**A Resolution Supporting the Purpose and Value of Baptist Church Associations**

Whereas Baptists have had a long history of forming voluntary associations between churches, dating back at least to 1654, with the formation of the Western Association in Somerset, England, and more recently and closer to home, the Philadelphia Baptist Association, organized in 1707, demonstrating that forming associations of Baptist churches was a growing practice following after the example of the first century churches interactions with one another in the exchange of apostolic epistles and the mutual encouragement of believers (II Corinthians 8:1) as recorded in the New Testament, and

Whereas a number of independent Baptist pastors in Pennsylvania met together to consider the formation of an Association in 1949, setting the groundwork for what became the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches, which has continued to serve fellowshipping churches from 1949 to the present, and

Whereas associations have served well to support local Baptist church ministries in the fulfillment of the Great Commission, by accomplishing works together with other Baptist churches that a single Baptist church might not be able to carry out on its own, such as sharing support of missionaries, starting new Baptist churches, conducting ordination examinations, helping struggling churches, developing camp ministries, ministry training and addressing issues that would undermine the cause of Christ with a larger, united voice to those in authority, all of which have been the roles served by Baptist Church Associations for centuries, and

Whereas, associationalism is a voluntary relationship between churches seeking to be in fellowship with an Association and the messengers of the churches within the Association voting upon their application, and

Whereas an association or its leaders cannot exercise authority over affiliated churches except to remove a church from fellowship for not abiding by the doctrinal statement of the association,

Be It Therefore Resolved that we, the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches assembled this September 16-18, 2019, at Open Door Baptist Church in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, do hereby praise and thank the Lord for the inherited wisdom to form associations of Baptist Churches to better lead the people in every affiliated church in edification, evangelism and service whether by conferences, publications, inter-church activities, starting new Baptist churches, helping with building programs or by support in times of damage and loss. We have a cause that is greater than any one of our ministries. Baptist Distinctives are being challenged more than ever. May the Lord find us faithful and help us to stand together more than ever before, as we withstand the evils of our day.