

*The Gathering of Baptists (GB)*

[www.gatheringbaptists.ca](http://www.gatheringbaptists.ca)

## ***A Home for the Homeless***

### **Preamble:**

Religious understanding has evolved over the centuries. Solid Biblical study and ever-advancing scientific knowledge has helped us to better understand our Scriptures and the world in which we live and serve. And a number of us have examined and affirmed what it is to be Baptist within the Christian community.

Unfortunately, our denomination with its conventions, under the umbrella of Canadian Baptist Ministries, has become so addicted to antiquated dogma that it is building regulatory fences and closing doors, rendering those, whom we consider to be progressives, without a place to call home. The Gathering of Baptists offers a home for those homeless.

Our beginnings were as a group exploring what it is to be Baptist, and to provide a voice within the Baptist Convention of Ontario & Quebec, to encourage respect for our basic Baptist heritage of “democratic” congregational government and the freedom of individuals and of congregations to discern what they believe and how they govern themselves. And we have found others across our great nation, and beyond, who have concerns and interests similar to ours.

We strive to provide connections, resources, and workshops (Gatherings) to help to wrestle with issues in Christian life and ministry, as well as a faith association for those who are seeking similar ends. No one of us has a corner on truth; together we grasp a wider vision and enthusiasm. We are delighted that the issues we have explored have garnered nation-wide interest and participation.

Our website offers our identity and purpose, our history, our legal status, Bylaw, processes and procedures, some of our writings, and information on some of our events.

This article attempts to explain that we can be of help in all provinces. It is not our aim to draw persons from historical connections, only to provide a safety net for progressive clergy to enable them to continue their ministry when privileges and licenses are threatened or integrity compromised.

### **Legal Status:**

We are a federally incorporated (2004) entity under the Canadian not-For-Profit Corporations Act. Our registered “head office” is currently at RR 1 Lynden, Ontario.

### **Financing:**

Our revenue is from annual membership fees, donations, and registration fees for Gathering Events. We do not (yet) have charitable status because our initial scope did not merit it.

### **A Community:**

We are a community of individuals which attempts to explore issues impacting Christian ministry. Members are those who are sympathetic with our identity and purpose. There are those who support with annual membership fees with the associated member privilege (Class A), and others who have expressed interest but not taken the step to be corporate voting members (Class B).

We are also an umbrella for congregational memberships, the benefits of which are contained in our website (Documents - Policy Statements).

### **Credentialing of Clergy:**

Persons may be credentialed with The Gathering in accordance with defined procedure. GB clergy may also hold credentials with our Conventions or other bodies. GB credentials are Canada-wide.

### **An Agency For The Issuance Of Licenses for Clergy To Perform Marriages:**

The Gathering is an accredited agency with the Government of Ontario for processing the application and issuance of Licenses to Perform Marriages in Ontario. Applying clergy must be “Class A” members of The Gathering of Baptists.

We have researched the process for becoming an agency through which License to Marry may be obtained in other provinces. The “Governing Official” for licensing is an officer of The Gathering of Baptists. To apply for status in any other province (than Ontario) we will need a candidate who wishes to apply for a License to Marry in their province under the GB umbrella. The first applicant becomes part of our application for status, which does take a while, but subsequent applications within that province move through in a matter of two to six weeks.

### **Pensions & Benefits:**

The Gathering of Baptists does not involve itself in the offering of pensions nor benefits for clergy. These are available via private investment and insurance providers. Individuals may find, as some of us have, that they can locate such services which will out-perform the Conventions’ plans, as well as being completely portable.

### **Questions:**

Inquiries may be addressed to our Secretary, to our Moderator, or to any member of our Board of Directors.

Gary Caldwell, Secretary,

The Gathering of Baptists (incorporated)

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26 March 2022