



Monday, January 26, 2026

Dear MARBC Brothers,

Thank you for your October 16 letter suggesting the possibility of a merger between the Minnesota Association of Regular Baptist Churches (MARBC) and the Minnesota Baptist Association (MBA). The MBA board of trustees discussed the letter at our meeting on October 24 and suggested several responses.

We are not aware of any current conflict between local churches fellowshiping with the MARBC and the MBA. Several churches participate in both associations: Marshall, Sleepy Eye, and New Ulm. Several other churches around the state share in various ministry events and pastors' fellowships. MBA churches have welcomed nearby MARBC churches to events and vice versa. Fellowship between churches has been an individual, local church decision.

As you noted in your letter to us, the MBA desires to include in our fellowship other churches of like faith and practice. An individual local church hosts a council that examines its doctrine and practice and then recommends it for fellowship in the MBA. The church messengers at our annual meeting consider the church and vote to accept it into the association. The MBA board does not have the authority to merge our fellowshiping churches with another association of churches. Fellowship is an individual local church decision.

In order to merge, one or both associations would need to dissolve. The remaining churches would apply to the new association on an individual basis. The MBA believes that it still exists for the glory of God and the benefit of its fellowshiping churches. We believe God wants us to continue. We do not presume that the MARBC has any less valuable heritage or mission.

As noted above, several churches have chosen to fellowship with both the MBA and the MARBC, but most churches have chosen not to join both associations. History, redundancy, financial support of two organizations, and broader associations might explain this. As an example, 18 MBA churches are also associated on a national level with the New Testament Association of Independent Baptist Churches (NTA). The NTA constitution prevents fellowshiping churches from participating in other national associations. We understand that MARBC fellowship does not obligate a church to participate in the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC). Churches unite around doctrinal statements, but each must also decide how much diversity of practice their fellowship can support.

The MBA board hopes and prays that our churches remain faithful to God's Word and work in Minnesota. We hope the same for the MARBC. We do not currently recognize the possibility of a merger of associations, although we are glad to fellowship with individual churches of like faith and practice.

Sincerely,

The MBA Board of Trustees