

Motion Submitted for Consideration and Vote
Special Meeting of the Henry County Baptist Association of Virginia – February 2026

Subject: Motion to Adopt the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 as the unifying Statement of Faith of the Southern Baptist Convention

Whereas, the Henry County Baptist Association of Virginia (herein referred to as the Association) is an association of Southern Baptist churches that has historically aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) through participation, cooperation, and shared beliefs;

And Whereas, the SBC has established the Baptist Faith & Message as its doctrinal statement, originally in 1925, with clarifications in 1963, 1998, and 2000 to safeguard biblical truth against cultural and societal shifts that seek to redefine Christian terminology and, therefore, doctrine;

And Whereas, in meetings with pastors and churches over the past year, one consistent concern has been the need to clearly affirm our identity and unity as an association of SBC grounded in Scripture;

And Whereas, it is necessary to ensure that all churches within the Association are united under the authority of God's unchanging Word, while honoring the principle of local church autonomy within biblical parameters;

Be it resolved, that the Henry County Baptist Association of Virginia hereby officially adopts the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 as its doctrinal standard for defining faith and practice.

Be it further resolved, that all churches wishing to be considered in cooperation with the Association must also adopt and adhere to the Baptist Faith & Message 2000.

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Argument: At the Association's 2024 annual meeting, we unanimously elected an interim Associational Missionary to find our way back to viability. His first goal was to meet with the pastors in the association. Of the 20 pastors we had at the time, he was able to meet with 14.

One common issue surfaced through these meetings: the need to determine who we are and who we are not. To that end, the constitution of the Henry County Baptist Association of Virginia specifically says that we are an association of autonomous churches. However, that statement is clarified contextually in two ways:

- 1) Article I and Statement 1 of Article III both state our identity as an association of Baptist churches.
- 2) Statement 2 of Article IV - Relationships states that the only organization specifically recognized as important for our participation is the SBC.

Our identity as an association of SBC churches of Martinsville-Henry County is evidenced by two facts:

1) We have been identified as such by the sign outside of our office building for as long as we have been the Association, and

2) We have operated as an association of the SBC in that every church in our association is aligned with either the SBCV or BGAV, both of which are state-wide associations of the SBC.



Summarily, we have always been an association of the SBC, and any church that wishes to be a part of this association should be willing to hold itself to

what makes us Southern Baptist Churches. The SBC has updated its Baptist Faith & Message three times in the convention's history for very specific reasons: NOT to change what we as SBC churches believe, but to protect the integrity of the convention from the progressive changes of society through manipulating definitions of terms. At this point, we need to decide whether we want to remain an association under the SBC umbrella or disband as an association, allowing our churches to go their separate ways.

While autonomy has been a central hallmark of Southern Baptist Churches, maintaining that autonomy while assuring that we remain unified in one accord becomes more difficult as churches and para-church organizations morph to stay in the good graces of our changing society. We hear statements to the effect that the Church should change with our society so as to not become alienated from it. And, yet, we must recognize that we serve our Lord and Savior who "is the same yesterday and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). His Word does not change to stay aligned with our societal changes. Autonomy ought never to be viewed as the right to align ourselves with people and/or organizations that have teachings and beliefs contrary to what God has taught us in His Holy Word. This was God's warning through Apostle Paul in Galatians 1:8-9.

One subtle way of driving and disguising change has been to obfuscate definitions of commonly used - commonly understood - terminology. We find ourselves having to defend our Christian identity by clarifying terms that have never before been questioned. Who would have predicted a time when society would not even be able to define terms such as 'woman', 'marriage', or 'family'; or a time when even people in the Church would question the divine authority of the Bible as the fully inspired Word of God that has been the sole Scripture - the very guardrail - of our Christian faith? And yet, here we are. We find ourselves in a time when organizations that call themselves 'Christian' are teaching that the Bible is not the inerrant, inspired Word of God, not fully relevant nor fully sufficient for today, and not the final authority for 'testing the spirits' (1 John 4:1). Teachers in these organizations come to us masquerading as angels of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). In such a time as this, it is critical that we protect the integrity of the Church by assuring that we are using terminology in keeping with Biblical definitions and understandings.

That was the impetus behind the initial writing of the Baptist Faith & Message in 1925, updating it in 1963, amending it in 1998, and then updating it again at the turn of the 21st Century. This is the same logic stream that is now also the basis of need to adopt the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 for our Association today.