

## **Report from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina**

*For period July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018*

**NOTE:** *The following summaries are abbreviated versions of reports that will be included in the 2018 Book of Reports that will be distributed at this year's Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Annual Meeting to be held Nov. 5-6, 2018 in Greensboro.*

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) exists to help local churches fulfill their divinely appointed mission from God. The convention staff, under the leadership of Executive Director-Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield Jr., is committed to helping Baptist churches and associations maximize their ministry outreach for the purpose of building God's kingdom through a strategy of "impacting lostness through disciple-making."

### **Associational Partnerships**

Associational Missions Strategists (AMSs), also known as directors of missions (DOMs) or associational missionaries across North Carolina, play a critical role in the life of our churches and can be a vital, significant and strategic force in the effort to help plant new churches and assist in the revitalization and replanting of existing congregations. For this reason, Associational Partnerships continues to offer opportunities, training and resources to help associational leaders enter the field with a fresh, intentional and deliberate approach. We are so grateful for the crucial strategic ministry partnerships with the associational leaders representing 77 associations across the state. Our staff is thankful for these leaders, their servant hearts and faithfulness toward impacting lostness through creating a disciple-making culture in their churches, communities and beyond.

**Associational Missions Conference:** During this year's three-day training event in April we offered a full day devoted to potential and new associational leadership training, a track for spouses, a track for church and community ministries personnel, and a full agenda of education, training and fellowship for

associational leaders. The conference theme was "Redeeming the Time: Reclaiming the Glory: Seizing Every Opportunity to Restore His Church." Our guest presenter was Mark Clifton, senior director of replanting at the North

American Mission Board. The emphasis was focused on the implementation of a framework and strategy related to church revitalization and church replanting.

### **Church Health and Revitalization**

In the last two years, our team of revitalization specialists has had hundreds of conversations with associations, pastors and churches in an effort to help them assess their current realities, envision a future for making disciples and build strategies to impact their communities with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Along the way, we have continually asked the question, "What is working in church revitalization?" The keys we are seeing are these:

1. An outpouring of God's Spirit through prayer and study of His Word.
2. Repentance and a return to a love for Jesus Christ.
3. Leaders unleashed to shepherd the church toward mission.
4. Disciples who are multiplying by making disciples.
5. Communities transformed by the power of God expressed through the ministry of the local church.

The interest and need for revitalization continues to flourish in North Carolina. We have consulted with several individual churches and have several associations involved in or making

plans to begin revitalization cohorts in the near future.

### **Church Planting**

North Carolina Baptists celebrated the addition of 101 new churches in 2017. Of these, 71 were new church plants receiving training, coaching and financial assistance through the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO) and the Cooperative Program. A total of 30 new churches, most new mission points, joined our Baptist family by affiliation and received resources other than financial assistance, such as coaching, partnership and training.

A total of 82 percent of these new churches are identified as non-Anglo. This is significant, since there are more than 336 languages spoken in the state. Of the new churches, 26 were Hispanic and 10 were Asian. Churches who self-identified as African-American totaled 12 new church plants, and 34 designated themselves as multi-ethnic or "other." Presently, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina churches, associations, and networks work with 69 language groups in the state.

These new churches reported 108,774 evangelistic contacts and 7,122 professions of faith.

### **Collegiate Partnerships**

The Collegiate Partnerships Team of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) has been increasingly helping N.C. Baptist churches fill college campuses with missionaries. Churches have responded by engaging campuses with the gospel, and we have seen the greatest growth from ministries started at community college campuses. As a result, more students are involved in collegiate ministry, more students are actively serving in our churches, more students are being saved, more students are being disciplined in small groups, more students are being trained to share the gospel, more students are being developed as leaders, and more students are being sent as summer missionaries.

### **Cooperative Program**

North Carolina Baptists minister together in hundreds of ways across our state and beyond. Behind all those ministries is a love for Christ and a desire to both proclaim and live out the the gospel He brought. The main component enabling and fueling these works is the Cooperative Program, now totaling more than \$31 million. This is how N.C. Baptists cooperate financially year-round for missions and ministry support.

There is room for both pride and concern when looking at Southern Baptist giving levels. Nationwide support for the Cooperative Program has trended slightly upward over recent years. In North Carolina, Baptists have also slightly increased their Cooperative Program giving.

Additionally, N.C. Baptists led all other state conventions in their support for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and were second among the other state conventions in their support for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

### **Disciple-making Culture**

The Evangelism and Discipleship Group is focused on the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's strategy of "impacting lostness through disciple-making" as we strengthen churches by helping them create a disciple-making culture. The Evangelism and Discipleship Group is comprised of two teams, the Disciple-Making Team and the Church Strengthening Team.

### **Disciple-making Conference**

The 2018 conference was held on Feb. 27 at Center Grove Baptist Church in Clemmons, N.C. Attended by approximately 600 people, the conference focused on best practices and methods for reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ and discipling them toward the mission of God. The keynote speaker was Pastor Matt Carter of The Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas. More than 40

equipping sessions were hosted, providing practical application to a vast array of evangelism and discipleship issues faced by the local church.

### **Embrace and Women's Evangelism and Discipleship**

Embrace continues to equip women to make disciples in order to impact lostness.

At the 2018 Disciple-Making Conference, Embrace hosted four equipping sessions to help women's ministry leaders and church members make disciples.

The Embrace Leadership Network (ELN) continued to grow in its second year. This yearlong intensive training includes four full Saturdays of discussion and hands-on learning activities, designed to equip participants to be well-rounded women's ministry leaders or influencers in their local churches or associations.

In the spring of 2018, Embrace hosted seven roundtable events in Statesville, Cary, New Bern, Monroe, High Point, Dobson and Rocky Mount, where attendees received training in having gospel conversations.

Embrace hosted "Embracing Boston," a four-day mission trip to Boston, Massachusetts, from Sept. 14-17, 2017. This mission team worked alongside Beacon Community Church in Belmont, a community of approximately 25,000 residents located just outside of Boston.

On Oct. 27-28, 2017, Embrace hosted the annual N.C. Baptist Women's Retreat. The theme was "Anchored" based on Psalm 1:3.

### **Great Commission Partnerships**

The Office of Great Commission Partnerships exists to mobilize and empower North Carolina Baptist churches to make disciples among unreached people groups and in least-reached places in North Carolina, throughout North America and around the world. We do this in

North Carolina by empowering churches to impact lostness through disciple-making among the unreached peoples next door and least-reached multifamily housing communities. We do this globally by mobilizing our churches to impact lostness through disciple-making through partnership missions with churches, planters and missionaries in least-reached places and among unreached people groups throughout North America and around the world. Our great hope is to help the church to fulfill its God-given commission to make disciples among all nations until there is no place or people left without the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Office of Prayer**

Last November during the 2017 Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSCNC) Annual Meeting in Greensboro, messengers and guests united in one-accord prayer toward revival and spiritual awakening during the "Broken Before the Throne" prayer gathering. The prayer service was based upon God's invitation in Acts 3:19 to return to Him through genuine repentance, humility and brokenness so that He might pour out His mercy, forgiveness, restoration and refreshing upon His people and upon our nation. Following last November's prayer gathering, many pastors and leaders implemented similar prayer gatherings in their churches and areas and used the resources that were created and used during the prayer gathering at the 2017 Annual Meeting to help with planning and implementing a prayer service.

The 2018 Statewide "Awaken" Prayer Conference was held at Lake Hills Church, Candler, North Carolina, on March 9-10, 2018. Over the past year, regional prayer conferences, summits and gatherings were also held in partnership with associations and churches across North Carolina.

### **Strategic Focus Team**

The Strategic Focus Team (SFT) has the responsibility to assist North Carolina Baptists

to focus on the 250 most concentrated pockets of lostness across our state. These small geographic areas, usually 3-to-6 miles in diameter, represent places where the lost population is growing and changing faster than the local church has kept pace.

Over time, these areas have filled with groups of people that are different from the local congregation and particularly hard to reach. Since 2014, the SFT has initiated work in 68 of North Carolina's top 100 pockets, which are generally located in eight population centers across the state. This past year, the team moved forward to begin assisting churches to engage the remaining 150 pockets, completing detailed research in 33 pockets and initiating work in 51 pockets. The strategy coordinators assigned to the SFT help churches and associations develop strategies within these pockets to engage North Carolina's hard to reach. These strategies often include strengthening existing churches as well as planting new ones. However, disciple-making lies at the heart of each strategy as churches work to establish sustainable, multiplying disciple-making among every group of people living in North Carolina's pockets of lostness.

### **Worship and Music**

This year has seen a focus on increasing the number of ways that we can deliver training to North Carolina Baptist worship leaders, particularly through the extensive development of online methods of training. Our primary training for worship leaders is through one of the Worship Leader Boot Camp experiences. We now offer a variety of possibilities, depending upon how deep worship leaders want to go and how much time they can allot to learning experiences.

### **Youth Evangelism and Discipleship**

Summer Youth Weeks 2017 consisted of seven weeks of camp at Fort Caswell. These weeks combined worship, small and large group studies, special interest tracks, church group

devotions, an afternoon opportunity called Youth Ministry University and many other fun activities. The theme was "Way. Truth. Life." based on John 14:6.

Attendance for the 2017 camps was 6,326, representing 263 churches. Total decisions reflected the greater things God was doing at camp, including 321 first-time professions of faith, more than 1,200 recommitments and 103 called to full-time Christian ministry.