

# **Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches**

**(History & Constitution follow Articles of Faith)**

## **PARBC ARTICLES OF FAITH**

### **I – OF THE SCRIPTURES**

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Bible, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, as originally written was verbally and plenary inspired and the product of Holy Spirit-controlled men. It is therefore inerrant, infallible truth, without any admixture of error for all its content. We believe the Bible to be the ultimate authority and all-sufficient source for all doctrine and practice. It is the true core of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions must be evaluated. The Scriptures are preserved by the Spirit of God and are authoritative on all matters to which they speak.

We believe that correct Biblical interpretation requires the use of the literal, historical, grammatical and contextual hermeneutic.

2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 Timothy 3:15; Psalm 119:89; Matthew 5:18

### **II -- OF THE TRUE GOD**

WE BELIEVE there is only one, true and living God, infinite, intelligent Spirit, Creator and Supreme Ruler of the heavens and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the Tri-unity of the Godhead there are three persons: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

Exodus 20:2-3; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 4:11; 1 John 5:7

### **III – OF GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST**

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, Creator, the eternal Word manifested in the flesh: that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the Virgin Mary; lived a perfect sinless life; and is fully God and fully man. We believe in His vicarious, substitutionary, and redeeming death on the cross for the penalty of man's sins. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His ascension, and His personal, imminent, and premillennial return. He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, interceding for and defending the saints.

John 1:1-3, 14; Psalm 2:7, 12; Colossians 1:16-17; Luke 1:31-55; Philippians 2:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 28:1-10; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1

#### **IV -- OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Triune God, co-equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the Evil One until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, that He bears witness to the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the new birth; that He seals, baptizes, enables, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies, and helps the believer.

John 14:16-17; Luke 1:35; John 3:5-6; Acts 11:16; Matthew 28:19; Genesis 1:1-3; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; Luke 24:49; Hebrews 9:14; John 16:8-11; Mark 1:8; Romans 8:14; John 14:26; Acts 5:30-32; John 1:33; Romans 8:16, 26-27

#### **V -- OF THE DEVIL, SATAN**

WE BELIEVE that Satan is the fallen angel, Lucifer, who is the devil, the originator of sin against God, that he is the unholy god of this age, the author of all the powers of darkness, the tempter of mankind, the accuser of the brethren, and the opposer of the work of God, and is destined to a just and eternal judgment by God in the Lake of Fire.

Isaiah 14:12-16; Matthew 4:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 6:11-12; Revelation 12:9-10; 20:10

#### **VI -- OF THE CREATION**

WE BELIEVE the Genesis account of creation, that God created all things in six consecutive twenty-four-hour days, thereby rejecting any teaching of evolution between kinds. We further believe that Adam and Eve were God's final acts of creation on day six, and that both man and woman are the highest forms of creation. We believe that God created man and woman in the image of God, and these two distinct, complementary genders together equally represent and reflect this image to all creation. We believe in the equality of both man and woman, while recognizing the biological differences between them. We believe that human sexuality is biologically and genetically determined by God as Creator and is binary (either male or female). These distinctions between man and woman are fixed, and are not determined by culture, nor by an individual. We further believe that the rejection of one's biological gender is a rejection of the image of God within that person. Therefore, we recognize all individuals based upon their gender at birth alone.

Genesis 1 – 2 (1:26-27); John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17; Psalm 8:3-9; 1 Peter 3:7; Psalm 139:13-16

#### **VII -- Of the Fall of Man**

WE BELIEVE that man was created in innocence under the law of his Creator. But by voluntary transgression against God, man fell from his sinlessness to physical and spiritual death. Consequently, all mankind are now sinners, by nature, birth, and choice, and therefore, are under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

Genesis 3:1-6, 24; Romans 5:12; Romans 5:19; Romans 3:10-23; Romans 1:18, 32

## **VIII -- OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH**

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Father, and was conceived of the Holy Spirit in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God, and God the Son, and perfect man without a sin nature.

Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:31, 35; John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 15:45

## **IX – OF THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN**

WE BELIEVE that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon Himself our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but as a voluntary substitutionary sacrifice of Himself in the sinner's place, the just dying for the unjust; Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that His once for all death was sufficient payment for all sin, accepted by the Father as proven by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day. He is now ascended, seated at the right hand of God the Father, in Heaven, as our sole Mediator, Great High Priest, Advocate, Intercessor, Who is the only perfectly compassionate, and all-sufficient Savior.

Ephesians 2:8; John 3:16; Hebrews 2:14; 4:14-16; 1 John 4:10; Acts 15:11; Matthew 18:11; Isaiah 53:4-7; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Romans 3:24; 8:34; Philippians 2:7; Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:1

## **X -- OF SALVATION**

WE BELIEVE that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again, that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one who is dead in trespasses and sins recognizes their lost condition, is brought to repentance and faith in Christ as their personal Savior; thereby being made a partaker of the divine nature and receiving eternal life, as a gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a miraculous manner above our comprehension performed by the power of the Holy Spirit through divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the fruit of the Spirit and sanctification in obedience to God's Word.

FURTHERMORE, we believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only condition of salvation: (a) That Old Testament saints were saved by faith alone looking forward toward the fulfillment of God's promises; and (b) That New Testament saints are saved by faith alone in the finished work of Christ alone.

John 3:3; Acts 16:30-33; Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Peter 1:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 19; 1 John 5:1; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:17; Colossians 2:13; John 3:6-8; Romans 3:20; 4:3, 6; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-10

## **XI -- OF JUSTIFICATION**

WE BELIEVE that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on the principle of righteousness (the just for the unjust); that Justification is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sin and on the basis of His resurrection; and that His righteousness is imputed to us.

Acts 13:39; 1 Peter 3:18; Isaiah 53:11; Romans 4:5, 25; 5:1, 9; 8:1

## **XII -- OF THE CHURCH**

### **THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**

WE BELIEVE that the true Church (universal) is the world-wide spiritual organism called the Body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the head of this body, the universal Church, which is made up of all regenerate believers from the Day of Pentecost until the Rapture. We believe that every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and baptized by the Holy Spirit into the one Body of Christ, which will have its first assembly at the Rapture.

1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; John 14:16-17; Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4; 11:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19-20; 12:13; Ephesians 2:21-22

### **THE LOCAL CHURCH**

WE BELIEVE that biblical local churches are the visible assembly of the Body of Christ in the local community. We believe that the mission of local New Testament Baptist churches is to glorify God by making disciples through the faithful witnessing of Christ to all men as we have opportunity, and the edification of believers.

Ephesians 1:1; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Romans 11:36; Matthew 28:19-20; Colossians 4:4; Ephesians 4:11; Romans 15:2

WE BELIEVE that the local church is a congregation of immersed believers, associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His Word, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by the Holy Spirit, and that its officers are pastors and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures.

Acts 2:41-42; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10; Acts 20:17-18; 1 Timothy 3:1-16; Titus 1:6-9

WE BELIEVE that the local church has the absolute right of self-government (autonomous), free from interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only true superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is Scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the Faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel. Every church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; and, that concerning all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final, as it submits to the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-33; Colossians 1:18; Acts 15:13-18

### **XIII --THE TWO ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH**

WE BELIEVE that Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water to show forth in a solemn and beautiful picture of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is the first step of obedience and prerequisite to the privilege and responsibility of church membership. We believe that the Lord's Supper is a remembrance of His death until He comes, and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. We believe that the ordinances are observed in obedience, and that saving grace is not received through them.

Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; John 3:23; Matthew 3:16;  
1 Corinthians 11:23-28; Ephesians 2:8-9

### **XIV -- OF THE SECURITY OF THE SAINTS**

WE BELIEVE that all who are truly born again are kept by the Triune God for eternity. A permanent relationship is established as a child of God when we are born again.

Philippians 1:6; John 10:28-29; 14:17; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; Romans 8:16-17, 29-39; Jude 1;  
1 Peter 1:5; Hebrews 7:25; 12:2; John 1:12; 3:3, 6

### **XV-- OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED**

WE BELIEVE that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; (a) that only those through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His sight; (b) while all who continue unrepentant and in unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse; and (c) this distinction holds among humanity both in and after death in the everlasting blessedness of the saved with the Triune God in Heaven and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost in the Lake of Fire.

Malachi 3:18; 1 John 5:19; Proverbs 14:32; Genesis 18:23; Romans 7:6; Luke 6:25;  
Romans 6:17-18, 23; Matthew 25:34-41; John 8:21; Luke 16:19-31; Revelation 20-22

### **XVI -- OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

WE BELIEVE that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interest and good order of human society, and we are commanded to pray for, honor, and obey civil authorities; except in things directly opposed to the expressed will of our Lord Jesus Christ in His Word, Who is Lord of the conscience and is the coming King of kings and Lord of lords.

Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; Exodus 18:21-22; Matthew 22:21; Acts 4:19-20; 2 Samuel 23:3;  
Acts 23:5; Acts 5:20; Daniel 3:17-18; Revelation 19:16

### **XVII -- LAST THINGS**

WE BELIEVE in the bodily resurrection of Church Saints and the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of Believers.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 3:10; 4:1

WE BELIEVE in the Literal Seven Year Tribulation known as the Time of Jacob's Trouble.

Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:4-28; Luke 21:5-28; Revelation 6-18

WE BELIEVE in the Second Coming of Christ bodily to the earth as Redeemer of Israel, as Judge of the rebellious, and as King.

Psalms 110; Isaiah 4:2-6; Jeremiah 30:7-10; Zechariah 12:10; 14:4; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Hebrews 9:28; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 19:11-16

WE BELIEVE in the Bodily Resurrection of Old Testament and Tribulation Saints.

Daniel 12:13; Revelation 20:4-6

WE BELIEVE in the Binding of Satan for a Thousand Years, the Judgment of the Nations, and the Millennial Reign of Christ on the Throne of David.

Revelation 20:1-3; Joel 3:12-14; Matthew 25:31-34; Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:4-5; 32:1; Psalm 72:8; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29-30; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Revelation 20:6

WE BELIEVE in the release of Satan, the final rebellion, and the Great White Throne Judgment.

Revelation 20:7-15

WE BELIEVE in the New Jerusalem and the Eternal Kingdom.

Revelation 21-22

## **XVIII – ISRAEL**

WE BELIEVE that Israel is God's chosen, national people, sovereignly selected as God's eternal covenant people. In God's sovereign will, Israel serves as a channel of His blessing to the entire world for His glory, and His witness to the nations. God's election of Israel for this unique relationship is irrevocable. Although she is now dispersed because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ, we believe that God will fulfill the biblical covenants made with the nation of Israel and she will be regathered in the Holy Land. We believe that Israel is distinct from the church and central to God's plan past, present, and future. The unfulfilled prophecies given to Israel in the Old Testament will find their literal fulfillment in Israel at a future time when Israel will be saved as a nation at the second coming of Christ to the earth. At that time, Christ will begin his Davidic rule over the world for 1,000 years and continue to reign in the eternal state.

Genesis 28:13; 13:14-17; 12:3; Isaiah 43:7, 10; Ezekiel 36:24-27; Ezekiel 37; Zechariah 12:10-14; 13:8-9; Romans 11:26-29; Ephesians 3:1-10; Jeremiah 31-33; Psalm 105:6-10

## **XIX – MARRIAGE, SCRIPTURAL MORALITY, AND FAMILY**

WE BELIEVE that marriage was created by God and is a holy and divinely established covenant between one (genetically male) man and one (genetically female) woman to be a representation of the relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church. Marriage is the

bond that joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God created sexual intimacy to be enjoyed exclusively between one man and one woman who are married to one another. Sexual intimacy outside the marriage relationship is sinful and offensive to God and any form of sexual immorality, including but not limited to fornication, adultery, polygamy, polyamory, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, prostitution, pedophilia, premarital sexual intimacy, cross dressing, sexting or any attempt to change one's gender, or disagree with one's biological gender, is sinful and offensive to God. We also believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Gen. 2:24; Matt. 15:19, 19:4; Mark 10:7; Rom. 1:21-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; Eph. 5:31; Heb. 13:4; 1 John 1:9

WE BELIEVE that the roles of husband, wife, parent, and child are clearly defined in Scripture.

Ephesians 5:21-32; Colossians 3:16-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7

WE BELIEVE that sexual relationships are sacred and fulfilling only within the bonds of marriage, and are condemned outside the marriage relationship.

1 Corinthians 7:3, 4; Hebrews 13:4

WE BELIEVE that children are a blessing of God and the responsibility for them rests solely upon the parent and they are to be brought up in loving, structured control and conscientious instruction in the truths of God and His principles of life.

Psalms 127:3; Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; Psalm 78:4-7; Proverbs 22:6; Proverbs 17:6

WE BELIEVE while we would not minimize the struggles that some experience with gender identity, that God created humanity with specific gender identity and that he continues this process through biological reproduction; that genotypic gender, and not feelings, determines gender identity; and that God makes no mistakes.

Numbers 23:19; Psalms 145:17; Isaiah 46:9-10

WE BELIEVE that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, and proper respect and dignity. Hateful and harassing speech, behavior or attitudes contrary to Scripture directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with the teachings of Scripture.

Romans 12:9-21; Ephesians 4:29-5:2

## **XX – SANCTITY OF LIFE**

WE BELIEVE that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. This affirmation does not suggest that we oppose capital punishment or just war.

Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:2, 24; Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 127:3; Genesis 9:5-6; Matthew 26:52; Romans 13:1-4

While we sympathize with those who become pregnant because of rape, forced or coerced molestation, we believe that the sin of abortion further compounds the guilt and consequences upon those who would abort the child who had nothing to do with the wrong.

We desire to lovingly support and help those who choose to give birth to their child either by keeping the baby or through adoption.

## **XXI – CURRENT TRENDS**

WE BELIEVE that the present-day charismatic movement; the allegorical interpretation of Scripture; the failure to recognize the cessation of the supernatural sign-gifts and the completion of the Scriptures; so-called faith healing; the ecumenical movement; neo-evangelicalism; Covenant Theology; hyper-dispensationalism; preterist theology are in error. Failure to practice the grammatical, historical and literal interpretation of the Word of God can lead to false interpretations and conclusions contrary to the Faith once delivered.

2 Timothy 2:15

Articles I – XI adopted September 15, 2020; Calvary Baptist Church, Jersey Shore, PA.

Articles XII – XXI adopted September 12, 2023; Marsh Creek Fellowship Baptist Church, Wellsboro, PA.

# **Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches**

## **THE NATURE OF THE ASSOCIATION**

The PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES has been in existence since 1949. The P.A.R.B.C. is the result of a firm conviction of several Baptist pastors. The pastors believed that a blessing and a more effective ministry would result from a state fellowship of fundamental Bible-believing churches. The united testimony of such an association and enlarged opportunities for fellowship should undoubtedly bring glory to the Lord whom we serve.

Since the formation of the Association, the number of churches affiliated has increased steadily. Since 1956, *THE KEYSTONE BAPTIST*, the official publication of the P.A.R.B.C., has sought to keep the constituency of the Association informed



concerning the activities and ministry of the fellowshipping churches. This is published on a quarterly basis.

The P.A.R.B.C. has adopted Articles of Faith and functions under a Constitution. A Council of Ten, elected from the fellowship, serves as an Executive Committee.

Any independent Baptist church in Pennsylvania and environs, duly recognized as a Baptist congregation, may be included in the fellowship by complying with the provisions of the Constitution. It is assumed that no church included in the National or the World Council organizations, or neo-evangelical or charismatic churches will seek to enter the P.A.R.B.C. fellowship.

No church entering the ASSOCIATION relinquishes its autonomy, nor will it be asked to submit to an ecclesiastical over-lordship. The P.A.R.B.C. holds that any such practice is not Scriptural. Fellowship in the ASSOCIATION does not establish a church in any other Association or Fellowship, on any level.

## **BRIEF HISTORY**

On May 31, 1949, a group of 18 pastors gathered at the Forest Hills Youth Camp to consider the possibility and advisability of establishing a Pennsylvania state fellowship of fundamental Baptist churches. These men sensed the need, not only for fellowship, but also for a united testimony in the proclamation of and the loyalty to the Word of God. A temporary organization was formed under the name of KEYSTONE STATE FELLOWSHIP OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES, and committees were appointed to formulate plans for permanent organization.

A second meeting was held September 27, 1949, in the First Baptist Church of Lock Haven. At this time, Council of Ten was elected and the drafting of the Constitution began. When the fellowship met for its first annual meeting at the Crescentville Baptist Church of Philadelphia in September, 1950, the Constitution was adopted officially. The name of the fellowship as provided by the Constitution became THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES.

The purpose of the Association as originally stated was “to provide a Biblical fellowship for Baptist churches and to encourage and promote the establishing of Baptist churches at home and abroad. This fellowship shall seek to maintain the independence of such churches.” In 1956 this purpose was broadened by amendment to the Constitution. Through the ensuing years, the Association has held to this purpose in faith and in practice as is evidenced by the resolutions which have been passed, published, and promoted.

In 1955 an official publication, *THE KEYSTONE BAPTIST*, was authorized. This newspaper is useful, not only in the matter of exchanging news and views, but

also in spreading the work and enlarging the fellowship. It was decided at the 1956 meeting to have a spring meeting each year in addition to the annual meeting in the fall.

Numerical growth has been slow but steady. The number of fellowshipping churches at this time is just under 100 churches. Bound together in love for the Living and Written Word as expressed in the Articles of Faith, the Association faces the future in confidence that God will bless even as of old. *“And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.”* **ACTS 16:5.**

## **CONSTITUTION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES**

### **Article I -- Name**

THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION OF REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCHES.

### **Article II -- Purpose**

To maintain a Biblical fellowship of sovereign, Bible-believing, Baptist churches; to give occasion for fostering personal friendships as existed in the early churches for mutual helpfulness and counsel; to raise a standard of Biblical separation from worldliness and apostasy; to promote the spirit of evangelism; to encourage the establishment of independent Baptist churches; to provide inspiration for better Sunday schools and to advance our educational and missionary enterprises at home and abroad.

### **Article III -- Meetings**

A meeting of the fellowship shall be held annually for the election of a council, and the conducting of a Bible and missionary conference at a date fixed by the council, and such other meetings as may be deemed advisable for the good of the fellowship. A Semi-Annual Meeting is held also.

### **Article IV -- Fellowship and Voting Privileges**

**SECTION 1.** Any Baptist church in Pennsylvania and environs which is not in fellowship or cooperation with any local, state, or national convention holding to liberalism and apostasy and which subscribes to the Constitution and the Articles of Faith herein contained may, upon submitting to the Secretary written notice to the effect that it desires fellowship, and upon recommendation of the Council, be received into the Association by a majority vote of the messengers present and voting at the next business meeting.

**SECTION 2.** No limit shall be placed on the number privileged to attend the Annual Meeting from any church, but each fellowshipping church may designate a maximum of three of its members as *messengers* who shall be entitled to vote at all sessions of the Annual Meeting.

**SECTION 3.** Should the fellowship ever Employ salaried servants, they shall not be entitled to vote.

**SECTION 4.** All business sessions of the fellowship and the Council shall be conducted decently and in order in a Scriptural fashion.

**SECTION 5.** Any fellowshipping church may with-draw from the Association at any time and for any reason sufficient to itself. Christian ethics would suggest that reason for such withdrawal should be filed with the Association, but such action is not mandatory. In conformity with the historic Baptist position, the property rights of such a church can in nowise be legally prejudiced or endangered by such withdrawal.

**SECTION 6.** Any fellowshipping church which is publicly known to be no longer in agreement with the Constitution and Articles of Faith of the Association, and has not voluntarily withdrawn itself from the Association, may, upon satisfactory evidence of disagreement being presented by the Council, and upon its recommendation, be removed from the rolls by majority vote of the Association.

#### **Article V -- Officers and Their Election**

**SECTION 1.** The officers of the fellowship shall consist of a Council of ten men, pastors or laymen, who shall be elected from as many fellowshipping churches, five of whom shall be elected for two years, annually. After having served two consecutive terms on the Council, a member shall be ineligible for re-election until one year has elapsed.

**SECTION 2.** The Council shall appoint annually a chairman and secretary from among their own number, a treasurer who does not have to be a member of the Council, and such other officers and committees as needed.

**SECTION 3.** The Council shall be elected in the following manner: Each fellowshipping church shall, at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting, select and send to the secretary not in excess of ten nominations for the Council. The secretary shall tabulate all lists, and the ten highest names shall be considered the nominees.

The Annual Election shall take place at the call of the chairman who shall present the names of the ten nominees, whereupon the voting messengers present shall each vote by ballot for five members of the Council. The five nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be considered elected.

Removal from a fellowshipping church shall constitute resignation from the Council and the unexpired term shall be filled by election at the next Annual Meeting. In case of an officer resigning, the chairman shall appoint a temporary officer to serve until the next election of officers.

The secretary shall notify all nominees prior to the election to provide sufficient time for withdrawal, if so desired.

All nominees to the Council of Ten must sign the Constitution and Articles of Faith of the P.A.R.B.C. and abide by the requirements of **I Timothy 3** and **Titus 1**, especially interpreting the phrase, "*the husband of one wife*," as not being divorced and remarried.

#### **Article VI – Dissolution**

Upon the dissolution of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches, the elected officers, to wit: the Council of Ten, shall after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the Association, dispose of all the assets of the Association exclusively for the purposes the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches in such manner, or to such organization or organizations organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, or religious purposes as shall at that time, qualify as an exempt organization(s) under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Council of Ten shall determine. Assets may be distributed only to organizations which agree with the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches' Statement of Faith.

#### **Article VI I-- Amendments**

This Constitution may be revised or amended at any Annual Meeting of the fellowship by a two-thirds vote of the messengers present and voting, provided notice has been given to the churches three months prior.

### **NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF A RECOGNITION COUNCIL**

Reference is made to a RECOGNITION COUNCIL in our application form. Assuming that this may raise some questions, we desire to give the reasons for such a requirement. Since many sound Baptist churches have been holding to Biblical principles and polity long before the P.A.R.B.C. was founded, it may seem rather odd that the Association would now request a church desiring fellowship to call a Recognition Council. However, there are three factors which bear on this subject and must be considered.

First, in our beloved land, a religious organization need not obtain status in any direction in order to qualify as a bona fide institution. A group of Christians (or heathen, even) may call themselves a "church" and conduct themselves under nearly any rules of order, and none can challenge their right to do so. This is especially true of those who lay hold of the distinctive called "Baptist." Baptists have championed the independent, congregational type of church government, free of any hierarchy or rule outside itself. Now the very nature of this blessed basic truth gives rise to the possibility of a religious society making use of the Baptist title when it is not a

genuine Baptist church. This possibility has long been recognized in Baptist circles and the idea of a recognition or examining council is not new.

A second factor to be considered is the uniqueness of the days in which we are privileged to live. Among other things, Regular Baptists have emphasized the Biblical command of separation from apostasy. While a church may be a Baptist church, it does not automatically follow that it is a REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCH. It may, for example, have some entangling alliance with liberalism. Thus, a council from sister churches, considering the society in question, could detect such irregularities. Also, the association to which the local society is looking for fellowship could be protected from becoming an association of *irregular* Baptist churches.

A third factor to consider is that no association has a right to impose an examination upon a church. Baptists may not examine without a request to do so from the church itself, but an association can require a church to do so, that is, call its own council, if it desires to become a part of that association.

As we suggested, it may seem odd that a Baptist church which has stood through the years should now call for a council of recognition. However, the mere fact that a church has been in existence for one hundred years does not vouch-safe for its being indeed a Regular Baptist Church. Actually, no church ought to object to an opportunity to present its credentials in defense of its faith and polity.

Such a council is called and conducted much like an ordination. Instead of a candidate being the object of consideration, the Constitution, Articles of Faith, and the practice of the church is that object. It is a time of rich spiritual blessing and fellowship for all concerned.