



**Texas
Baptists Committed**

Mainstream Baptists Of Texas

What Is Texas Baptists Committed?

Our Mission Statement sums it up:

Texas Baptists Committed is dedicated to reaching people for Christ through local churches; promoting and defending historic Baptist principles; spreading an understanding of Baptist heritage and distinctives through education; and cooperating with the mission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas and its related institutions.

Texas Baptists Committed (TBC) stands firm for the historic purpose and principles set forth by the founders of the first Baptist churches in the early 17th century and adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) at its founding in 1845. The churches forming the SBC were independent and diverse, but united in cooperation for missions.

Historic Purpose

This purpose revolved around the conviction that every person on earth needed to be given the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord. Although the SBC considered every believer and every local congregation as responsible for sharing Jesus with others, it also placed importance on spreading the Gospel through the work of larger voluntary and cooperative organizations.

Historic Principles

Until 1979, SBC-affiliated churches were agreed on the major guiding principles of personal relationship with Jesus Christ expressed in the priesthood of the believer; the authority of scripture; the autonomy of the local church; the separation of church and state; voluntary cooperation for biblically-based missions; and the Convention's role as a resource and support network rather than a hierarchical authority.

These principles were carried out as follows:

- Limited Authority

The SBC Constitution of that time stated: "While independent and sovereign in its own sphere, the Convention does not claim and will never attempt to exercise any authority over any other Baptist body, whether church, auxiliary organizations, associations, or conventions."

- Radical Freedom

No convention has authority over a local church. The SBC had no pope, no cardinals, no bishops, and no hierarchical ecclesiology. This commitment to freedom, based on a generally agreed understanding of the nature of God and the teaching of Scripture, shaped the guiding principles:

- ***Soul competency***

The most distinctive Baptist belief is “the competency of the soul in religion,” which undergirds all other principles. Soul competency excludes all human interference in religious matters, such as episcopacy, infant baptism, religious proxy, and governmental authority. Religious faith is a personal matter between the individual soul and God.

- ***Authority of Scripture***

Baptists have no creeds. Scripture is the final authority for the person and the local church.

- ***Priesthood of every believer***

Each believer has the right and responsibility of being a priest. Christ is our High Priest. Each believer can pray directly to God, through Christ, without the need for any intercession by a human priest. Also, each believer is to interpret Scripture for him/herself, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

- ***Autonomy of the local church***

Each local congregation is free to choose its ministers, worship as it feels comfortable, and ordain whomever it believes is called of God to ministry. The church is a democracy in which each member has equal rights, privileges, and responsibilities. No other Baptist organization has authority over the local congregation.

- ***Voluntary cooperation***

Local church congregations make all decisions in governing themselves. They choose to join associations, state conventions, or national conventions. They choose how much money to give to cooperative mission efforts. Coercion or authority from the top down was prohibited.

- ***Separation of church and state/religious liberty***

Baptists did not believe in mere religious *toleration* but, rather, in full religious *liberty* that is given by God, *not* granted by government. No person, civil government, or religious system has the right to come between God and human beings. All beliefs, as well as belief in no religion or the choice to not worship at all, are equal before the law.

It was Baptists, after all, who were responsible for 16 precious words contained in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

Result

Herschel Hobbs summarized one result of practicing these guiding principles: “So in reality Baptists are the most broad-minded of all people in religion. They grant to every man that he shall be free to believe, as he wants. But they insist upon the same right for themselves. The moment that a Baptist seeks to coerce another person—even another Baptist—in matters of religion, he violates the basic belief of Baptists.”

Another result was incredible growth in mission and ministry. While following these principles, Southern Baptists became the largest non-Catholic denomination in America.

THEN EVERYTHING CHANGED...

From 1845 until 1979, Southern Baptists stayed true to the aforementioned guiding principles. We always had differences of opinion regarding theology, style of worship, and local church practices. But, because we agreed on the major guiding principles, disagreements on other issues were considered secondary and nonessential. We were united on the main things – evangelism and missions.

In 1979, everything changed. An organized political effort was launched, led by Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson. Recognizing that the SBC president had total power to appoint the convention committees responsible for electing trustees of all SBC agencies and institutions, they devised a method designed to gain control.

The successful election – for the next 19 consecutive years – of presidential candidates endorsed by this political machine became known as the "Fundamentalist takeover." The result? Since then, only a particular “type” of Baptist has been allowed to serve in leadership positions within the SBC.

Persons who did not agree with the positions of SBC leaders were branded as “not believing the Bible.” The new SBC leaders fired, or forced to resign, most of those who had been SBC leaders before the “takeover” began in 1979. The “correct” positions on selected biblical interpretation became the litmus tests for denominational employment and service, as did allegiance to the term “inerrancy” for describing the nature of the Bible.

Throughout the decade of the 1980s, various attempts were made to either defeat the movement controlling the SBC or negotiate peace. These efforts were not successful.

After taking over the SBC, the Fundamentalists next set their sights on the state conventions, especially the largest and most influential of the state conventions – the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT). Following the 1994 BGCT annual meeting in Amarillo, one of the two major architects of the Fundamentalist takeover of the SBC stated, “We will destroy the BGCT.”

However, despite their success in taking over the SBC, the Fundamentalist leaders did not succeed in their attempt to take control of the BGCT. Why? Because of the vigilance of Texas Baptists Committed, an organization formed in 1987 to defend the freedom of the BGCT, its institutions, and its affiliated churches.

In 1998, the Fundamentalists in Texas – frustrated at their inability to take control of the BGCT – formed a new convention: the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. This convention has yet to build a single institution, university, or children’s or retirement home, but it poses a grave threat to Texas Baptists. Its leaders’ primary goal – the

purpose of their existence – is to draw Texas Baptist churches, one by one, away from the BGCT, and exercise the same control over them that the SBC exercises over its affiliated churches.

WHY TEXAS BAPTISTS COMMITTED TODAY?

Texas Baptists Committed exists in Texas as an educational effort organized to resist any takeover of our state convention by those who have abandoned our historic Baptist roots of God-given freedom and voluntary cooperation, centered on the main purpose of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We want to stay true to our historic purpose and principles, and thus keep the main thing – missions and evangelism – the main thing.

We are a voluntary organization, funded by persons who choose to identify with this cause by paying for a yearly membership in the organization.

Part of our educational work is the publication of a newsletter several times each year. This newsletter highlights our historical guiding principles; and encourages Texas Baptists to attend our state convention and elect leaders who will honor Christ by acting in accordance with these principles.

We also sponsor meetings throughout Texas, which feature speakers who emphasize our historic Baptist guiding principles and the importance of unity centered on Jesus and missions.

We work hard to be especially helpful in informing Pastor Search Committees about the track records and positions of potential pastors. Through secrecy and deception, Fundamentalists are trying to take over Texas Baptist churches by getting their adherents positioned as pastors of those churches. We provide valuable information to make sure that Pastor Search Committees are fully informed.

We are also working hard to involve young ministers in Texas Baptist life so that they are not drawn into Fundamentalism and also to provide them with a support system to help them to deal with the pressures involved in pastoring.

As Christians, we must live in the real world. Reality says to us that an organized movement is essential to counter the Fundamentalist political machine in our midst and prevent it from taking our state convention down the same road as the SBC. So we choose to stand firm, praying that our efforts honor God and His work and help our state convention to equip us to be more effective witnesses for Christ.

We invite you to join us in supporting the ministry of the BGCT; to keep the focus of the state convention on missions and evangelism; and to stand for historic principles unique to what it means to be called a Baptist.

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