III: CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section A - Membership Requirements**

1. No church shall be admitted to membership whose faith and practices are not in accord with the Faith and Practices of the South Carolina State Association of Original Free Will Baptists and the Treatise of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.
2. Each church may represent at each session with up to five (5) delegates. A quarterly representation fee of sixty-five dollars (\$65) shall be paid by each church. This fee must be paid in order for delegates from a church to be seated.
3. The Clerk is required to send a letter at least seven (7) days prior to a quarterly or annual session informing each member church and minister of the date, place and time of the forthcoming meeting and the representation fees due.
4. If a church fails to represent with the required fee, that church must then represent at the next session with the previous fee and the current fee. If a church fails to represent for two (2) consecutive sessions, the Executive Committee will contact that church to learn why it failed to do so. The Executive Committee will offer every reasonable assistance and encouragement possible to get the church to return to faithful status, including financial assistance if needed. If a delinquent church, after the above steps are taken, fails to represent for the third consecutive time, the church will then be automatically dropped from the Conference membership roll. The Clerk will notify the church of the action taken.
5. A church that has been dropped from Conference membership can be reinstated by requesting such action through the Executive Committee, for presentation to the body for approval.

### **Section B - New Churches**

6. All churches desiring membership in the Conference must submit a letter of request to the Executive Committee and agree to be examined by that Committee regarding their history, doctrine and practices.
7. Free Will Baptist churches which are members of other Free Will Baptist conferences may be received into membership upon the recommendation of the Executive Committee and the approval of the Conference.
8. Churches that are not Free Will Baptist may be accepted under the watchful care of the Conference for one year upon recommendation of the Executive Committee and the approval of the Conference.

## ARTICLE IV: GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS

### Section A - Time

The Conference shall hold quarterly sessions on the first Friday nights of April and October. The annual session will be on the Friday before the fourth Sunday of January, and the summer session will be held on the Friday before the fourth Sunday of June. Special sessions may be called by the Executive Committee as necessary.

### Section B - Place

The place of the meetings shall be determined by the body while in session or by the Executive Committee acting in behalf of the Conference.

### Section C - Agenda

All Conference business may be transacted at any of these sessions. However, it is suggested that only pressing business be handled at the quarterly sessions.

### Section D - Decorum

9. A portion of the Word of God shall be read at the beginning of each session.
10. Prayer shall be offered at both the beginning and ending of each session.
11. Members shall not conduct conversations among themselves during the business session.
12. Any member wishing to speak to an issue shall first rise and address the moderator.
13. No member shall interrupt while another is speaking.
14. No member shall speak more than twice on any one subject.
15. No member shall absent himself from the body without the permission of the Moderator.
16. No member who is not properly seated shall speak to or vote on an issue being considered.
17. Motions shall be considered passed when a majority of members has voted for them, except for matters stated elsewhere in this Constitution requiring a two-thirds vote.
18. The Moderator shall have the right to speak as any other member, providing the Chair is filled.
19. Any member transgressing the above rules shall be admonished by the Moderator.
20. No less than twelve (12) churches represented by fee/and or delegate(s) shall constitute a quorum.

## ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

### Section A - Officers

The officers of this Conference shall be the Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer/Assistant Clerk, members of standing boards, and members of committees or commissions.

### Section B - Selection

Conference officers are to be selected at the close of the January session as the result of a nomination from the Nominating Committee or from the floor. They are to serve a one-year term unless otherwise specified, and may be re-elected.

### Section C - Limitations

No person shall be elected or appointed to serve concurrently on more than one standing board or committee.

#### Section D - Duties

##### MODERATOR

The Moderator is to (a) serve as Chairman of the Executive Committee; (b) preside over the quarterly and annual sessions; (c) provide general leadership and direction to the Conference; (d) appoint the Committee on Committees unless the body requests their election from the floor; (e) appoint temporary replacements for officers between sessions; (f) see that all delegates are properly seated; (g) recognize all visitors attending the Conference sessions.

##### ASSISTANT MODERATOR

The Assistant Moderator is to (a) discharge all duties and responsibilities of the Moderator in his absence; (b) assist the Moderator in carrying out his duties as requested; (c) serve as member of the Executive Committee.

##### CLERK

The Clerk shall (a) record the minutes of all business meetings; (b) preserve the Conference records for historical purposes; (c) send out report forms, announcements of all meetings and available reports to ministers and churches prior to all sessions; (d) have printed minutes ready for distribution; (e) correspond with other Conferences at the request of the Board of Presbytery; (f) serve as a member of the Executive Committee; (g) perform all other duties as instructed by the body; (h) call the Conference to order in absence of the Moderator and Assistant Moderator, and preside in the selection of a temporary Moderator.

##### TREASURER

The Treasurer shall (a) pay all Conference bills promptly to maintain a good testimony; (b) preserve all Conference financial records for historical purposes; (c) maintain a balanced checking account; (d) furnish the body with a printed, itemized financial statement on a quarterly basis; (e) receive and disburse all funds for the Retirement Fund; (f) serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

##### ASSISTANT TREASURER/ASSISTANT CLERK

The Assistant Treasurer/Assistant Clerk shall (a) perform all the duties of the Treasurer or Clerk in the event of their absence or resignation; (b) serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

#### ARTICLE VI: STANDING BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

##### Section A - The Presbytery Board

21. This Board shall consist of five (5) members, with one member being elected annually at the January session. Board members may not serve more than two (2) full or partial terms consecutively.
22. The Board shall (a) examine for licensing and/or ordination candidates for the Gospel ministry recommended by the local churches and make appropriate recommendations to the Conference; (b) examine ministers requesting transfers from other conferences/associations and make appropriate recommendations to the Conference; (c) deal with all matters of discipline in the areas of conduct, doctrine, profession and morality of ministers; (d) oversee the restoration of ministers.
23. The Presbytery Board will meet prior to each session of the Conference. Meetings while the Conference is in session shall be held only when necessary. The Board may hold a called meeting when necessary.

##### Section B - The Executive Committee

24. The Committee shall consist of five (5) members; Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer/Assistant Clerk. These all serve by virtue of their offices.

25. The Committee shall be responsible for (a) the planning, preparation and printing of the programs for the sessions; (b) reviewing all petitions of churches for membership in the Conference and making recommendations to the body; (c) planning, promoting and directing the Evangelism Conference; (d) making recommendations for the general direction of the Conference; (e) acting on behalf of the Conference on all matters between sessions. The Committee shall report its activities at each session.

#### Section C - The Registration Committee

26. The Committee shall be composed of three (3) members, with one member being elected annually at the January session. Each member shall serve a three (3) year term. Committee members may not serve more than two (2) full or partial terms consecutively.
27. The Committee shall be responsible for the registration of all ministers, delegates and visitors at each session, and the collection of representation fees from churches.

### ARTICLE VII: TEMPORARY COMMITTEES

#### Section A - The Committee on Committees

28. The Committee shall consist of five (5) members appointed by the Moderator or elected from the floor at the beginning of each Annual Session.
29. The Committee shall recommend to the body a list of individuals to serve on the Resolutions, Nominating and Finance Committees.
30. This Committee shall serve only during the Annual Session.

#### Section B - The Nominating Committee

31. The Committee shall consist of five (5) members. They shall be selected from the recommendations of the floor.
32. The Committee will be furnished by the Clerk with a list of offices and positions that need to be filled. They shall then send to the body a nomination for each opening.
33. This Committee shall serve only during the Annual Session.

#### Section C - The Resolutions Committee

34. The Committee shall consist of five (5) members. They shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee or from the floor.
35. The Committee shall receive all suggested resolutions and report appropriate resolutions for presentation to the body.
36. The Committee shall serve only during the Annual Session.

#### Section D - The Finance Committee

37. The Committee shall consist of three (3) members, one of whom shall be the Treasurer, who shall serve as Chairman. They shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee or from the floor.
38. The Committee shall examine the financial condition of the Conference at the Annual Session and recommend appropriate expenditures.
39. The Committee shall serve only during the Annual Session.

### ARTICLE VIII: MINISTERS

#### Section A - Candidates for Licensing

40. All candidates for licensing must have been a member in good standing of a Free Will Baptist church for a period of no less than one (1) year.
41. Each candidate must bring to the Conference a letter of recommendation signed by the Pastor and Clerk of the church in which he is a member.
42. Each candidate must be morally blameless and doctrinally sound.

43. No candidate will be considered for licensing who has been divorced and remarried, or whose wife has been divorced.
44. All candidates not enrolled in some systematic form of study must take an individual program of study provided by the Board of Presbytery and approved by the Conference.
45. Each approved candidate shall be issued a license for a period of one (1) year. His license may be re-issued each year thereafter, up to five (5) years, upon receipt of a letter of recommendation signed by the Pastor and Clerk of the church in which he is a member, and a meeting with the Presbytery Board to give a report of his previous years ministry. Since the licensing period is a time for reflection and learning, no ceremony will accompany the presentation of license.

#### Section B- Licensed Ministers

46. Any licensed minister providentially hindered from attending a Session of the Conference must report by letter to the Clerk within ten (10) days.
47. Each licensed minister must speak at least twenty (20) times per year in order to qualify for re-issuance of their license. This would include Sunday School, CTS, prayer meeting, etc.
48. Any licensed minister being absent from the Conference for two (2) consecutive sessions without explanation shall stand charged with delinquency, will be denied the right to hold Conference office, to vote on any matter, and will be listed in the Conference records as not in full fellowship.
49. A licensed minister may perform all the duties and services of an ordained minister, except officiating and weddings and administering church ordinances. In these matters he must assume an assistant role to an ordained minister.

#### Section C - Candidates for Ordination

50. Each candidate for ordination must bring to the Conference a letter of recommendation signed by the Pastor and Clerk of the church in which he is a member.
51. Before a licensed minister may be ordained, he must (a) be called to pastor a church; (b) be employed as a teacher in a Christian school; (c) enter full-time evangelistic work, conducting at least twenty (20) meetings per year; (d) become an assistant or associate pastor, minister of music or Christian Education minister; (e) become a Home or Foreign missionary.
52. All candidates for ordination must take and score satisfactory on the examination given by the Board of Presbytery. In addition, they must have completed educational requirements given by the Board of Presbytery.
53. Upon approval of the Conference, the candidate, in cooperation with his pastor and church, may plan and carry out his ordination. This includes selecting the place, time and speakers. It is desirable, however, that a member of the Board of Presbytery be present and participate in the ordination service. The candidate's credentials will be signed by his pastor and participating ordained Free Will Baptist ministers.

#### Section D - Ordained Ministers

54. Ordained ministers shall maintain sound doctrine and good moral character, both in their public and private lives.
55. Any ordained minister being absent from the Conference for two (2) consecutive sessions without explanation shall stand charged with delinquency, will be denied the right to hold Conference office, to vote on any matter, and will be listed in the Conference records as not in full fellowship.
56. Ministers who cannot be accounted for, who have moved and left no forwarding address, or who do not respond to normal inquiry shall be dropped from the roll of ordained ministers after a period of one (1) year.
57. Any ordained minister who divorces his wife, whose wife divorces him, who marries a divorced woman after the death of his wife, or who is involved in sexual immorality shall be considered to have seriously compromised himself as a minister and shall be asked to surrender his credentials. Such individuals shall not be reconsidered for ordination.
58. Persons bringing charges against ministers should do so in writing. Such charges should be as detailed as possible, signed by the individual(s) and presented to the Board of Presbytery.
59. All pastors of member churches are expected to affiliate with this Conference.

This Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Conference in session, provided the change was laid on the table at the previous session.

#### ARTICLE X: FINANCIAL REMUNERATION

60. The Clerk shall be given a fifty (50) dollar honorarium per quarter.
61. The Treasurer shall be given a twenty-five (25) dollar honorarium per quarter.
62. Conference Boards and Committees whose responsibilities require travel, meals or lodging shall be reimbursed from the Conference treasury. Meals and lodging shall be reimbursed according to actual expenses, and mileage shall be paid according to the current Internal Revenue Service allowance.