

Associations Survey Results (Summer 2017)

25 Respondents

1. Before taking this survey, were you aware that each ABC/WI church is also a member of one of seven Associations in the region?

- Yes - 22
- No - 3

2. If you are a member of an ABC/WI church, do you know what association your church belongs to?

- Yes - 20
- No - 2
- Not applicable - 3

3. In the past three years, have you or your church participated in a gathering or initiative organized by your Association?

- Yes – 10
- If yes, please describe. *See Details
- No – 15
- If no, why not? *See Details

4. Please use the scale below to indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements:

- 1. Getting together with other American Baptists for worship and fellowship is important
Strongly Disagree - 1 Disagree - 1 Agree - 12 Strongly Agree - 7 I am Neutral - 4
- 2. Sharing in common ministry or mission with other American Baptists is important
Strongly Disagree - 1 Disagree - 1 Agree - 10 Strongly Agree - 9 I am Neutral - 4
- 3. Learning about how God is working in fellow ABC/WI churches edifies me/my congregation
Strongly Disagree - 1 Disagree - 1 Agree - 15 Strongly Agree - 6 I am Neutral - 2
- 4. Ministerial relationships of support and accountability are important for clergy
Strongly Disagree - 1 Disagree - 0 Agree - 11 Strongly Agree - 12 I am Neutral - 1
- 5. The current model of Associations helps to foster inter-church relationships
Strongly Disagree - 7 Disagree - 9 Agree - 1 Strongly Agree - 2 I am Neutral - 6
- 6. When considering which fellow American Baptists I will fellowship, worship, or engage in mission with, I consider first those within my Association.
Strongly Disagree - 3 Disagree - 10 Agree - 4 Strongly Agree - 1 I am Neutral - 7
- 7. When considering which fellow American Baptists I will fellowship, worship, or engage in mission with, it does not matter to me if we are in the same Association.
Strongly Disagree - 1 Disagree - 1 Agree - 10 Strongly Agree - 8 I am Neutral - 5

5. If we continue to have Associations in the future, what should their functions be?

- To support these functions, how should the Associations be organized? *See Details
- To support these functions, how might leadership be determined? *See Details

6. If we do not continue to have Associations, how might your personal or congregational ministry and mission be hindered?

- What other ways might you address those challenges? *See Details

7. If we do not continue to have Associations, what questions or concerns do you have about our common life together in the region? *See Details

8. Should ABC/WI do away with categorizing churches by Associations?

- Yes - 6
- No - 6
- I'm neutral - 7
- I'm not sure - 6

9. Choose all categories that apply to you: *36 answers

- ABC/WI Local Church Pastor - 10
- ABC/WI Pastoral staff member - 3
- Clergy in ministry setting other than the local church - 6
- Retired clergy - 4
- ABC/WI Lay church member - 6
- Partner Organization Representative - 2
- ABC/WI Board, Commission, or Committee Member - 4
- Other – 1, church office staff

10. Your church/organization:

11. Personal Information:

3. In the past three years, have you or your church participated in a gathering or initiative organized by your Association?	If yes, please describe.	If no, why not?
No		Our association doesn't meet and has no purpose that I can discern
Yes	We have met at the yearly ACTS	
Yes	at annual meeting, none since	
No		active, though some of the pastors and former pastors from our association get together regularly (TIM group). The clergy remain connected, even though some of them are no longer connected to ABC churches and the churches don't really do much together. The women's groups used to get together a couple of times a year, but as women's groups dwindled (members aging and younger women not participating in that way of doing women's ministry), these meetings haven't been held in several years.
No		No association events planned that I am aware of.
Yes	Clergy TIM group	
No		Church chose to withdraw from denomination. Not all members agreed.
No		We were not aware that these "groupings" existed.
No		My association has done nothing.
Yes	ordination council	
No		
No		Has only met at region annual meeting and I have not attended
No		WE HAVE NO LEADER
Yes		
No		have been appropriated by the region; I am not interested in simply "fellowshipping" as my social needs are better met elsewhere.
Yes	At the annual gathering, participated in the election of	
Yes	White Cross work. We actually redistribute the quota to the one or two other churches involved. Not much interest there anymore.	
No		

3. In the past three years, have you or your church participated in a gathering or initiative organized by your Association?	If yes, please describe.	If no, why not?
No		
Yes	An ordination council	
No		Not belong to a Baptist church anymore
No		
Yes	Joint worship services	
No		i am not sure why was not aware of the seven associations.
Yes		

5. If we continue to have Associations in the future, what should their functions be?	To support these functions, how should the Associations be organized?	To support these functions, how might leadership be determined?
I think associations are great if we live in the 19th century	I don't think they should exist	I don't think they should exist
Meetings to keep neighbor churches up-to-date.	Regions or it might be better to group churches with similar goals and doctrines.	
pastoral support	not certain	central staff support
Collaborate on missions, work together on things that we might not be big enough to do on our own (we used to chip in for VBS curriculum and supplies, then rotate the curriculum, decorations and other supplies from church to church in the association over the summer)	Shared goals.	
Strengthen and support. Holding pastors and members to Christian beliefs and ethics.	Associations determined by mileage, a variety of ethnic groups, at least one state staff in attendance for mtgs.	Local lay leader and assigned state staff member who report to executive minister
They should serve to allow churches that are in close proximity to be able to congregate together and share experiences, best ideas and other things of the sort. Which I believe was the idea, I just think a lack of communication has caused this not to happen.	As my previous answer eludes to, by churches that are in close proximity of each other.	There should be nominations from within the congregations and then submitted to the governing body of ABC Wi.
fellowship, worship and engage in mission.	They are well organized. The problem is the leadership.	Could be determined by the nomination committee, And give them a responsibilities description.
Connection for mission, for ordination councils (unless another model is created). Perhaps geographic regions are no longer the answer.	Around common direction or interests, perhaps.	Leadership seems to presently be quickly determined during a brief meeting at the ABC-WI Annual Gathering. Not saying that this is ideal.
SUPPORT, LEARNING EXP., MISSION & WORSHIP TOGETHER, PULPIT EXCHANGE	GEOGRAPHICALLY OR MAYBE SIZE, RURAL OR CITY ETC.	VOLUNTEER

5. If we continue to have Associations in the future, what should their functions be?	To support these functions, how should the Associations be organized?	To support these functions, how might leadership be determined?
Whatever their function, it should be genuine and not mere appearance -- as is the case with ordination authority being vested in the region's ministry commission and ordination councils rubber stamping the commission's decision. Reverse the order of the terms and it becomes a reassertion of associational authority.	Through committed covenanting relationships, not merely proximity	Ad hoc basis to realize the particular association's needs and goals
We need good communications from each church to both the region and the association leadership.	I think the organization structure is OK	I think the present leadership determination method is OK
Working together men and women alike.	in close proximity	no suggestions on this.
Support churches in structure development ie..pastor search, local community relationships like red cross, salvation army etc	Members of churches within a region should compose the makeup	Within the composed group a personality profile should be conducted along with group suggestions
back to the purpose of being connectional as Baptists - to work together on mission we couldn't do alone, to share resources and insights and encouragement.	might require moving away from the idea that a church belongs to just one "association" -- if associations become mission defined, a church may have more than one area of focus.	first need to answer what kind of leadership is needed in a new model. is it calling together meetings? Is it taking the lead in sharing resources or organizing mission events?
To keep church leadership informed of opportunities for combined mission, worship.	By geographical region	Voluntary leadership
no thoughts, not sure of what exists	no thoughts, not sure of what exists	no thoughts, not sure of what exists
Since the ABC is so diverse racially and ethnically, I really think this should be a powerful piece of table dialogue together where we share our experiences.... particularly in a critical national moment focused on racial justice.	Don't have an opinion on this.	Of the people, by the people, for the people.

6. If we do not continue to have Associations, how might your personal or congregational ministry and mission be hindered?	What other ways might you address those challenges?	7. If we do not continue to have Associations, what questions or concerns do you have about our common life together in the region?
I cannot say that our interests and ministry has been hindered by not meeting for the past decade or so, except for the meeting to elect officers to do constitutional functions at the region level		none
Not sure	We will meet with fellow churches on our own.	Since we are diverging in several areas already, having a common life together is already difficult.
don't know	not certain	I would like to hear more about the work of my colleagues
I don't think it would actually affect us significantly, as our association has not really associated much at all over the past several years. The TIM group that Sam Brink started with Northeast Association clergy remains active, even though half of the pastors in the group are either retired or not with ABC churches; they've known each other for a long time and have built close friendships. We have in the past done mission trips together, but we could just as easily organize that sort of thing without the formal structure of an association.	Memorial FdL "cross-pollinates" quite a bit with Immanuel Brookfield because we're interested in learning about how they do community building around food, so some of our members have apprenticed with Despensa de la Paz and StreetLife Communities, and people from those ministries have been doing pulpit supply while our pastor is on Sabbatical. I think maintaining connections with other ABC churches in the region requires intentionality and specific purpose. Rather than having gatherings in order to stay connected, we should stay connected in order to do mission together, do apprenticeships with each other's ministries, etc. We have a hard time getting people to attend a regional meeting or retreat, but we can easily get a bunch of people together to go do street ministry and then talk about that experience over lunch with Pastor Max.	

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Distance will be an issue. Some of the churches I would like for my church to fellowship with are in the Milwaukee area. The church would have to be willing to commit the time to travel back and forth.	Plan events together on a quarterly basis. Utilize social media to communicate between churches. Share Christian Education efforts via webinars.	How do we maintain fellowship & family? Would the region office become central to holding this all together? Is the region office equipped to do this?
Since we have withdrawn the ethics of ministerial leadership has been questionable with no one to turn to. Also the missions support has fallen off.	I have attempted to introduce alternative missions. The ethic questions have been ignored by those involved.	There needs to be alternative support systems. That receive more emphasis.
We will not have the opportunity to benefit from meeting with and learning from sister churches and thus feel more motivated in our local congregation.		
the associations are not doing something in that matter.	The ministerial commission would be more active visiting congregations.	Our annual gatherings most have more promotion in the churches.
Some opportunity to connect meaningfully with other churches is always eye-opening, in terms of who is involved in congregational leadership, what churches are doing, what churches are struggling with.		How do we encourage connectedness? What does the ordination process look like without association councils?
In no way	Allow a minimum of 4 congregations to form an association as needed for ordination purposes	Don't associate as associations now, let them go.
WON'T MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE	RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER LOCAL CHURCHES	RURAL CHURCHES WILL BE LEFT OUT
The historical value of associations was mutual support and correction. We have not been very good at either purpose. The region functions as a de facto association, but not a very substantive or satisfactory substitute.	Return to the Baptist root of the importance of each congregation belonging to the "wider Church" and not just focusing exclusively on it's own life. It would only happen through intentionality at the grass-roots level -- not by top-down decision.	We lose our Baptistic uniqueness and become one more tepid body espousing the name "Christian."

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<p>We will be hindered in our ability to find out what is working in other parts of our association and be able to incorporate that into our ministry</p>	<p>To the extent that a church makes a publication for the benefit of their church, it might be forwarded to the Association leader and the Region office. On a regular basis (for instance quarterly) the collection of publications could be reviewed and articles thought potentially beneficial to the Association churches could be sent to all the churches of the Association.</p>	<p>I am concerned that we miss the contributions that each church can make to the mission of the other churches</p>
<p>Our NE Association has not been very active in Womens' work for quite a while. I miss that. We are still holding together at Memorial Fond du Lac, but not so much interest with younger women. They find service in other ways. These are new times and I guess we have to incorporate change.</p>		
<p>Don't know</p>	<p>Developing relationships with people who are involved with the church</p>	<p>None at this moment</p>
<p>honestly, to the degree that our association is nonfunctional, it won't affect us much at all, other than figuring out how to ordain people. That said, I think we can grow in effectiveness by better connecting and collaborating with other ABC congregations across the region.</p>	<p>Make the region itself (more of) a hub for various mission emphases and resources</p>	<p>how can we strengthen regional structures and resources to become more able to respond to the variety of needs among churches</p>

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<p>Since our association has been essentially inactive, the impact would be minimal.</p>	<p>We reach out to other churches on a regular basis by email and phone call. We would continue to do this</p>	<p>I think we need to look at how other denominations deal with the idea of connectivity between congregations. What do Lutherans, Methodists, Congregationalists do? Associations don't seem to have been effective. The American Baptist concept of church autonomy has, in some ways, kept us apart and hindered our sense of corporate responsibility. Not everyone uses electronic devices so relying on FB, Twitter, etc has left some people behind.</p>
<p>no thoughts, not sure of what exists</p>	<p>no thoughts, not sure of what exists</p>	<p>no thoughts, not sure of what exists</p>
<p>I'm not sure that it would affect us all that much.</p>	<p>We are already pretty ecumenically involved, rather than associationally involved.</p>	<p>I've observed the ABC office doing a good job of keeping the region connected.</p>