

INFORMATION & GUIDELINES
For
CHURCHES SEEKING AFFILIATION
with the
KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

“The Kentucky Baptist Convention: Created by churches, for churches, to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ”

Developed by the Kentucky Baptist Convention
Committee on Credentials Study Group, April 1999
Louisville, Kentucky

Executive Office
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A personal word to church leaders ...

... from the Office of the Executive Director, KBC...

We are pleased you and your congregation have decided to join Kentucky Baptists ON MISSION. Our state convention and fellowship of cooperating churches have discovered firsthand the blessings of serving “together”, multiplying our resources, and accomplishing with God those things we could never do separately. As you proceed through these guidelines, I pray you shall sense the desire of Kentucky Baptists to know you better and to help you understand what it means to be affiliated with the cooperating Kentucky Baptist churches all across this state. Our Committee on Credentials has prepared this packet to get you started. I hope you can soon be a part of us.

Paul Chitwood, Executive Director

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SHARED PURPOSES AND GOALS
The Kentucky Baptist Convention
and its
Affiliated Cooperating Churches

This body (convention) consists of (1) “Baptist churches cooperating with the Convention ... and sympathetic with its purposes and work” who are “understood by the Convention to be local congregations of scripturally-baptized believers in general agreement with any of the historic Baptist confessions of faith (By way of example, churches which act to affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior would be deemed not to be in cooperation with the Convention.) And, (2) Has been a bona fide contributor through the Cooperative Program during the fiscal year preceding. (Article IV)

This body. . . “shall serve and assist the churches in their sovereign capacity by the providing of resources and the facilitating of cooperation so that both the Body and the churches may fulfill the Great Commission,” Matthew 28:18-20. (Article II)

The convention recognizes that the cooperation is voluntary and the convention “has no jurisdiction over the local churches or district associations and shall exercise no authority over them.” (Article VI)

PURPOSES AND WORK

The Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC) is a partnership of Baptist congregations, area Baptist associations, and convention staff who cooperate; share resources and energy; and engage in state, national, and international mission and ministry endeavors as they collectively discern God’s leading.

The Convention staff has as its vision statement “The Kentucky Baptist Convention by churches, for churches, to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ.”

The churches provide resources for mission and ministry beyond the local congregation through a funding channel known as the Cooperative Program. Financial contributions to the KBC through the Cooperative Program provide significant support for the following:

- in-state missions and congregational development; *
- a Kentucky Baptist university;
- a Bible college and a residential school (grades 6-12);
- a state network of children’s and family services;
- a state Baptist news journal;
- a women’s mission support organization;
- a Baptist foundation that manages funds invested for Baptist causes, institutions, and Baptist churches;
- two conference centers/camps;
- partnerships with other states and foreign countries.
- support for and participation in national and world-wide missions.

This “cooperation” assures each church a participation in crucial mission and ministry far beyond what the church could do alone.

CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The convention is a strong fellowship and partnership of congregations. A primary focus of the Kentucky Baptist Convention is to enhance the development of these churches toward effective evangelism and discipleship within the members. The convention offices and staff provide resources, training, consultation, coordination of statewide mission projects, and ministry opportunities to assist churches in their development as they follow their God-given mission.

The convention is a depository and distributor of funds given by the churches to support kingdom growth beyond the local church. A mission board is elected annually by the church messengers to guide the distribution of these funds.

The details of these services, mission, and ministries are reported in an annual Book of Reports distributed each November during the annual session of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

THE LOCAL CHURCH AS PARTNER

The affiliation of a Kentucky Baptist church with the Kentucky Baptist Convention is an entirely voluntary arrangement. As noted earlier, the convention “has no jurisdiction over the local church... and shall exercise no authority over them.”

Affiliated cooperating churches are encouraged to enthusiastically engage in the opportunities to participate with other churches through the convention’s channels in evangelistic and mission endeavors, whether locally, statewide, or globally.

These partnering local churches are encouraged to utilize the resources and support services of the convention staff in ways that nourish and fulfill the needs and goals of that local congregation as they discern God’s leadership.

These affiliated churches are expected to provide financial support to the convention's work with gifts through the KBC Cooperative Program plan and special offerings. Information about the distribution of these funds is available for use in the churches.

These affiliated churches are also expected to report annually through the ACP (Annual Church Profile) to the convention to measure progress and aid in planning and evaluation.

Affiliated KBC churches usually affirm the value of several principles, commonly known as “Baptist Distinctives.”

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
For
CHURCHES and their LEADERS**

1. Who and what is the Kentucky Baptist Convention?

The KBC is a voluntary fellowship of more than 772,000 Baptists and their cooperating churches pulling together service and resources in order to fulfill our Lord's command to "go ye... and make disciples."

The KBC Constitution, Article II, affirms our purpose:

"The Body shall serve and assist the churches in their sovereign capacity by the providing of resources and the facilitating of cooperation so that both the Body and the churches may fulfill the Great Commission."

2. What is meant by "cooperating church?"

Again, the KBC Constitution provides insight, Article IV: this fellowship includes "cooperating affiliated Baptist churches" who are (1) "in friendly cooperation with this convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work"...and is "understood by the convention to be local congregations of scripturally-baptized believers in general agreement with any of the historic Baptist confessions of faith (By way of example, churches which act to affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior would be deemed not to be in cooperation with the Convention.) And, (2) Has been a bona fide contributor through the Cooperative Program during the fiscal year preceding."

The KBC Credentials Committee looks for evidence of these characteristics in the application materials presented by the candidate church.

3. If a church is an "affiliated cooperating church", does she lose any of her autonomy?

No, Kentucky Baptist polity affirms the autonomy of the local church, the autonomy of the district association, and the autonomy of this state convention; neither of these has jurisdiction over the others. Cooperation with and participation in the Convention's work is voluntary. Cooperation is based on mutual goals and shared vision for carrying out the Great Commission.

4. What does it cost the church to become affiliated with the KBC?

First, there are no “dues.” Cooperating churches contribute to the mission and work of the Convention primarily through the Cooperative Program as they are led by the Holy Spirit after reviewing the many facets of the Convention’s ministries and programs. These funds are used according to annual mission’s goals voted on by church “messengers” to the KBC annual meeting each November.

Second, congregations and their members volunteer to participate in KBC sponsored mission projects, special ministries, training programs, and fellowship events which strengthen our witness and discipleship.

5. How long does the church have to wait before becoming affiliated with KBC?

That depends on the status of the candidate church. The Credentials Committee looks for evidence the Baptist church is well-organized; is supported by a faithful core of people to sustain it; has defined its purpose and governance; operates through a congregational church polity; has Baptist purposes which are generally compatible with those of the KBC; has developed a basic program of worship, teaching, witness, and stewardship; and has voted to seek KBC affiliation. Candidate churches should be able to show some level of financial support for the Kentucky Baptist Convention’s work.

Churches are urged to establish friendly relations with the local district association of Kentucky Baptists. Some churches maintain dual alignment with other regional or statewide Baptist associations.

Some churches have not been constituted long enough to establish themselves as described above and need a period of development and may be placed under “watchcare” for a period of time.

In any year, prior to September 1, in which a church has reflected a strong candidacy, it can be reviewed by the Credentials Committee in October, be recommended to the November annual convention, and have messengers seated the first day of the convention.

6. May a church participate in programs and ministries of the KBC while it is seeking affiliation?

Yes, upon the first financial contribution a candidate church makes to KBC missions and ministries, the church is placed on the Convention’s mailing list. KBC materials and information will begin coming to the pastor. The congregation may begin participating in fellowship events and training programs. Members of the congregation may attend the KBC annual meeting but may not register as messengers until the church has become affiliated.

**SOME STEPS A BAPTIST CHURCH IS ENCOURAGED
TO TAKE PRIOR TO SEEKING KBC AFFILIATION**

1. Begin developing those programs which will strengthen your congregation, such as regular worship, Bible study, witness, discipleship, and stewardship.
2. Lead the congregation to develop its statement of faith and purpose; to develop a constitution and bylaws based on Biblical principles or another detailed description of how the church will make its decisions and function as a Baptist congregation. From this process you will be able to elect the church leadership. A declaration of the church's faith may be the Baptist Faith and Message or any other declaration which parallels the tenets of our historic Baptist faith.
3. Begin supporting and contributing to state and national missions through the Cooperative Program or through the KBC operating budget. The Kentucky Baptist Convention's Mission Board accounting office receives and acknowledges these contributions and distributes funds to all KBC and SBC mission enterprises. Send to Executive Office, Kentucky Baptist Convention, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Dr., Louisville, KY 40223-4160 and designate on a piece of paper how you would like your contribution credited.
4. Establish the church as a viable congregation by being constituted. Another church may sponsor you or a local district Baptist association may help you arrange this official inauguration of your church. Depending on the development of your congregation, you may want to seek assistance from either the Evangelism and Church Planting Team Office (502-489-3417/toll free 866-489-3417) or the Convention Relations Office (502-489-3365/toll free 866-489-3365).
5. Seek good relations with a district association of Kentucky Baptist churches in your area.

How to Complete the Church's Application for Affiliation With the Kentucky Baptist Convention

1. Use the forms enclosed with this packet of material entitled "Church Request for Affiliation with the Kentucky Baptist Convention" and "Data Sheet". This information will provide the Committee on Credentials an overview of the life of your congregation.
2. Please furnish all the information requested. Complete names and addresses, zip codes, and phone numbers are very important: future contact and mailings will depend on the accuracy and completeness of this information.
3. Good relations with a district association of Kentucky Baptist churches, though not required, is strongly encouraged since so much of our cooperative missions and ministries include close coordination with the district Baptist associations.
4. Please attach to the application forms copies of any church approved documents which describe your purpose, rules of governance and bylaws, doctrinal statement, organization, participation in missions and ministries, financial condition and stewardship, and any other information that helps the Committee on Credentials become acquainted with your church.
5. Be sure to submit the application forms and church information by the September 1 deadline and earlier if possible.
6. The following convention offices and staff are available to assist you:

**Kentucky Baptist Convention, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Dr., Louisville, KY 40223-4160
Phone: 502/245-4101. Direct numbers are listed below.**

Executive Office: 502-489-3373/toll free 866-489-3373
Church Consulting & Revitalization: Steve Rice 502-489-3434/tollfree 866-489-3434
Evangelism & Church Planting: Todd Gray 502-489-3417/tollfree 866-489-3417
Convention Relations: Curtis Woods 502-489-3365/tollfree 866-489-3365
Missions Mobilization: Eric Allen 502-489-3402/toll free 866-489-3402
Cross Cultural Ministry: Carlos De la Barra 502-489-3419/toll free 866-489-3419