

## Intercultural Ministries: Building Bridges of Understanding

The racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of American Baptist Churches USA is an enviable reality—a true representation of God’s inclusive family. But as much of a blessing as multiculturalism is, the call of Christ to be one church mandates seeking ways to share with the whole family the riches of our unique cultural traditions. It’s no stretch of our Baptist distinctives to acknowledge that we need to be, culturally as well as individually, priests one to another.

To that end, National Ministries encourages these vital connections and dialogue, along with mutual mission and worship experiences, through Intercultural Ministries. While honoring the unique cultural



character of Hispanic, Black Church, Asian and Indian Ministries, the program identi-

fies “the need to push forward toward a deeper understanding of what happens at deeper interpersonal levels in groups, teams and congregations when two or more cultures interact.”

Clearly, the resources and vision of each cultural community are treasures to be shared.

**Hispanic Ministries**, with roots dating back more than a century to pioneering work in Puerto Rico and elsewhere, has modeled church planting and growth initiatives for the entire American Baptist family.

**Black Church Ministries**, embodied in 1,200 largely African American congregations, draws from the diverse antecedent communities and worship styles of Africa and the Caribbean as well as from a triumphant witness in this country in the face of long-standing oppression.

**Asian Ministries**, which has grown from mission work among Chinese immigrants in the 1870s, encompasses within its approximately 135 churches the influences of nearly 15 Asian and Pacific Rim cultures.

**Indian Ministries**, supported in pioneering days by home mission evangelism efforts and initiatives to ensure just treaties, itself includes a rich diversity of native cultural traditions.

For these and other distinctive communities within the American Baptist family, important bridges of understanding and fellowship are being built by Intercultural Ministries.

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AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES USA

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2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

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