

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OF AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES IN THE U.S.A.

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., as a manifestation of the church universal, bears witness to God's intention to bring redemption and wholeness to all creation. American Baptists believe that God's intention can be sought and followed in local congregations and other gatherings of Christians and in associational, regional, national and world bodies as they receive from one another mutual counsel and correction. Since Jesus Christ is the head of the church, each body of Christians, seeking to order its life in accordance with the Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has a proper responsibility under God for maintaining its life of worship, witness, and ministry.

In every area of their common life American Baptists, acknowledging the importance of creative diversity, seek such a balance of freedom and order as will keep all parts of American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and at the same time enable them to work responsibly to carry out the common task of mission and ministry in our time.

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. acknowledges that it shares a common faith in Christ with churches which may be quite different from it in history, polity and practice. Consequently, it seeks to share with them a common ministry and to express it faithfully.

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. acknowledges that God's will is also manifested in movements outside the formal structures of Christ's church, and that, therefore, it must respond faithfully to such disclosures.

American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. further acknowledges and confirms its commitment to the objects stated in its Act of Incorporation as follows: it to give expression to the opinions of its constituency upon moral, religious and denomination matters and to promote denominational unity and efficiency in efforts for the evangelization of the world."

In the light of this affirmation, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. intends the following statement of purpose to implement and not to alter the objects stated in its Act of Incorporation:

- to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the world and to lead persons to Christ;
- to seek the mind of Christ on moral, spiritual, political, economic, social, denominational and ecumenical matters, and to express to the rest of society on behalf of American Baptists, their convictions as to the mind of Christ in these matters;
- to guide, unify, and assist American Baptist in their witness in the world, in preparing members for the work of ministry, and in serving both those within and outside the fellowship of Christ; and
- to promote closer relations among American Baptist churches and groups, within the whole Body of Christ and to promote understanding with other religious bodies.