



Dear North Carolina Free Will Baptist Pastors and District Association Leaders:

As many of you know, the National Center for Life and Liberty (NCLL) recently assisted the North Carolina Association of Free Will Baptists to revise and update its most important legal document—its bylaws. The NCLL is also in the process of helping the FWB state association to become legally incorporated. With these changes to the corporate structure and bylaws, the North Carolina Association of Free Will Baptists has been placed in a much stronger position to legally protect itself without compromising its practices, doctrinal positions, or denominational autonomy.

With the approval of the State Association's Executive Board Chairman, Rev. Sonny Thomas, the NCLL would like to encourage every district association and Free Will Baptist church in the state of North Carolina to also consider incorporating and to review their own ministry bylaws to find areas where they could similarly be strengthened legally in these times of growing hostility in America toward Bible-believing churches.

To that end, the NCLL has drafted sample bylaws specific to North Carolina Free Will Baptist churches and district associations. These sample bylaws include the necessary legal protections that should be included in your church and district bylaws, but can also be customized to reflect your individual FWB church and district practices. These FWB-specific sample bylaws may be obtained free of charge by contacting our NCLL office (info@ncll.org) and requesting them. In addition, our attorneys are able to assist any church or district association that would like to work with the NCLL on the process of conforming their bylaws to include the legal protections included within the new FWB sample bylaws.

Incorporation (or, becoming incorporated) is a process by which an organization pays a relatively a small fee to the state to file a document (usually called articles of incorporation) with the Secretary of State in which the organization is located. Once the articles are approved by the Secretary of State, a new legal entity is created—a corporation—which can hold title to property, obtain loans, hold bank accounts in its name, disburse funds, etc. The primary benefit to becoming a corporation is that doing so effectively shields the church's board, directors, staff, individual members, and others associated with the corporation from becoming personally liable in the event of a lawsuit filed against the organization. Without that buffer of protection, a person suing the church or district association could reach beyond the organization-owned assets to threaten the personal assets of the staff, board, and members (like their houses, cars and other personal property).

Please contact us at info@ncll.org to receive a sample of our North Carolina-specific Free Will Baptist sample church bylaws or district association bylaws, and we invite you to consider having the NCLL further assist you with officially incorporating, reviewing your bylaws, and providing you with other important legal information, protections, and resources to keep your ministry safe.

Sincerely,

David C. Gibbs III

Admitted in Florida, North Dakota, Minnesota, Colorado, Texas, Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan, and the District of Columbia