

WHAT IS THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION?

The Baptist association in North America is local churches in a geographical region cooperating together to reach people and do missions and ministries both locally and globally. It is churches together “Serving Here....Reaching the World.”

Historically, Baptist associations have been essential to uniting churches for the cause of missions. In 1624, associations evolved in England under the rule of Oliver Cromwell. Both General and Particular Baptists gathered area churches in associations in order to “steady one another in doctrine and explain themselves unitedly to the world, to aid one another in time of need, and, especially, to propagate their views.”¹ As Baptists spread to the American colonies, the concept was reproduced in 1707 in Philadelphia. This would spread to Sandy Creek, N.C., and Charleston, S.C., in the 1750s. From associations, state conventions were formed in early 1800s, and the Southern Baptist Convention was established in the middle of that century. The rest is history. Associations have long served as a very meaningful way for Baptist churches to accomplish more together than they can separately.

Now, nearly 300 years after the association came to America, it still contributes significantly to local churches and Southern Baptist life in accomplishing the Acts 1:8 challenge. Today, 1,200 associations continue to assist local churches to do missions cooperatively and strategically. In all of these associations, you will find volunteers doing a variety of acts of kindness, hosting block parties on warm spring and fall days, and providing disaster relief help—such as cleaning up after hurricanes or earthquakes have ravaged neighboring cities and states. Through numerous activities, you will see associations assisting local churches in accepting the Acts 1:8 Challenge to share the gospel both locally and globally.

The Great Commission of Christ is imperative. It is estimated that there are more than 200 million in North America that do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Accept the Acts 1:8 Challenge and get involved by serving in your association and reaching the world.

“The Baptist association faces the future with new and dynamic ways to equip churches and believers to share the timeless message of Jesus Christ with a lost and dying world. I urge you to join with other Baptist churches in your association . . . Together, we can win North America and the world for Jesus Christ.”

Robert E. Reccord
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