

BAPTIST CHURCHES

History

In the early 1600's Separatists from the Puritans formed the first Baptist congregations. English refugees formed a congregation in Amsterdam, Holland in 1608/09. Some of these people made up the nucleus Pilgrim Fathers on the Mayflower. They were influenced by the Dutch Mennonites, a splinter off the Anabaptist. Began baptism by immersion around 1640. In 1653 a General Assembly was held in London. Began in North America in 1638 in the area to become Rhode Island. With about 50 million people in the USA identifying themselves as Baptist, 36% of evangelical protestants are Baptist.

Southern Baptist Convention

World's largest Baptist denomination, largest Protestant denomination in the US and the second largest Christian denomination in the US, 14.8 million members and an average weekly attendance of 5.3 million. 47,500 congregations and 41 affiliated state conventions

First Baptist church organized in 1682 in Charleston, South Carolina

In 1844 a slave holder was appointed as a missionary by a state organization but the Foreign Mission Board refused to approve his appointment. About the same time the Home Mission Society refused to appoint a missionary because he was a slave owner.

The Southern Churches preferred a centralized organization of congregations composed of churches patterned after their associations, with a variety of ministries brought under the direction of one denominational organization. The increasing tensions and the discontent of Baptists from the South regarding national criticism of slavery and the issues over missions lead to their withdrawal from the national Baptist organizations.

SBC was organized in 1845 at Augusta, Georgia after a split with Northern Baptist over the issue of whether Southern slave owners could serve as missionaries.

Southern Baptist are evangelical in doctrine and practice. They emphasize individual conversion experience, complete immersion in water for a believer's baptism and reject infant baptism

The Baptist welcomed slaves and free blacks as members but whites controlled leadership of the churches--their preaching supported slavery and blacks were usually segregated in seating. Black congregations were sometimes the largest in their region.

The Southern Baptist Church was the last bastion of segregation in the 1960s. In 1995 the Convention adopted a resolution renouncing its racist roots and apologizing for its past defense of slavery, segregation, and white supremacy.

Since 1979 Southern Baptists have become polarized into two major groups: moderates and conservatives. For example, abortion rights shifted from a pro-abortion (but not as a form of birth control) to a strong pro-life one.

The general theological perspective of the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention is represented in the Baptist Faith and Message

- Autonomy of local church
- Cooperative program for missions
- Bible is the final word
- Priesthood of all believers
- Sanctity of life
- Marriage – one man one woman
- Each person accountable to God
- Women can serve on boards but not eligible to serve as pastors
- Two ordinances : **Lord's Supper** – for believers, some churches have open and some have closed communion **Baptism** – precondition to church membership

Organization

The local congregation, the local association, State Conventions (41), The National Convention

Pastor- Teacher , Deacon

Missions

Cooperative program

Each church decides how much to give to the Cooperative Program annually-usually a per centage of the offerings.

\$548 million in 2008 with \$244 million sent to the National Convention for ministries

State Baptist Convention

North American Mission Board

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

387 missionaries -Usually support missionaries for three years while they are planting a church.

International Mission Board

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

Disaster Relief

6 theological seminaries

LifeWay – christian publishing house

Holman translation of the Bible

North American Baptist Conference

The conference began in 1839 in New Jersey and Pennsylvania by a Swiss separatist ministering to German immigrants. The first German Baptist Church was established in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1843. The conference was formed in 1851. In 1882 the first missionary was sent to India. In 1944 the name was changed to North American Baptist Conference to rid itself of the German tie.

Currently have 20 associations in the Conference. There are 444 churches in the US with 74,000 members. They have two schools-one in Sioux Falls and Taylor Seminary in Edmonton, Alberta. About 65 missionaries serve in seven foreign countries.

Mission is to glorify God by making disciples. Believe in baptism (by immersion) and regenerate church membership.

Believe the Bible is God's Word given by divine inspiration, the record of God's revelation of Himself to humanity.

Believe in the one living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy, and love.

Believe in the Trinity.

God created angels.

God created man in His own image to have fellowship with Himself and to be stewards over His creation.

Salvation is redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin and death.

The Church is the body of which Christ is the head and all who believe in Him are members.

Believe religious liberty, rooted in Scripture, is the inalienable right of all individuals to freedom of conscience with ultimate accountability to God.

Christians are salt and light in society.

God will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth.

Independent Baptist

In the late 19th century many people concerned with modernism and liberalism in Baptist, and other, denominations and conventions left those organizations and formed independent churches. In 2014 about 2.5% of the adult population in the US were members of IFB Churches.

The word independent refers to the doctrinal position of church autonomy and a refusal to join any other church or organization. They hold conservative Baptist beliefs and observe strict separation from the world and other churches. Many congregations use only the King James Version of the Bible. They interpret Scripture literally, wear conservative dress, and limit social interaction to other IFB churches.

Church members are saved, baptized believers. Often baptisms in other churches aren't accepted.

They believe in strict separation of church and state.

Believe in the priesthood of believers.

Pretty much in agreement with the SBC and NABA on doctrinal issues. Women aren't allowed on boards, except boards dealing only with women.

The local church is totally autonomous. The pastor is the sole leader for spiritual matters, but church matters are made of vote by the church members. They have deacons and/or trustees.

Missionaries raise their own support by going from church to church asking for support. They are then expected visit supporting churches when on furloughs to give a report of their work.