



GACB Apologetic Article

GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF CONFESSIONAL BAPTISTS

APOLOGETIC ARTICLE

It has been asked, what is the purpose of the Georgia Association of Confessional Baptists? Why does GACB exist and what was intended when we started this association.

The Georgia Association of Confessional Baptist Churches first purpose is to encourage our members in advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As confessional Baptists, our aim is to encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ to return to the sound teachings summarized in the great confessions of the Protestant Reformation, especially as put forth in the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. Our early Georgia Baptist forefather's held to this same confession and historical evidence shows that the gospel was surely advanced and churches firmly planted throughout Georgia and the South East through the work of men like Daniel and Abraham Marshall and Jesse Mercer.

The purpose of GACB is more explicitly described in our Constitution as follows:

1. Advance Christ's kingdom by providing a fellowship in which churches of common confession may find mutual encouragement, assistance, edification, and counsel, and may participate in cooperative efforts, home missions (such as planting and establishing confessional Baptist churches), foreign missions, ministerial training and publications all of which are often beyond the scope of one local church.
2. Provide a forum of fellowship and helps for men and churches who are learning about Confessional Calvinism.
3. Record the history of Confessional Baptist Churches in Georgia, in order to commend a faithful heritage.

The Pastor's Fraternal, normally scheduled in March, is one of the means where we encourage and help "those men and churches who are learning about Confessional Calvinism". Normally, the Pastors Fraternal will be a time of topical sermons and biographical sketches of influential historical figures in Baptist life along with discussion and, of course, good fellowship.

The General Assembly, normally held in September, is the means where the member churches gather "for mutual encouragement, assistance, and counsel." This is also the time when individual churches may bring proposals for a variety of cooperative efforts. For example, a church may have an opportunity to plant a church (domestic or international) but lacks the funding or personnel to proceed. After making their case for assistance other churches in the association may choose to help. Another example may be helpful. Perhaps a church has a gifted brother who desires to obtain more theological training. His church would be given time at the General Assembly to make the case for financial assistance. Again, if other churches are able and desire to be part of sending this man to seminary they would have the opportunity. The 'sending' church would maintain oversight for the man but other churches might choose to help with his support while in school. There have always been times in church history where theological controversy has challenged orthodoxy. If particular issues come to a local church those elders/leaders might choose to bring the matter to the assembly for discussion and perhaps advice in how they might deal with the controversy.

It is important to note that we are an association of churches. We should make the distinction between a denomination and an association. Our understanding of the local church is best described in the 1689 London Baptist Confession, Chapter 26, Of The Church, paragraph 15 where it states, "messengers assembled, are not entrusted with any church-power properly so called; or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures either over any churches or persons; or to impose their determination on the churches or officers." Messengers, of course, refers to an associational meeting where individual churches send 'messengers' from within their own congregations.

An association is a plurality of churches and we think, is as valuable as a plurality of elders. We have seen men who have no accountability struggle. Just so, we believe that churches who have no fellowship or 'communion' with other churches may, at times, struggle with issues that other churches have already resolved successfully (or at least have learned valuable lessons from their own struggles).

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact us or the pastors of our member churches.