

POLICY FOR MINISTRY RELATIONSHIPS

Rationale for Ministry Relationships

Biblical Rationale

Various times in the New Testament churches partnered to accomplish a common goal, (2 Corinthians 8, 9; Philippians 4; 3 John). While no formal association of churches existed, such as state conventions, the principle of cooperation and mutual assistance is found throughout scripture (Ecclesiastes 4, Luke 9).

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (“The Convention” or “The SBTC”) is committed to carrying out the Great Commission tasks of evangelism and discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20). The convention may at times consider ministry relationships with institutions or organizations that can assist it in accomplishing these divine mandates.

Theological Rationale

The Convention holds a core value of theological agreement. Recognizing the church as autonomous, the Convention claims autonomy as well. The SBTC has chosen to set theological parameters for affiliation among the churches. Therefore the SBTC would enter into a ministry relationship with those institutions or organizations that meet those parameters.

Missiological Rationale

The SBTC desires to work with Great Commission entities. Without creating a bureaucracy, the SBTC seeks to provide mission and ministry tools for the affiliated churches. In order to do so, the SBTC is willing to enter ministry relationships.

Foremost for the SBTC is evangelism and missions that result in new church starts. Other missions and ministry efforts must fit within the context of the Great Commission. Priority in funding will be directed to missions and evangelism. New church starts will continue to receive the largest emphasis.

Practical Aspects

Coordination of mission/evangelism and ministry activities is being done with a limited staff, paid consultants and volunteers. There is no desire on the part of the SBTC to form new organizations or duplicate ministries that are already in existence and are willing to enter into a ministry relationship.

Affiliated and Fraternal Ministries may be eligible to receive funding from the Convention. Any funding shall be administered according to the Business and Financial Plan.

Spiritual Understanding

The work undertaken in these ministries is the work of God for the benefit of His Kingdom. Each agreement shall specify that no legal partnership, joint venture, or agency is being created. No ministry relationship shall be undertaken with an entity which does not hold an exemption under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Each agreement shall declare that the parties do not intend to be entering into, and the agreement shall not be, a legally enforceable contract.

1. Each ministry relationship is founded upon a voluntary agreement between the SBTC and another entity to cooperate together in the task of missions and ministry.
2. The SBTC and the other entity shall each remain independent and autonomous organizations.
3. Neither the SBTC nor the other entity will seek to abridge or control the other.
4. Each will select, employ, retain, and supervise its employees, volunteers, members, officers, directors and agents without any participation by the other in those matters.
5. Each shall remain free to enter into other formal relationships with other institutions or organizations.

6. Each must faithfully comply with all applicable state and federal laws, rules, and regulations.
7. Each will have the right to terminate the relationship at any time without cause and without the necessity of any prior notice to the other.

Method for entering into a Ministry Relationship

1. Any entity desiring a Ministry Relationship with the SBTC will petition the Ministry Relationships Department of the SBTC, indicating a desire for such relationship.
 2. The SBTC Staff and the entity shall formulate a written Ministry Relationship agreement to be presented to the Ministry Relationships Committee.
 3. The written Ministry Relationship agreement shall be submitted through the Ministry Relationships Committee to the Executive Board of the SBTC for approval.
 4. The Ministry Relationship agreement will be reviewed and renewed periodically as specified in the agreement.
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Types of Ministry Relationships

- I. Fundamental conditions of an **Affiliated Ministry Agreement**
 - A. This type of relationship is intended for educational or family support institutions that enhance the ministries of SBTC churches. It is not appropriate for fellowships or other types of ministry resource providers.
 - B. The entity entering into an affiliation agreement with the Convention shall affirm it is in agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.
 - C. The entity will engage an independent CPA to perform year-end audit of its books and records. It will provide a copy of its audited financial statements, and any accompanying audit reports and management letters, to the Convention on an annual basis for informational purposes. Although not a condition for affiliation, it is also strongly recommended that the entity be a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (“ECFA”) and adhere to the standards of conduct required to remain a member of ECFA in good standing.
 - D. The entity shall be eligible to receive financial support from the SBTC. If the entity receives funds from the SBTC it agrees not to solicit funding from any church affiliated with SBTC without prior SBTC approval in writing signed on behalf of the SBTC by the Executive Board Chairman.
 - E. The SBTC will be allowed to have representation on the governing board of the entity.
- II. Fundamental conditions of a **Fraternal Ministry Agreement**
 - A. This type of agreement is intended for fellowships and organizations that have risen out of Texas Southern Baptist life and is not intended for institutions, or commercial, sole proprietors or ministry resource providers under the primary control and direction of an individual.
 - B. The entity must hold a high view of Scripture.
A high view of Scripture would include but not be limited to the position that the Bible is factual in character and historicity in such matters as: 1) the supernatural character of the biblical miracles which occurred as factual events in time and space, 2) the historical accuracy of biblical narratives which occurred precisely as the text of Scripture indicates, and 3) the actual authorship of biblical writings as attributed by scripture itself.
 - C. Institutions and organizations must be in basic agreement with Southern Baptist distinctives.
Southern Baptist distinctives would include but not be limited to 1) salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone [inclusive of security of the believer] 2) baptism by immersion of believers only, and 3) the Bible is the final rule of faith and practice.