

**Constitution
October 1979**

**Chinese Baptist Church
900 Brogden
Houston, Texas 77024**

**CONSTITUTION
OF THE
CHINESE BAPTIST CHURCH OF HOUSTON, TEXAS**

PREAMBLE

For the more certain preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and to the end that this body may be governed in an orderly manner consistent with the accepted tenets of the Southern Baptist denomination, and for the purpose of preserving the liberties inherent in each individual member of this church and the freedom of action of this body with respect to its relation to other churches of the same faith, we do declare and establish this constitution.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as the CHINESE BAPTIST CHURCH of HOUSTON, TEXAS.

II. ARTICLES OF FAITH

1. **Of the Scriptures.** We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles on which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.
2. **Of the True God.** We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the God-head there are three persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost--equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.
3. **Of the Fall of Man.** We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but by choice; and by nature inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.
4. **Of the Way of Salvation.** 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 Him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven; and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

5. **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 promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness; which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.
6. **Of the Freeness of Salvation.** We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, patient and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own determined depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.
7. **Of Grace in Regeneration.** We believe that in order to be saved sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is affected in a manner above our comprehension, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, faith, and newness of life.
8. **Of Repentance and Faith.** We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby, being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.
9. **Of God's Purpose of Grace.** We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with that end; it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God and active imitation of His free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.
10. **Of Sanctification.** We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are partakers of His holiness; that progressive work; that it begins in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer, and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means--especially, the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.
11. **Of the Perseverance of the Saints.** We believe that such only are believers as endure unto the end; that their preserving attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

12. **Of the Harmony of the Law and the Gospel.** We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of His moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts, arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy law, is the one great end of the gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the church.
13. **Of a Gospel Church.** We believe that a particular 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; that its only scriptural officers are bishops or pastors, and deacons whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.
14. **Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.** We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost; to show forth, in the solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effects in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination.
15. **Of the Christian Sabbath.** We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day, or Christian Sabbath; and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes, by abstaining from all secular labor and sinful recreations; by the devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public; and by preparation for the rest that remaineth for the people of God.
16. **Of Civil Government.** We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of the conscious and the Prince of the kings of the earth.
17. **Of the Righteous and the Wicked.** We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only such as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and sanctified by the spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue to impenitence and unbelief are in His sight, wicked and under the curse, and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.
18. **Of the World to Come.** We believe that the end of this world is approaching; and that on the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell on principles of righteousness.
19. **Religious Liberty.** God alone is Lord of the conscience, and he has left it free from the doctrine and commandments of man which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to the church protection and full

freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The Gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil powers.

20. **Peace and War.** It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on the principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teaching of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war. The true remedy for the war spirit is the pure gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of man and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. We urge Christian people throughout the world to pray for reign of the Prince of Peace, and to oppose everything likely to provoke war.

21. **Education.** Christianity is the religion of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is therefore a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. An adequate system of schools is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people. The cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is to co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches.

22. **Social Services.** Every Christian is under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ regnant in his own life and in human society; to oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice; to provide for the orphaned, the aged, the helpless, and the sick; to seek to bring industry, government and brotherly love; to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth. All means and methods used in social service for the amelioration of society and the establishment of righteousness among man must finally depend on the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of Christ Jesus.

23. **Cooperation.** Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such association and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over each other or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Individual members of New Testament churches should cooperate with each other, and the churches themselves should cooperate with each other in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent program for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various Christian denominations, when the end to be

attained is itself justified and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

24. **Evangelism and Missions.** It is the duty of every Christian man and woman, and the duty of every church of Christ, to seek to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods sanctified by the Gospel of Christ.

25. **Stewardship.** God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. We have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the Gospel, and a binding stewardship in our possessions. We are, therefore, under obligation to serve Him with our time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to us to use for the glory of God and helping others. Christians should cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally contribute of their means to advancing the Redeemer's cause on earth.

26. **The Kingdom.** The Kingdom of God is the reign of God in the heart and life of the individual in every human relationship, and in every form and institution of organized human society. The chief means of promoting the Kingdom of God on earth are preaching the Gospel of Christ, and teaching the principles of righteousness contributed therein. The kingdom of God will be complete when every thought and will of man shall be brought into captivity to the will of Christ. And it is the duty of all Christ's people to pray and labor continually that His Kingdom may come and His will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Addendum. This church accepts Genesis as teaching that man was a special creation of God and rejects every theory, evolutionary or otherwise, which teaches that man originated in or came by way of a lower animal ancestry.

III. CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and on the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

For the Advancement of This Church

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines.

As Christian Stewards

To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

Alone and At Home

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to educate our children religiously; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances.

Before the World

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagement, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Saviour.

Toward One Another

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and, mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

When We Move

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

IV. CHARACTER

Section 1. Polity. The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and co-operation which are common among Baptist churches.

Section 2. Doctrine. This church receives the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth as contained therein is in essential accord with the belief of other Baptist churches as indicated in the Articles of Faith herewith.