

Introduction	16. Sect 9 - Nursery Committees
Constitution	17. 10 - Publicity 21
A) Preamble - B) Name T.V.M.B.C.	17. 11 - Benevolence 21
C) Statement of Faith	18. Sect 12 - Kitchen 22
D) Church Covenant	Sect 13 - Education 22
A) Charter = Policy - Doctrine	Sect 14 - Missions 22
B) LAWS = A) membership	18. Sect 15 - Budget 22
C) General C) Candidacy	VIII of Educational Ministries
D) Termination e) CHURCH OFFICERS	1) General and Sunday School
PASTOR -	2) Training Union

CONSTITUTION

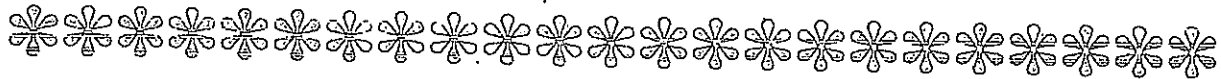
CHURCH STAFF - Deacons	13. Sect 4 - Women's Missionary Union
A) Deaconess B) Moderator	Sect 5 - Brotherhood
C) Church Clerk D) Financial Sect	Sect 6 - Music Ministry
E) CHURCH USHERS D) Church Council	14. Sect 7 - Library
F) VII Committees	IX. CHURCH MEETINGS
A) General - B) Finance committees	1. Worship Service 2. Reg Business ^{Meet}
C) Baptism - D) And Lord's Supper Committee	or special Business meeting

Sect 3. Flower Committees	15. (4) Notice of Call Meetings
Sect 4. History Committees	(5) Quorum - (6) Parliamentary Rule
Sect 5. Nomination Committees	(7) Fiscal Year
Sect 6. Personnel 21	X. CHURCH FINANCES
Sect 7. Properties 21	Sect (1) And Sect (2)
Sect 8. Recreation 22	16. Sect (3)
SECT 9	XI. Sect DISCIPLINE
	Sect 17 - 2 - 3 - 4.

TRUE VINE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA 71302

17. 15 - Over From pg 16
XII AMENDMENTS

CONSTITUTION



*TRUE VINE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH
ALEXANDRIA, LOUISIANA 71302*

INTRODUCTION

A church is a fellowship of people who have accepted Christ as Savior and are united by their common relation to the Holy Spirit. A church, like a community or an individual, is always changing. Fundamental doctrines remain the same, but methods of teaching these doctrines and of moving toward objectives must change if the mission of the church is to be accomplished.

A church constitution and bylaws document helps a church preserve democratic procedures. This instrument serves as the guide for members to follow in carrying out the work of the church. Basic theology, organizational structure, and church policies are contained in a constitution. Bylaws, on the other hand, state the methods for expediting these principles and policies. Bylaws will usually be changed more often than the constitution. It should be emphasized, however, that both constitution and bylaws should be reviewed annually by the church council and/or deacons. As the program of a church changes, so must its rules of governmental procedure be brought up to date.

The basic advantages of a constitution and bylaws are:

- 1) Furnishes members a written statement of their church organization, fundamental guidelines, and theological belief.*
- 2) Aids in preserving democracy and harmony since predetermined guidelines have already been established by the member.*
- 3) Provides orderly procedures for guiding the transaction of church business.*
- 4) Serves as basis for solving problems before problems arise.*

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We declare and establish this constitution for the preservation and security of the principles of our faith, and so that this body may be governed in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual member of this church and the freedom of the action of this body in its relation to other churches of the same faith.

I. NAME: TRUE VINE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

This body shall be known as the True Vine Missionary Baptist Church of Alexandria, Louisiana.

II. STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the basis for any statement of faith. We band ourselves together as a body of baptized believers in Jesus Christ personally committed to sharing the good news of salvation to lost mankind. The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

III. CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Chfist as our Savior, 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 and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

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.

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

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

To walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another 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 Savior, to secure it without delay.

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.

VI. CHARACTER

Section 1. Policy

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 cooperation which are common among Baptist churches. Insofar as it is practical, this church will cooperate with and support the association and state convention affiliated with National Baptist Convention.

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 National Baptist churches.

BYLAWS

V. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. General

This is a sovereign and democratic Baptist church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The membership retains unto itself the right of exclusive self-government in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

The membership reserves the exclusive right to determine who shall be members of this church and the conditions of such membership.

Section 2. Candidacy

Any person may offer himself as a candidate for membership in this church. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular worship service for membership in any of the following ways:

- (1) By profession of faith and for baptism according to the policies of this church.
- (2) By promise of a letter from another Baptist church.
- (3) By restoration upon a statement of prior conversation and baptism in a Baptist church when no letter is obtainable.

Should there be any dissent as to any candidate, such dissent shall be referred to the pastor and the deacons for investigation and the making of a recommendation to the church within thirty (30) days. A three-fourths (3/4) vote of those members present and voting shall be required to elect such candidates to membership.

Section 3. Termination of Membership

Membership shall be terminated in the following ways:

- (1) Death
- (2) Dismission to another Baptist church
- (3) Exclusion by action of this church
- (4) Erasure upon becoming affiliated with another church of another faith or denomination.

Should a member become an offense to the church and to its good name by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his covenant vows, or nonsupport of the church, the church may terminate his membership by a three-fourths (3/4) vote of members present and by voting only after due notice and hearing and after faithful efforts have been made to bring such member to repentance and amendment.

VI. CHURCH OFFICERS

All church officers must be members of the church. The officers of this church shall be as follows:

Section 1. Pastor

The pastor is responsible for leading the church in functioning as a New Testament church. The pastor will lead the congregation, the organizations, and the church staff in performing their tasks. A major concern of the pastor is to perform pastoral responsibilities. The pastor is the leader of worship, proclamation, education, and pastoral ministry. 0

A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose, of which at least one week's public notice shall be given.

Any member has a right

to vote
nominee

-6-

From time to time the pastor shall address the congregation of the state of affairs of the church and shall recommend such measures as he deems necessary and proper.

A pulpit committee shall be appointed by the church to seek out a suitable pastor, and their recommendations will constitute a nomination, though any member has the privilege of making other nominations according to the policy established by the church. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths (3/4) of those present being necessary for a choice. The pastor, thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by his request or the church's request. He shall preside at meetings of the church. The pastor shall give at least two (2) weeks notice at the time of resignation before terminating his responsibilities as pastor.

Section 2. Church Staff

This church shall call or employ such staff members as the church shall need. A job description shall be written when the need for staff members is terminated.

Vocational staff members other than the pastor shall be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by the church action.

The secretaries and custodians shall likewise be recommended to the church by the personnel committee and employed by church action.

Section 3. Deacons

There shall be an ample number of deacons. Deacons shall be elected at regular business meetings of the church:

- (1) The husband of one wife.
- (2) Pleasing personality.
- (3) They are to have charge of the sick and needy members, and whatever temporal affairs may require attention.
- (4) They are to act as counselors and assistants of the pastor in advancing the general interests of the body, both temporal and spiritual.
- (5) Deacons should be watchful guardians of the purity and good order of the church, striving to maintain a healthful tone of purity and Christian activity in the body.

- (6) In the absence of a pastor, it becomes the duty of the deacons to conduct the devotional meetings, provide for the supply of the pulpit and administer the affairs of the body generally.
- (7) In case there be no pastor it would be legitimate for them to bring before the church, as by them directed, such persons as are deemed suitable candidates for the pastorate.

The deacons shall serve indefinitely. In case of death, removal, or incapacity to serve, the church may elect to fill position. There is no obligation to constitute as an active deacon a person who comes to the church from another church where he has served as deacon.

In accordance with the meaning of the work and the practice of the New Testament, deacons are to be servants of the church. The task of the deacon is to assist the pastor in performing pastoral responsibilities.

The deacons shall elect their officers and shall be organized to assist the pastor, and for the consideration of problems related to their work. They serve the church in the specific areas of baptism, Lord's Supper, and benevolence. Special committees may be needed for special assignments and subjects. (See VII. Committees)

Section 4. Deaconess

- (1) Shall be appointed.
- (2) Pleasing personality.
- (3) Must be married or widowed.
- (4) Deaconess recommended by the deacons.
- (5) Assisting deacons in serving communion, conducting devbtion, visiting the sick, and disciplinary problems among women.

Section 5. Moderator

The moderator shall be the pastor. In the absence of the pastor, the chairman of deacons shall preside; or in the absence of both, the church clerk shall call the church to order and an acting moderator shall be appointed.

Section 6. Church Clerk

The church-elected clerk of the church shall keep in a suitable book a record of all the actions of the church, except as otherwise herein provided. He is responsible for keeping a register of the names of members with dates of admission, dismissal and/or death, together with a record of baptisms. He shall issue letters of dismissal voted by the church and preserve on file all communications and written official reports and legal notices of all meetings where such notice is necessary, as indicated in these bylaws. All other clerical responsibilities shall be delegated to a church secretary. All church records are church property and should be filed in the church office when one is maintained. The assistant clerk shall keep a record of all funds and allocations.

Section 7. Financial Secretary

The financial secretary shall be employed by the church. He shall receive the empty collection envelopes after the money has been removed and counted by the proper persons selected by the church to serve in turn and from these he shall give donors individual credit. He shall keep the envelopes for reference for a period of two (2) years. He will fill out a sheet for the monthly balance, which will indicate receipts from envelopes, plate or loose, and miscellaneous or special offerings. He shall also be responsible for preparing and compiling quarterly or semi-annual records of contributions to all contributing members. He shall be a standing member of the Finance Committee. He shall be responsible for all clerical work not delegated to the church clerk. Each Sunday the previous week collection shall be reported in the church bulletin. Quarterly, the report of the total income and expenditures shall be made in the church bulletin.

Section 8. Church Ushers

Every regular church usher shall be selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church, and who shall take into consideration personality, physical fitness and interest. The usher shall be led by a head usher also selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church. The ushers are to greet people as they enter and LEAVE the church, seat people at the proper time, provide bulletins and other materials at the time of seating. The usher will be attentive to the needs of the congregation and the pastor, and assist with funerals whenever necessary.

Section 9. Church Council

- (1) The primary functions of the council shall be to recommend to the congregation suggested objectives and church goals, to review and coordinate program plans

recommended by church officers, organizations, and committees; to recommend to the congregation the use of leadership, calendar time, and other resources according to program priorities; and to evaluate program achievement in terms of church goals and objectives.

- (2) The council, unless otherwise determined by vote of the church shall have as regular members the pastor, minister of music, Sunday School superintendent, Training Union director, woman's Missionary Union president, Brotherhood director, and chairman of deacons. Committee chairman and church-elected officers shall serve as ex-officio members.
- (3) All matters agreed upon by the council, calling for action not already provided for, shall be referred to the church for approval or disapproval.

VII. COMMITTEES

General

All church committee members shall be selected by the nominating committee and elected by the church unless otherwise indicated in the description below. The committee members shall serve on a three (3) year rotation system with one-third (1/3) to be elected each year. The following committees shall be elected:

Section 1. Finance Committee

The finance committee shall keep a record of all income and expenditures. A full annual account shall be presented to the congregation at the end of each fiscal year.

Section 2. Baptism and Lord's Supper Committee

This committee shall consist of deacons and deaconess. The committee is elected to assist the pastor in preparing for the Ordinance of baptism and prepares the elements and the equipment for the observance of the Lord's Supper. The committee does the preparatory and maintenance work needed to observe the memorial service and is responsible for preparing the candidates and the baptistery for the ordinance. The committee will prepare the elements on a schedule approved by the church.

Section 3. Flower Committee

The flower committee is responsible for securing, arranging, and disposing of floral arrangements for church services, and for providing flowers for sick and bereaved members. This committee has a sub-committee.

Section 4. History Committee

The history committee is to preserve and use the historical records of the church. The committee is especially concerned with gathering and reserving available church records, recording full and accurate records and using the records to help members understand and appreciate their heritage and mission.

Section 5. Nomination Committee

The nominating committee coordinates the staffing of all church leadership positions that are filled by volunteers. The nominating committee recommends persons for all volunteer positions to be elected by the church.

Section 6. Personnel Committee

The personnel committee assists the church in matters related to employed personnel administration. Its works include such areas as staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, and personnel services.

Section 7. Properties Committee

The properties committee assists the church in matters related to properties administration. Its works include such areas as maintaining all church properties for ready use, recommending policies regarding use of properties, recommending employment of maintenance personnel, and assigning responsibility to appropriate personnel for supervision.

Section 8. Recreation Committee

This committee seeks to serve the entire church in seeing that all recreation activities sponsored by the church or any organizational unit are properly planned and that they contribute to the ultimate objectives of the church. The committee will plan all church

activities and serve as a resource to others who plan activities.

Section 9. Nursery Committee

The nursery committee is to coordinate the church's nursery activities and to help nursery parents and teachers work together. The committee will see that adequate provisions are made for nursery children each time they are at church.

Section 10. Publicity Committee

The church relations committee is to know and discover the public relations needs and choose the means of communication to those inside and outside the church. The committee is responsible for discovering what needs to be communicated and to communicate with the proper audience.

Section 11. Benevolence Committee

The benevolence committee is to perform acts of benevolence to persons in need in the name of Christ and His church. These needs may be physical, social, or mental. This is a deacon committee. Guidelines should be established and voted on by the church to determine the needs of benevolence.

Section 12. Kitchen Committee

The kitchen committee is responsible for formulating policies of the kitchen and for communicating these policies to church members.

Section 13. Education Committee

The church education committee is to study the needs for, and possibilities of a church educational program, to help in the organization of this program where it is considered wise, and to serve as a liaison between the church and its educational programs.

Section 14. Missions Committee

The missions committee seeks to discover possibilities for local missions projects, shares findings with church program organizations, and serves the church in establishing and

conducting such missions projects as may be assigned.

Section 15. Budget Committee

Before the beginning of each fiscal year, the budget committee shall prepare and submit an annual budget for projected operational expenses needed by the church. This budget must be approved by the membership before it becomes operational. This committee shall work closely with the finance committee.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL MINISTRIES

Section 1. General

All organizations of the church shall be under control; all officers being elected yearly at the beginning of the fiscal year and reporting regularly to the church. It is understood that the pastor is an ex-officio officer of all the organizations named, and his leadership is to be recognized in them.

Section 2. Sunday School

There shall be a Sunday School, divided into departments and classes for all ages and conducted under the director of a general superintendent, for the study of God's word. Sunday School is to be conducted each Sunday morning.

The tasks of the Sunday School shall be to teach the biblical revelation; lead in reaching all prospects for the church; lead all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 3. Training Union

There shall be a Training Union, divided into departments for all ages and conducted under the director of a general director. Training Union is to be conducted each Sunday evening or any appropriate time as needed. The Training Union shall serve as the training organization of the church.

The tasks of the Training Union shall be to teach systematically: theology, Christian history, Christian ethics, and church policy and organization; give orientation to new members; train all church members to worship, witness, learn, and minister daily, train leaders for the church and the denomination; discover, recruit and train potential leaders; provide for specialized training; provide organization and leadership for special projects of the church; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 4. Women's Missionary Union

There shall be a woman's Missionary union with such officers and such forms of organizations as needed. The tasks of the Women's Missionary Union shall be to teach missions; lead persons to participate in missions; provide organization and leadership for special mission projects of the church; provide and interpret information regarding the church and the denomination.

Section 5. Brotherhood

There shall be a Brotherhood, made up of such standard organizations including Royal Ambassadors, as needed. This program shall be directed by a director who shall be elected by the church. The tasks are to teach missions; lead all men, young men, and boys to participate in mission activities; provide organization and leadership for special projects of the church; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 6. Music Ministry

There shall be a Music Ministry under the director of the minister of music. Such officers and organizations shall be included as needed. The music tasks shall be to teach music and hymnody; provide music and musicians for the congregational services and the organizations of the church; lead persons to participate in hymn singing; train persons to lead, sing, and play music; provide organization and leadership for special projects of the church; provide and interpret information regarding the work of the church and the denomination.

Section 7. Library

The church library provides basic services designed to:

- (1) provide materials for the use of its members both adult and children
- (2) provide recreational and leisure-time reading
- (3) develop and promote reading interest
- (4) aid in biblical research and study

The pastor reserves the right to appoint and assign the duties of the library personnel. The pastor shall set the time the library shall open for services.

IX. CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. Worship Services

The church shall meet regularly each Sunday morning and evening for preaching, instruction, evangelism, and for the worship for Almighty God and on Wednesday evening for prayer. These meetings will be open for the entire membership of the church and for all people and shall be conducted under the direction of the pastor.

Section 2. Regular Business Meetings

Regular business meetings shall be held quarterly the Monday night after the second Sunday. Should there be any unusual business or matter of unusual interest to be brought before such regular quarterly meeting, notice shall be given to the adult membership (age 18 and above) one (1) week prior to the meeting.

Section 3. Special Business Meetings

Specially called business meetings may be held to consider special matters of significant nature. A one (1) week notice must be given for the specially called business meeting.

Section 4. Notice of Called Meetings

Notice of all specially called business meetings of the church shall be given by announcement one (1) week prior to the meeting, unless extreme urgency renders such notice impractical at the pastor's discretion.

Section 5. Quorum

The quorum consists of ten percent (10%) of the total membership provided it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 6. Parliamentary Rules

Robert's Rules of Order Revised is adopted as the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church, the deacons, and the committees.

Section 7. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall run concurrently with the church year which begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th.

X. CHURCH FINANCES

Section 1.

The budget committee, which is not a standing committee, and in consultation with the church council, shall prepare and submit to the church for approval an inclusive budget, indicating by items the amount needed and sought for all local and world wide expenses. After approval by church membership, the budget becomes operational.

Section 2.

All funds, for any and all purposes, shall pass through the hands of the finance committee and be properly recorded on the books of the church.

Section 3.

It is understood that membership in this church involves financial obligation to support the church and its causes with regular, proportionate gifts. Each new member shall, therefore, be immediately approached by a representative of the church for a pledge to the church's unified budget; and at least annually, plans shall be put into operation for securing a worthy subscription from each member of the church.

XI. DISCIPLINE

Section 1.

Should any unhappy differences arise among members, the aggrieved member shall follow, in a tender spirit, the rules given by our Lord in the eighteenth (18th) chapter of Matthew.

Section 2.

Should any case of gross breach of covenant, or of public scandal occurs, the deacons shall endeavor to remove the offense; and if this effort fails, shall report the case to the church.

Section 3.

All such proceedings shall be pervaded by a spirit of Christian kindness and forbearance, but should an adverse decision be reached, the church may proceed to admonish or declare the offender to be no longer in the membership of the church.

Section 4.

Any person whose membership has been terminated for any offense may be restored by vote of the church, upon evidence of his repentance and reformation, or, if on account of continued absence, upon satisfactory explanation.

Section 5.

Participation of Officers in Church Meetings and Business Meetings of the Church.

All officers are expected to attend all departmental meetings called in their respective departments, (as deacon board, mission, Sunday School, etc.). All officers are expected to attend all general business meetings of the church.

XII. AMENDMENTS

Changes in this constitution and bylaws may be made at any regular business meeting of the church, provided such amendments shall have been presented in writing at a previous meeting, and copies of the proposed amendment be furnished to each member present. Amendments to the constitution shall be by two-thirds (2/3) vote of all members of the church present entitled to vote. Amendments to the bylaws shall be a concurrence of a majority of the members present and voting.