

WHAT IS THE

**LAW AMENDMENT?**

**WHAT IS THE SBC?**

IT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CONVENTION TO PROVIDE A GENERAL ORGANIZATION FOR BAPTISTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS TERRITORIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AT HOME AND ABROAD AND ANY OTHER OBJECTS SUCH AS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, BENEVOLENT ENTERPRISES, AND SOCIAL SERVICES WHICH IT MAY DEEM PROPER AND ADVISABLE FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

BAPTISTS ARE A PEOPLE OF DEEP BELIEFS  
AND CHERISHED DOCTRINES.  
THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY WE HAVE  
BEEN A CONFSSIONAL PEOPLE, ADOPTING  
STATEMENTS OF FAITH AS A WITNESS TO  
OUR BELIEFS AND A PLEDGE OF OUR  
FAITHFULNESS TO THE DOCTRINES  
REVEALED IN HOLY SCRIPTURE.

**WHAT DO BAPTISTS BELIEVE  
ABOUT THE CHURCH?**

# BF&M

1925

A church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. **Its Scriptural officers are bishops, or elders, and deacons.**

# BF&M

1963

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, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking 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.

# BF&M

2000

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. **Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.**

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.



# BF&M

2023

*Note: Article VI was amended in 2023 at the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in New Orleans to:*

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. **Its two scriptural offices are that of pastor/elder/overseer and deacon. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.**

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

# WHO IS IN THE SBC?

ARTICLE III. COMPOSITION - THE CONVENTION SHALL CONSIST OF MESSENGERS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF BAPTIST CHURCHES IN COOPERATION WITH THE CONVENTION. THE FOLLOWING SUBPARAGRAPHS DESCRIBE THE CONVENTION'S CURRENT STANDARDS AND METHOD OF DETERMINING THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF MESSENGERS THE CONVENTION WILL RECOGNIZE FROM EACH COOPERATING CHURCH TO ATTEND THE CONVENTION'S ANNUAL MEETING.

- The Convention will only deem a church to be in friendly cooperation with the Convention, and sympathetic with its purposes and work (i.e., a "cooperating" church as that term is used in the Convention's governing documents) which:
  - Has a faith and practice which closely identifies with the Convention's adopted statement of faith. (By way of example, churches which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior would be deemed not to be in cooperation with the Convention.)
  - Has formally approved its intention to cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention. (By way of example, the regular filing of the annual report requested by the Convention would be one indication of such cooperation.)
  - Has made undesignated, financial contribution(s) through the Cooperative Program, and/or through the Convention's Executive Committee for Convention causes, and/or to any Convention entity during the fiscal year preceding.
  - Does not act in a manner inconsistent with the Convention's beliefs regarding sexual abuse.
  - Does not act to affirm, approve, or endorse discriminatory behavior on the basis of ethnicity.

# WHAT IS THE LAW AMENDMENT?

## AN ADDITION TO THE SBC CONSTITUTION

- The Convention will only deem a church to be in friendly cooperation with the Convention, and sympathetic with its purposes and work (i.e., a “cooperating” church as that term is used in the Convention’s governing documents) which:
- **Original: “Does not affirm, appoint, or employ a woman as a pastor of any kind.”**
- **Amended and approved by 66.6%+ of messengers in 2023 at the SBC in New Orleans: “Affirms, appoints, or employs only men as any kind of pastor or elder as qualified by Scripture.”**

# WHAT IS THE EFFECT?

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

- The SBC Credentials Committee would then have clarity on their work concerning churches not in friendly cooperation.
- Churches that have been removed over the issue of women pastors:
  - New Faith Mission Ministry in Griffin, Ga.
  - St. Timothy's Christian Baptist Church in Baltimore
  - Calvary Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss.
  - Fern Creek Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky.
  - Saddle Back Community Church in California
  - Immanuel Baptist Church, in Paducah, Kentucky
  - New Hope Baptist Church, of Gastonia, North Carolina

WHAT ABOUT LOCAL  
CHURCH AUTONOMY?

**WHAT ABOUT NCC?**

# WHAT ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA?

## WHO ARE NC BAPTISTS?

A church in friendly cooperation shall be one which financially supports the Cooperative Program of the Convention. A church which fails to contribute to the Cooperative Program through the Convention for 3 consecutive calendar years, beginning with calendar year 2022 or later, shall be removed from the Convention's list of cooperating churches, will no longer be eligible to elect messengers to the annual meeting or special meetings of the Convention, and will no longer be eligible for any other benefits afforded cooperating churches by the Convention. The Convention shall be responsible for notifying any church that fails to contribute to the Cooperative Program in the prior calendar year.

# WHAT ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA?

## WHO ARE NC BAPTISTS?

A church in friendly cooperation must have a faith and practice that closely identifies with Baptist beliefs and distinctives. The Board of Directors shall apply this provision. Any decision to declare a church as not in friendly cooperation by the Board of Directors shall be final, provided that a church has a right to request the Convention in annual session to reconsider the Board of Directors' decision that such church is not in friendly cooperation with the Convention.



# WHAT ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA?

## WHO ARE NC BAPTISTS?

Among churches not in friendly cooperation with the Convention are: 1) churches which knowingly act to affirm, approve, endorse, promote, support, or bless **LGBTQ+ lifestyles**; **2) churches which affirm, approve, endorse, promote, or support discriminatory behavior on the basis of race or ethnicity**; or **3) churches which affirm, approve, endorse, promote, or support behavior inconsistent with Biblical teachings regarding sexual abuse.**\* The Board of Directors shall apply this provision. Any decision to declare a church not in friendly cooperation pursuant to these standards by the Board of Directors shall be final, provided that a church has a right to request the Convention in annual session to reconsider the Board of Directors' decision that such church is not in friendly cooperation with the Convention.

\*Updated language in 2022