

National Baptist Convention (NBCUSA)

The National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBCUSA) is the largest African American religious denomination in the United States, with an estimated membership of 7.5 million.

- **Origins:** Founded in 1895 in Atlanta, Georgia, the NBCUSA emerged from a merger of several smaller Baptist organizations. It grew out of the need for Black Baptists to establish their own institutions and organizations, separate from the predominantly white Baptist denominations.
- **Civil Rights Era:** The NBCUSA played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement, with many of its members actively involved in the struggle for racial equality.

More info: <https://nationalbaptist.com/>.

Core Beliefs:

- **Protestant Christianity:** The NBCUSA adheres to the core tenets of Protestant Christianity, including belief in the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), the Bible as the inspired word of God, and the salvation of humankind through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Baptist Principles:** The Convention emphasizes the autonomy of local churches, the importance of believer's baptism by immersion, and the priesthood of all believers.

Differences from Other Baptist Churches:

- **Historical Context:** The NBCUSA has a unique historical context, shaped by the experience of slavery, segregation, and the struggle for racial justice.
- **Social Justice Emphasis:** The Convention has a strong emphasis on social justice and has been actively involved in addressing issues such as poverty, education, and racial inequality.
- **Community Focus:** The NBCUSA plays a vital role in the African American community, providing social services, education, and spiritual guidance.

Practices and Rituals:

- **Worship Services:** Traditional worship services typically include singing, prayer, preaching, and the reading of Scripture.
- **Sunday School:** Sunday School is an important part of the educational and spiritual development of members.
- **Bible Study:** Bible study groups are common in many NBCUSA churches.
- **Church Dinners and Social Events:** These events provide opportunities for fellowship and community building.

Places of Worship:

- **Local Churches:** The NBCUSA consists of thousands of local churches across the United States.

Leadership Structure:

- **Hierarchical:** The Convention has a hierarchical structure with national, state, and local levels of leadership.
- **Elected Officials:** Leaders are elected by the membership at various levels.
- **President:** The President of the NBCUSA is the highest-ranking official of the denomination.

Main Symbols:

- **Cross:** The cross remains a central symbol of Christian faith.
- **Dove:** Symbolizing the Holy Spirit.