

**COVENANT BETWEEN
AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE U.S.A.
AND ABC ASSOCIATED MINISTRY ORGANIZATIONS**

Guiding Principles

American Baptists have for many years recognized that in order to continue the work of Jesus Christ we must have a diverse ministry that reaches all people within the denomination. [I Corinthians 12] There is also the realization that God has blessed us with many gifts and talents and we have been asked to use these gifts and talents responsibly and that we do things in an orderly manner. [Ephesians 4] This covenant acknowledges that American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. (ABCUSA) and the American Baptist Associated Ministry Organizations (AMO), (formerly known as Administratively Related Organizations) are bound together by such beliefs. This covenant affirms our spirit of cooperation to work together, to provide ministries that reflect these beliefs, and our support for each other and our love for Jesus Christ. [Ephesians 2:11-22] This covenant relationship recognizes that Associated Ministry Organizations are independent, unique and have their own autonomy while supporting the statement of purpose in the Bylaws of the ABCUSA. This covenant affirms the support, provision of services and participation in the denominational structure of ABCUSA for the Associated Ministry Organizations. All covenanting partners are independent entities, but are focused on the goals of the denomination and the will of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. [Matthew 28:19-20]

This covenant document has been developed to add clarity, definition and procedure for American Baptist Associated Ministry Organizations and their affiliation with ABCUSA. This covenant recognizes that our denominational history, current events, theology and heritage affect the relationship between ABCUSA and Associated Ministry Organizations; therefore it is important that all covenanting partners review and update this covenant at intervals of five years. In addition, this covenant affirms the principles outlined in the document “Autonomy and Interdependence Within the American Baptist Denomination: A Declaration” and nothing within this covenant shall be construed to contradict that document.

Associated Ministry Organizations Responsibilities

The following responsibilities, while not exhaustive, are intended to identify the characteristics and ministries of Associated Ministry Organizations. Any changes proposed to the original covenant must be approved by both parties.

1. The AMO shall support the statement of purpose in the Bylaws of ABCUSA.
2. The AMO shall have an independent governing board of directors, distinct from any other American Baptist organization, a substantial portion of which shall be members of American Baptist churches.
3. The AMO shall ensure its financial solvency, shall not take any action that would subject ABCUSA to liability for the debts, obligations or liabilities of the AMO, and shall carry liability insurance to indemnify directors, staff and volunteers working on behalf of the AMO.
4. The AMO shall execute written contracts or agreements when seeking administrative services from ABCUSA.
5. The AMO shall provide reports of its activities as requested by the ABC General Board and shall make appropriate efforts to communicate its mission and ministries to the constituencies of ABC.
6. The AMO shall strive to provide ministries and services of the highest quality to its constituents.
7. The AMO shall encourage active participation in the life of American Baptist Churches at every level, including local, regional, national and international.
8. The AMO shall identify itself as an organization related to ABCUSA by name and logo on documents and other materials where appropriate. **ABCUSA Responsibilities**

The following responsibilities are not to be considered exclusive and are not intended to limit the partnership of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. and Associated Ministry Organizations. Any changes proposed to the original covenant must be approved by both parties.

1. ABCUSA shall affirm the purposes of the AMO as stated in its Articles of Incorporation and shall advocate for and support the ministries and activities of the AMO, in part by giving recognition to its legitimate place in the structures of our denomination.
2. ABCUSA shall recognize the ABC status of the AMO by permitting use of its American Baptist identity and ABC logo.
3. The ABCUSA shall insure its financial solvency, shall not take any action that would subject the AMO to liability for the debts, obligations or liabilities of the ABCUSA, and shall carry liability insurance to indemnify directors, staff and volunteers working on behalf of the ABCUSA.
4. ABCUSA shall provide opportunities for the AMO to participate in the denominational life of the ABCUSA.
5. ABCUSA shall provide administrative services for the AMO, if it desires, by entering into a mutually acceptable agreement specifying services and fees.
6. ABCUSA shall encourage its constituents to participate in the ministries and activities of the AMO.
7. ABCUSA shall make available its communication resources for use by the AMO to promote its ministries and services.
8. ABCUSA, through the Office of the General Secretary, shall foster recognition, communication, assistance and support for the AMOs. In this relationship, a staff person shall be designated to facilitate access to resources, provide counsel and to identify collaborative opportunities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have signed this covenant

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE U.S.A.

By: _____
Name:
Title:

[ASSOCIATED MINISTRY ORGANIZATION]

By: _____
Name:
Title: