



John 3:8

*The wind blows where He wishes.*

## THE SBC CONSTITUTION \* “FRIENDLY COOPERATION” IN ARTICLES III & IV

**The messengers from missionary societies, churches, and other religious bodies of the Baptist denomination** in various parts of the United States met in Augusta, Georgia, May 8, 1845, for the purpose of carrying into effect the benevolent intention of our constituents by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the denomination for the propagation of the gospel and adopted rules and fundamental principles which, as amended from time to time, are as follows:

**Article I. The Name:** The name of this body is the “Southern Baptist Convention.”

**Article II. Purpose:** 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.

**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.

1. 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:
  - (1) 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.)
  - (2) 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.)
  - (3) 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.
  - (4) Does not act in a manner inconsistent with the Convention’s beliefs **regarding sexual abuse**.
  - (5) Does not act to affirm, approve, or endorse **discriminatory behavior on the basis of ethnicity**.
2. Under the terms above, the Convention will recognize to participate in its annual meeting two (2) messengers from each cooperating church, and such additional messengers as are permitted below.
3. The Convention will recognize additional messengers from a cooperating church under one of the options described below. Whichever method allows the church the greater number of messengers shall apply:
  - (1) One additional messenger for each full percent of the church’s undesignated receipts which the church contributed during the fiscal year preceding through the Cooperative Program, and/or through the Convention’s Executive Committee for Convention causes, and/or to any Convention entity; or
  - (2) One additional messenger for each \$6,000 which the church contributed during the fiscal year preceding through the Cooperative Program, and/or through the Convention’s Executive Committee for Convention causes, and/or to any Convention entity.
4. The messengers shall be appointed and certified by their church to the Convention, but the Convention will not recognize more than twelve (12) from any cooperating church.
5. Each messenger shall be a member of the church by which he or she is appointed.
6. If a church experiences a natural disaster or calamitous event and, as a result, the church is not qualified to appoint as many messengers as the church could appoint for the Convention’s annual meeting immediately before the event, the church’s pastor or an authorized church representative may, for no more than the three annual meetings after the event, certify the facts to the registration secretary and obtain the same number of messengers it could have certified for the Convention’s annual meeting immediately before the event.

**Article IV. Authority:** 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 convention.**