

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF  
CENTRAL TEXAS DISTRICT ASSOCIATION  
OF  
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

We, the believers in Christ according to the doctrine of the Free Will Baptist Denomination, having been baptized upon a like profession of faith in Jesus Christ and properly organized into churches or missions, realizing the necessity of a bond of union and fellowship among us for preservation of the "Faith Once Delivered Unto the Saints," and the spreading of the gospel of Christ upon earth, do therefore ordain and establish this constitution.

**Article I - Name**

This organization shall be known as the Central Texas District Association of Free Will Baptists.

**Article II - Purpose**

The purpose of the organization shall be to unify the work of the churches and missions composing this association by devising and executing such measures as will best spread the gospel of Christ as we interpret it.

**Article III - Membership**

Section 1. Any regularly organized and well-disciplined Free Will Baptist Church or Mission conforming to the usages of the Free Will Baptist denomination as set forth in the Treatise of the Faith and Practices of the Free Will Baptists of the National Association, may upon proper application, and vote of the association, become a member of this association.

Section 2. Membership into the association shall be as follows - - Churches and Missions shall apply to the Ordaining Council.

**Article IV - Composition**

This association shall consist of the delegates duly appointed or elected by regularly organized and well-disciplined Free Will Baptist Churches or Missions who may embody themselves under this constitution: ordained Free Will Baptist ministers and their wives; ordained deacons and their wives; and all elected district board members who are members of Free Will Baptist Churches or Missions composing this association.

## **Article V - Representation**

Each church or mission composed of fifty members or less shall be entitled to three delegates to this association.

Those churches or missions composed of more than fifty members shall be entitled to one additional delegate for each additional fifty members or fractional part thereof.

## **Article VI - Finance**

Each church entitled to three delegates shall send dues to the treasurer of the association in an amount to be voted upon by the association at a district meeting. Each church and mission will also submit to the district clerk a letter of greeting listing standing and elected delegates except for the Annual Meeting in February when a written report of its spiritual condition, benevolent work and statistics for the year shall be sent. Each church entitled to more than three delegates may be required by the association to send additional dues for each additional delegate to which it is entitled.

Missions, during their mission status, until the church is established, will be exempt from paying dues to the district. Furthermore, the dues to the State and National Associations will be paid from district funds, provided such funds are available.

## **Article VII – Quorum**

Representation from at least 50% of the churches or missions of the association shall be declared a quorum at any regular or called meeting of the association.

## **Article VIII - Discipline**

Should the teachings or practices of a church or mission of the association become inconsistent with the Treatise of the Faith and Practices of the Original Free Will Baptists, and labor to restore the church or mission is unsuccessful, the association will withdraw fellowship.

## **Article IX - Ministers**

Section 1. The pastor of every church or mission in the association shall be a member of the church or mission under his care. The pastor of a mission not yet accepted as a member of this body may be a member of a sponsoring church.

Section 2. When a church desires that one of its members be licensed or ordained to preach the gospel, it should request the association through its ordaining council to examine such member, and should agree to abide by the recommendation of the ordaining council.

Section 3. A minister of this association who is subject to discipline for doctrine or practices contrary to the Treatise of the Free Will Baptist denomination shall be brought to trial by the church of which he is a member. However, the ordaining council must sit in the church conference in an advisory capacity.

Section 4. Ministers transferring into this association from another association will present to the ordaining council a letter of good standing from the association prior to the second district meeting after his arrival.

A. Failure to comply with the above, or to give good reason for being unable to do so, will cause the ordaining council to make known at the meeting of the association the minister's standing.

B. Willfully, or otherwise, neglecting to comply by not presenting a letter of good standing may jeopardize the standing of the church under his pastorate and bring disciplinary action as described more fully in Article VIII of this Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 5. A church bringing charges against a minister whose doctrinal teachings or practices are inconsistent with the Free Will Baptist Treatise, or whose personal life is inconsistent with Christian conduct, will do so in writing to the ordaining council to investigate these charges to verify or disclaim them. Should the ordaining council's findings substantiate the charges, it is their duty to recommend to the association that the minister's credentials be terminated and the state and national association be notified. Should the findings of the ordaining council fail to substantiate the charges brought against the minister, it shall be the responsibility of the council to so inform the church bringing the charges. Appeal of the ordaining council's decision by either party will be made in writing only to the moderator of this association, who will appoint a committee consisting of himself, the assistant moderator, three ministers and three laymen, none of whom will be a member of the church bringing the charges. A meeting will be called by the district moderator of these members for this specific purpose.

Section 6. The Credentials Committee will go by the "Guidelines for the Ordaining Council of the Central Texas District of Free Will Baptists" passed May 12, 1990 and the four additional items passed by the Association on February 9, 1991 in investigating reports of ethical, moral, or doctrinal issues brought to the Committee against licensed or ordained ministers. Any further additions to the Guidelines will be recommended by the Committee and passed by the Association in any regular meeting of the Association.

## **SEE ATTACHMENT "A" FOLLOWING BY-LAWS**

### **Article X - Officers**

Section 1. The officers of this association shall be a moderator, an assistant moderator, a clerk, a treasurer, an assistant clerk/treasurer, and a parliamentarian. These offices shall be elected near the close of each annual session of the association and shall serve as executive committee of the association to transact business between sessions. This committee shall make written reports to each regular session of all business transacted between sessions.

A. Officers who miss two consecutive Quarterly Meetings, except for illness or church activities, shall be removed from the board. The board will then have the authority to fill that vacancy until the next annual meeting.

Section 2. All Committees, with the exception of the Credential Committee, which is otherwise provided for, shall be appointed by the moderator and shall hold office until their work is completed, or until their successors are appointed.

### Section 3. Duties

A. It shall be the duty of the moderator to preside over all district meetings, any called meetings and the General Board Meetings.

B. The assistant moderator shall serve in the absence of the moderator at all meetings and shall assist when called upon to do so by the moderator.

C. The duties of the clerk are:

1. To record the minutes of each district meeting, executive sessions, and called meetings.
2. To publish the minutes of each meeting and mail along with the treasurer's report and the appropriate form to their respective members or church two weeks prior to the next meeting.
3. To be assigned duties and responsibilities at any meeting of this district according to the constitution and by-laws of this district association.
4. To report to the Texas State Association and the National Association of Free Will Baptists as they request or direct.
5. Shall prepare the agenda for district meetings and executive meetings, in cooperation with the planning committee, and called meetings within the district.

D. The duties of the treasurer are:

1. Receive reports and monies from member churches in Central Texas District Association.
2. To prepare and publish quarterly and annual report of all giving coming through this office into the district to be given to the clerk for mailing to the churches two weeks prior to the district meeting.
3. To distribute the monthly giving to their respective accounts at the end of each month and within five days following.
4. Be prepared to field questions and offer explanations to any questions addressed to the office of treasurer.
5. Act on behalf of the Central Texas District Association regarding correspondence and report to the Texas State Association and the National Association of Free Will Baptists.
6. To attend any special or called meetings where this office is to be represented.

E. The parliamentarian shall keep himself abreast of the Parliamentary Rules of Order and be able to make an intelligent decision if called upon to do so by the moderator or the district association.

F. The duties of the assistant clerk/treasurer are to assume the duties of the clerk or the treasurer in either of his/her absence at any district meeting.

## **Article XI - Sessions**

The regular sessions of this association shall be on the second Saturday of February, May, August, and November, at the place designated by the vote of the association at its previous regular session. The association shall receive written reports from the churches and missions of which it is composed as to progress made and services rendered in the spreading of the gospel of Christ, and to such other business as does not violate this constitution. A letter of greeting shall be received quarterly except the report to the annual meeting in February when a statistical report covering the entire calendar year shall be received. Adjourned sessions may be called by the moderator or by a majority of the Executive Committee.

## **Article XII - Council**

Section 1. The ordaining council shall consist of three members whose terms shall be three years each. Each member shall be elected alternately.

Section 2. The duties of the ordaining council shall be to examine each applicant for license to preach the gospel, those desiring ordination to the gospel ministry, and those who have been ordained outside of the Central Texas District Association and desire recognition as a minister in good standing and make appropriate recommendation to the association on the basis of such examination. The ordaining council will serve as the credential board at each session. It shall sit in church or mission conferences in an advisory capacity, when ministers of such church are on trial for doctrine and practices contrary to the Treatise of the Free Will Baptist denomination.

Section 3. Should charges be brought to the ordaining council in writing against a church whose doctrinal teachings or practices are inconsistent with the Treatise of the Faith and Practices of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Inc. (latest revision), it shall be their duty to investigate these charges to verify or disclaim them. Should the ordaining council's findings substantiate the charges, it is their duty to recommend to the association that the hand of fellowship be withdrawn and the state and national association be notified. Should the findings of the ordaining council fail to substantiate the charges brought against the church or mission, it shall be the responsibility of the council to so inform the party bringing the charges.

Appeal of the ordaining council's decision by either party will be made in writing only to the moderator of this association, who will appoint a committee consisting of himself, the assistant moderator, three ministers, and three laymen, none of whom will be a member of the church being charged. A meeting will be called by the district moderator of these members for this specific purpose.

Should the church or mission repent for the error of their ways and desire to be restored to fellowship, they shall make application through the ordaining council to be recommended to the Central Texas District Association.

Section 4. The ordaining council shall examine and recommend application for membership by churches and missions into the District.

### **Article XIII - Boards**

Section 1. The board of trustees of the W. Herbert Richards Memorial Scholarship Fund shall be composed of three members. Their term of office shall be for a term of three years. One member shall be elected for a term of one year, one for a term of two years and one for a term of three years, after which each member shall serve three years.

A. The board of trustees of the Scholarship Fund shall govern themselves. The board shall have the power to organize itself and devise its own government, as may be found in harmony with the principles of this association.

B. The board shall meet in at least one regular session each year. It shall be the duty of this board to make written reports of all its work and funds to each annual session of the association.

Section 2. The Christian Education Board shall be composed of at least three members with tenures of office to be for three years.

A. The Christian Education Board shall promote all phases of education in our District and prepare a report for our annual meeting advising the District of their activities for the year.

Section 3. The Board of Trustees shall be composed of at least three members, with tenures of office during the first term to be six, four and two years, respectively, thereafter to be for six years. The duty of this board is to hold titles to properties of this association.

Section 4. The General Board shall be composed of the District Officers, Chairman of each elected Board of their designate, and Central Women Active for Christ Coordinator.

A. The General Board shall meet prior to the annual meeting to discuss the matters concerning the District at a time and place specified by the Moderator who shall be the Chairman of the General Board.

B. The General Board shall set the salaries of the Clerk and Treasurer for the coming year at the annual session.

Section 5. The Camp Board shall consist of five members to serve three, two and one year respectively and each year thereafter for three years.

A. It shall be the duty of the board to supervise and maintain the operation and formulate immediate and long range plans for the development of the camp.

B. They shall be responsible for the caretaker and his duties.

C. They shall recommend to the District in August the camp director for the next year.

D. This board shall approve any gifts given to the camp.

E. It shall be the duty of the Board Treasurer to prepare and publish an Annual Financial Report of all monies received and expended for the previous year at the Annual meeting in February each year.

F. The Board may spend up to \$5000.00 per occurrence for expenses necessary for the maintenance of camp buildings and grounds, without the approval of the District.

Section 6. The Central Texas Women's Active for Christ shall exist as a board of the Central Texas District Association. The board will be comprised of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and as many officers and members-at-large as the Chair deems necessary. They shall organize at their own discretion and have power to create, adopt, and modify their policies, procedures and budget. The scope and character of the work of this organization shall conform to the general program and promotional plans of the National WAC, State, WAC, and the district as a whole. They shall report their plans and accomplishments to the district at least annually.

Section 7. Each Board shall meet at the close of the Annual Meeting to elect a chairman for the coming year.

#### Article XIV - Amendments

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular session provided the proposed amendment has been presented to the body in writing at the morning session of the association; however, by two-thirds vote of the body any amendment to the Constitution can be postponed until the next regular District Meeting.

## **By-Laws**

Article 1. Each session and adjournment session of this association shall be called to order by the moderator and opened with prayer. Each session shall be closed with prayer.

Article 2. This association shall hold correspondence by messenger or otherwise with other religious bodies as it may deem advisable.

Article 3. Conference will sit with open doors except when it may go into committee of the whole.

Article 4. Any person not of this conference may be allowed to take part in its discussion by obtaining permission of the conference.

Article 5. It shall be the duty of the clerk to furnish the association with a book of records containing the doings of its previous sessions.

Article 6. The conference may determine the time when its daily sessions commence and close.

Article 7. It shall be the duty of all members of the association to be present at the time appointed for each daily session, and anyone wishing to retire shall first obtain leave of the moderator.

Article 8. A member wishing to make a motion or to speak in conference shall first rise, address the moderator, and be recognized by him before proceeding. A member may second a motion without rising and addressing the moderator.

Article 9. No person shall be allowed to nominate more than one person or member on any committee, provided the one nominated is elected.

Article 10. No person shall be allowed to speak more than ten minutes at any time, nor more than twice on any one subject without leave of the association.

Article 11. The following committees shall be appointed at each setting of the association: Resolutions. At the third quarterly meeting the Nominating Committee shall be appointed. At the fourth quarterly or annual session the Obituary Committee shall be appointed.

Article 12. The program of each session of the association shall be prepared by the regularly elected, or appointed, program committee; programs to be distributed two weeks in advance of date of setting of the association.

Article 13. The Preamble only shall be read at each Annual Meeting of this association. Any article or part thereof may be read as deemed necessary by the moderator.

Article 14. These by-laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular session, provided the proposed amendment has been presented to the body in writing at the morning



session of the association; however, by two-thirds vote of the body any amendment to the by-laws can be postponed until the next regular District Meeting.

AMENDED February 12, 2022

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ORDAINING COUNCIL  
OF THE  
FREE WILL BAPTISTS**

**PART I**

**PROCEDURE FOR LICENSING ORDINATION**

A. The local church requests by letter that the Ordaining Council examine the candidate for license to preach.

1. Generally, there is no formal examination of a candidate involved for licensing. The request of the local church is all that is necessary at this stage.
2. The license shall be in force for a period of one year, and may be annually renewed, if the licentiate is not ready for ordination. The renewal must be made by request of the local church.
3. Near the end of the licensing year, if the candidate feels that he is ready for ordination, he again approaches the local church and signifies this. The local church, if it also feels that the candidate may be ready, now requests by letter that the candidate be examined by the district Ordaining Council.

B. Having received petition from the local church, the association's Ordaining Council proceeds to "examine" the candidate.

1. The candidate will be required to fill out a formal questionnaire at this stage. The questionnaire should cover basic information on the candidate.

The application should be completed and returned to the chairman of the Ordaining Council at least one month before the examination by the council.

2. The candidate will be interviewed by the Ordaining Council usually at a quarterly meeting.
3. The Ordaining Council reports the results of its examination to the association as a whole, and makes recommendations to be acted upon by the association as a body.
  - a. If the recommendation is made and approved that the candidate be ordained, the candidate and his local church set up the Ordination Service.

b. In some cases, the council may recommend some conditions be met by the candidate before he should be ordained. In this case, his license will be renewed until the suggestions are followed and another examination be made.

In some cases, the council may recommend that the candidate completely withdraw from consideration for ordination, in which case his license will not be renewed.

## PART 2

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF ORDINATION

A. The candidate who has been ordained continues to have certain responsibilities relating to those who have ordained him.

1. He should report regularly to the body with which he holds ordination.
2. He should submit to any call issued by the body for disciplinary purposes. If he shows himself, by conduct or doctrine, to be unworthy of continuing as ordained, he should willingly relinquish his ordination certificate to those who have the authority and have followed the correct procedures, when they request it.

B. The Ordained has obvious responsibilities to the Lord who has called him.

## PART 3

### TRANSFER OF ORDINATION

A. A minister in good standing in one Association is usually granted confirmation of his ordained status in the Central Texas District Association with a minimum of procedural requirements.

1. He must be able to get a letter of good standing from his former association.
2. He must meet all the standards and requirements that those who are ordained in Central Texas District are required to meet, including the completion of the questionnaire.

B. The Ordaining Council will examine transferring ministers only at the request of the local church.

C. By whatever means necessary, the Ordaining Council will make sure that the minister has left his former association in good standing, and is worthy of conduct and doctrine of ordination.

D. The Ordaining Council will report its finding and will make recommendations to the body as a whole to be acted upon.

## PART 4

### STANDARDS FOR ORDINATION

A. The character and conduct of the candidate should be above reproach. To begin with, the Bible itself, furnishes a list of standards in this area, and this list should be carefully checked. (I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:59). The council should make sure, either by their own personal knowledge, or by interviewing enough persons with direct knowledge, that the candidate meets the standards of these Biblical passages.

B. The official recommendations of the local church should not be given to a candidate unless their recommendation can be relied on to mean the candidate, by sufficient length of time has given full assurance to members of the church that he meets the standards of these Biblical lists.

## PART 5

### THE CANDIDATE'S BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

A. One of Paul's specific requirements is that ministers "have a good report of them which are without" (I Timothy 3:7). In reference to this matter of great importance, is that the candidate's financial reputation. The "ministry" has been blighted by those who do not pay their bills. Every effort should be made to make sure the candidate is scrupulously careful to keep his finances in order.

B. The air in securing this assurance, the candidate may be required to submit several credit references or even the credit bureaus may be checked.

## PART 6

### THE CANDIDATE'S MINISTERIAL ACTIVITIES

A. There have been far too many Free Will Baptist persons ordained as "preachers" who almost never "preach" or perform in any real ministry for which ordination is required. Every effort should be made to be sure the candidate is actually going to be involved in ministerial duties. Indeed he should be already be manifesting ministerial abilities to some degree.

B. Careful consideration should be given to only renewing license and not actually ordaining until a candidate actually gets involved in a specific "ministry" like pastoring, regular evangelistic work, missionary labor, or other types of church employment needing ordination. Perhaps this reflects Paul's requirement that the individual be ordained not to be a "novice" neither immature as a Christian nor in Christian service.

## PART 7

### THE CANDIDATES'S MARITAL STATUS

A. The Central Texas District Association has adopted the guidelines as outlined by the National Association of Free Will Baptists: "That Paul's statements in I Timothy 3:2, 12 and Titus 1:6, namely "The

husband of one wife”, be looked upon as making ineligible as ministers anyone who has been divorced and remarried, regardless of the cause of the divorce or the guilt or innocence of either partner.

B. “The husband of one wife” does not mean that a single man cannot be Ordained.

C. A candidate or transferring minister whose wife has been divorced (have two or more husbands) cannot be ordained or accepted in Central Texas District.

D. No homosexual or transgender person will be considered for licensing or ordination.

## PART 8

### THE CANDIDATE’S SEX

A. Central Texas District does not ordain women nor do we accept the Credentials of women who may wish to transfer into our district.

## PART 9

### THE CANDIDATE’S EDUCATION

A. There are no specific educational requirements connected with ordination by the Central Texas District.

B. Candidates are encouraged to obtain as much formal and Biblical education as possible. This may be done through correspondence courses, etc.

## PART 10

### THE CANDIDATE’S BIBLICAL KNOWLEDGE

A. It is absolutely necessary that a minister have a good general knowledge of the Word. Indeed, this is one of the main purposes of the “examination” to determine the level of Biblical knowledge.

B. Examinations should cover two things:

1. Knowledge of general Biblical facts
2. Ability to explain basic Biblical concepts

## PART 11

### THE CANDIDATE'S DOCTRINE POSITION

A. Of utmost importance is the matter of the candidate's doctrinal position and understanding.

B. The Ordaining Council should be completely satisfied on three counts:

1. That the candidate is doctrinally sound and holds a clear-cut position in agreement with the basic fundamentals of Christianity.
2. That the candidate is denominationally sound and holds a clear-cut position in agreement with the distinctive doctrines of the Free Will Baptist denomination.
3. That the candidate not only knows the right words, but understands and can satisfactorily explain the doctrines involved in the two areas just mentioned.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CREDENTIAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
CENTRAL TEXAS DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

These items were added to the above guidelines on February 9, 1991 by a unanimous vote of the body.  
Amended November 13, 2021.

Item 1.

The Credentials Committee of the Central Texas Association of Free Will Baptists should not be considered as a "Watchdog Committee" to search out problems that might exist among the member churches and their licensed and ordained personnel.

Item 2.

The Credentials Committee will investigate any complaint about any church and/or pastor only after having received a written statement, signed by at least two adult members in good standing of said church, listing the complaint as doctrinal, moral, ethical, etc.

Item 3.

Upon receiving such complaints, the Credentials Committee shall investigate the matter and report their finding to the Central Texas District Association for action by the body.

Item 4.

The Credentials Committee will not recommend ordination of any minister whose license have been recalled by his church, or if his license has been expired for a period of more than three months.