

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.

Sadly, there has been no big increase in giving such as the numbers of lost people in our state and nation would say is needed. Still, N.C. Baptists have won the right to feel good about much in their giving.

Consider what N.C. Baptists gave in 2017 through their Cooperative Program gifts and what they gave to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions plus what they gave to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions.

More than 60 percent of their total missions dollars went outside North Carolina, primarily to the two Southern Baptist mission boards and the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

Further, consider that 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.

N.C. Baptists are accustomed to hearing such reports and think it is commonplace. But it is anything but commonplace.

Chris Furl came to serve Peachtree Memorial Baptist Church near Murphy about three years ago. He came from another denomination and knew nothing about the Baptist approach to missions support.

He had never heard of the Cooperative Program, but Peachtree Memorial members were solidly behind it, routinely budgeting about 10 percent of their total income for it. Furl figured he should know where all those dollars were going, so he began a study of the Cooperative Program.

"I was astonished to see the numerous avenues of ministry the money affected," he said. Now Furl calls himself a Cooperative Program fan and is proud of his church's support.

Capturing the viewpoints of pastors like Furl was the goal of a new series of Cooperative Program videos recorded during 2017 and 2018. See these brief videos at vimeo.com/channels/nccooperativeprogram.

A new challenge for Cooperative Program promotion in recent years has been the growing numbers of ethnic groups among N.C. Baptists. Baptist congregations across our state now speak scores of languages as they worship on Sunday.

Cooperative Program materials in Spanish have been distributed to the more than 150 Hispanic churches that are now part of our convention. One new piece in Spanish is called “Neustra Iglesia No Está Sola” (Our Church Is Not Alone), which provides photos and information on teaching and fellowship opportunities for Hispanic churches plus information about the Cooperative Program.

Is your church praying for your missionaries every Sunday? One of the best ways to do that is with “52 Sundays,” our missionary prayer guide. Show your members a different missionary every Sunday, present information on the ministry and then lead in prayer. Think of how much your members will learn about missions over a year.

For 2018, “52 Sundays” was available in English, Spanish, Korean and Chinese. The 2019 edition of “52 Sundays” will include 15 of North Carolina’s church planters who are planting new Baptist churches from the mountains to the sea.

Videos, print materials, ads, in-church presentations, phone consultations all are part of helping N.C. Baptists understand and support their unique giving system called the Cooperative Program. For more information, contact the Cooperative Program Office at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5513.

Mike Creswell, Senior Consultant

Fatima Roma, Ministry Assistant