

**DECLARATION OF IBADAN**  
**Ibadan, Nigeria**  
**October 22, 1987**

*Consultation sponsored by the All Africa Baptist Fellowship  
And the Baptist World Alliance  
Division of Evangelism and Education*

We, the delegates of the Consultation on Cooperation and Partnership between Baptist National Conventions and Mission Boards represented in Africa, meeting in Ibadan, Nigeria, led by God's Spirit to wrestle with the Biblical issues of socio-human and missio-theological concerns affecting our cooperative mission in the evangelization of Africa and the world in our time, in accord with the Biblical theme of "partners working together with God" (I Corinthians 3:1-15), make the following declaration.

**I. Declaration of Our Theological Understanding of Mission**

1. We declare that the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and His Christ embraces the whole of the cosmos, with the Father's purpose in His Spirit to bring "everything together under Christ as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth." (Ephesians 1:10)
2. We declare the task of evangelization to be the mission of the whole church, with the whole Gospel, for the whole person, in the whole of society, for the whole world.
3. We declare that God the Father by His Spirit bestowed on all of human life the crowning glory of a common human dignity in all peoples, and that the entire human race has the inherent right to the heritage of being human in God.
4. We declare that our justification by faith in Jesus Christ is the spiritual witness in the Scriptures and in human life to the Biblical declaration that God has no favorites, and that He is impartial to all peoples. (Galatians 2:6; Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11)
5. We declare that by faith in Jesus Christ we are all the children of God in His Spirit, that peoples of all races are all one in Christ Jesus, with their oneness not restricted to detached spirituality but belonging to the common dignities which are intrinsic to physical human life, across all races.
6. We declare that it is a violation of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and His Christ to preach the redemptive love and saving goodness of God to people who are the victims of discrimination and injustice without addressing a prophetic word of protest against suppressive political systems which abuse human dignities in society.
7. We are committed to strategies for evangelization together, in mutual and reciprocal experiences of fellowship (*koinonia*), grace (*charis*), service (*diakonia*), glory (*doxa*), and blessing (*eulogia*), as a celebration of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, in peace and hope affecting all of human life and society, in our resurrected Redeemer and Lord.

8. We are committed to strategies of evangelization which give recognition to the Word of God within the human predicament of lostness, for it is within the human problem of hopelessness in existence that we together discover the meaning and purpose of the mission of God (*missio Dei*), the mission of human societies (*missio hominum*), and the mission of the church (*missiones ecclesiarum*).

9. We are committed to the great commission of our Lord God and Savior, in which “the sending church” relates to the entire church of Jesus Christ, and not merely to the Western churches of the modern missionary movement.

10. We are committed in our time to the God of the Bible, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in an integrated mission of evangelization in Africa unto the ends of the world, which is characterized by the message of the Gospel (*kerygma*), the work of the ministry (*diakonia*), and cooperative celebration of fellowship (*koinonia*), in the redemptive liberation of all peoples, in the strong name of Jesus Christ and His Spirit.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone; the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. (II Corinthians 5:17-20 NIV)

## **II. Declaration of Principles for Partnership between Baptist National Conventions/Unions and Mission Boards in Africa**

The relationship between Baptist mission boards and African conventions/unions is one of partnership. It is a mutual sharing in the holistic evangelization of the world, each bringing its particular gifts to the task.

Organizational efforts directed to the accomplishment of specified objectives always involve the exercise of power. Power is understood to be the authority and capacity to make decisions and undertake activities designed to achieve stated ends. This is an inherent quality of institutional structures, and the church is no exception.

Since two or more organizations are involved in the partnership of African conventions/unions and mission boards, the equitable and effective sharing of power in carrying out the common task is a crucial concern. As implied, this concern involves issues of justice with regard to the legitimate authority of indigenous peoples in the carrying out of activities within their own context, of being “masters of their own household”. In the political sphere, these issues of justice have been largely resolved through revolutionary independence movements. Within the church, they are resolved on the basis of Biblical principles of equality and fellowship in Christ, where all exercise full personhood before God.

Sharing of power in partnership also involves consideration of effectiveness in accomplishing the evangelization task. It is particularly at this point that differences in cultural perspective may arise. For example, Western mission boards often place a

premium on “efficiency” as it is understood in the Western cultural context. African church leaders may emphasize other values of the local culture. Since communication is essential to the evangelization task, long-term effectiveness depends heavily on how well programs and practices reflect appropriate indigenous values. Thus, empowerment of the African convention/union in the partnership is important in consideration of both justice and effectiveness.

In light of the above, we declare the following as principles to guide our partnership relations.

1. While the nature of partnership includes mutuality and consultation in decision-making, the primary authority for priorities, programs, and personnel should reside with the African partner.
2. All programmatic activities should be carried out within the structure and under the authority of the African convention/union. Any mission structure should be limited to fellowship and to such personnel matters as salaries, personal needs of missionaries, education of missionary children, and so on.
3. All real property should be registered in the name of the African convention/union.
4. Missionary personnel should be sent to a country only on invitation or agreement of the African convention/union. The assignment of each missionary should be determined by consultation and mutual agreement of the partners. Primary accountability of the missionary should be to the indigenous Baptist body or institution to which the missionary is assigned.
5. It is a goal that each African convention/union should become self-supporting in basic administration. Before full self-support is possible, or in support of ministries beyond basic administration, the African convention/union may request funding support from a mission board partner. The mission partner may grant all or part of such a request, depending on available resources and its own priorities. The African convention/union should hold itself accountable to the mission board for the appropriate use of such grants, in accordance with any conditions under which a grant is made.
6. Capital project funds should be handled in a manner similar to program funds. It is noted that capital project funds are always for a clearly designated purpose and should therefore always be subject to separate accounting.
7. Inevitably, misunderstanding or disagreement between partners may arise in any partnership. Since the partnership is between mission boards and African conventions/unions, differences on substantive matters of policy should be resolved between the officers of the African convention/union and officers of the mission board whose authority includes the formulation of policy. There should exist channels of communication which permit the African convention/union officers to bring substantive issues of policy to the attention of such officers of the mission board.
8. New initiatives by a mission board among an unevangelized people in an African country should be undertaken only in consultation and cooperation with a Baptist convention/union already existing in the country and any mission board which has a traditional relationship with the convention/union.

9. Multilateral relationships involving two or more mission boards in joint partnership with an African convention/union are a healthy trend which should be encouraged.

10. Women should be given full and equal opportunity for participation in the life of the mission boards and African conventions/unions. This applies not just to traditional activities of women but also to positions on staff, committees, and boards.

11. In each partnership relationship there should be on-going dialogue between the African convention/union and the mission board to elaborate the particular details of that relationship in accordance with the above principles.

*Voted* by the delegates of African Baptist conventions/unions and mission boards to the Consultation on Cooperation and Partnership between Baptist National Conventions/Unions and Mission Boards in Africa, Ibadan, Nigeria, October 22, 1987.