

MISSION STATEMENT

Being a culturally diverse people who are one in Christ and who value the liberties of our American Baptist heritage, the Evergreen Baptist Association will

- Build bridges between communities;
- Provide Resources to equip Member churches to share Christ, and teach God's word; and
- Translate our unity to the world.

OUR MISSIONAL VISION STATEMENT

The Evergreen Association of ABC as a region is an attempt to rethink the purpose and function of an association of American Baptist Churches. We seek to recapture the shared life of the churches of the Christian Testament in ways fitting to our Baptist heritage.

Because the Evergreen Association began its life with a new mission in mind, we first outline how that mission is already coming to fruition:

1. The Evergreen association makes **decisions by consensus** and follows a process whereby actions proceed only after reaching consensus among ethnic caucuses of churches and within meetings.
2. The Evergreen Association organizes its life around ethnic **caucuses** that are formed when a

minimum of two individuals committed to Evergreen life request recognition. The purpose of the caucuses is to level the playing field, empower all congregations, and assure that no unjust privilege is extended.

3. The Evergreen Association advocates the historic **Baptist Liberties**, which include soul liberty, local church autonomy, religious freedom, scriptural liberty, and the priesthood of all believers.

4. We intend our association to be joyful, prayerful and respectful. In the same light, we wish to engage other ABC Regions, the American Baptist Churches in the USA, local ecumenical partners, and Baptist groups around the world in the same **positive spirit**.

5. The Evergreen Association bases its life around **mutuality between churches and pastors**. This shared life is central for our emerging vision.

Some of our basic contextual assumptions are:

General American church culture has become increasingly isolationist and competitive. As our Baptist churches have sadly tended to conform to this nonbiblical culture, local congregations have

increasingly become isolated from one another. Scripture instead calls us not to "be conformed of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of [our] minds" (Romans 12:2). Evergreen is built upon a counter-cultural concept of mutuality between congregations.

Many judicatories are mostly promotional in nature, planning events and workshops which local churches are urged to attend. Pastors and leaders are asked to promote one event after another. Although our association needs promotional events, the genius of Evergreen lies in the fundamental mutuality between congregations networking together to meet shared ministry needs and callings. We encourage pastors and congregational leaders to be in noncompetitive, sharing relationships with one another.

We have chosen the Christian Testament Greek word, koinonia, (koy-noh-nee-ah) to describe the mutuality we see emerging in Evergreen that we expect will flourish (Acts 2:32, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Corinthians 8:4, Galatians 2:9, Philippians 1:5, 3:10, 1 John 1:3, 6, 7). The Scriptures describe koinonia, not as mere "fellowship," but as "sharing in the Spirit" (Philippians 2:1). We therefore understand koinonia as participating in a shared life among congregations, characterized by a dynamic spirit of mutual caring that expresses itself in networking ministry needs and resources.

OUR VISION STATEMENT

Our vision can thus be summarized:

Our goal is to encourage every Evergreen church to move forward in creative partnership with other churches and the Association.

Through the love of God in Christ and the shared life of the Holy Spirit, we seek to empower every Evergreen congregation to become a vital missional church. We will lead our congregations in Spirit-directed transformation—expanding in vision for ministry, engaging our local communities, and creating healthy congregational systems including: worship, study, decision-making, stewardship, fellowship and outreach.

In particular, Evergreen desires:

- a. to help every pastor build bridges from the isolation of ministry to the companionship of *koinonia*.
- b. to assist every congregation to enter into cross-cultural partnerships.
- c. to encourage every Evergreen church to be engaged in active ministry networks.
- d. to welcome new congregations in the discovery of profound mutuality of ministry with other Evergreen churches.
- e. To continually ask our Association: “How can we deepen *koinonia* among our churches?”



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MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS



EVERGREEN ASSOCIATION
— OF AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA —
TRANSLATING OUR UNITY TO THE WORLD

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