

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Randall Forsythe, Convention President

As I am finishing my second consecutive term as your elected President, let me extend my deep, heart-felt gratitude to all of you who make up the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. You have prayed for me, encouraged me, supported me, and loved me in my service to you. It truly has been an honor, privilege and personal blessing to serve you in this office.

This has been another wonderful, exciting year for SCBI. We have seen the Hand of God moving all around the State. People of all walks of life have been changed and transformed by the Gospel of Jesus, because Indiana Baptists have kept the mission of penetrating lostness at the forefront of all our ministries. Whether we do that by personal evangelism, church planting, church revitalization, or preaching Jesus, it all comes down to building and increasing the Kingdom. Yes, this has been an exciting year... but I believe God has so much more for our State and churches.

Thus, what has been on my mind and heart lately is this: Are we as SCBI looking for and ready to receive the increase that God has in store for us? One early spring a grain farmer wanted to take advantage of the rising price of harvested grain. He had a vision in his mind of earning a fortune at that year's harvest. However, when it came time to plant, he did not purchase any more seed because he did not want to spend the money. Then, instead of taking advantage of planting by GPS (in order to gain more yield per acre), he continued to plant the old fashion way... besides, he had never planted by GPS before. Instead of tapping into a nearby river to irrigate his fields, he endured those summer weeks of drought. During the time of growing, he kept telling his farmer friends about how he was going to have the biggest increase in his crop ever! Many of those colleagues asked where he would store the harvested grain... given he had not built any new barns or silos? Needless to say, that old farmer ended up with the same harvest as in past years, because he did not prepare for a larger harvest.

Indiana Baptists, we can talk all we want of more salvations, more baptisms, bigger churches, and building the Kingdom, but if we are not proactive and prepared to receive God's blessing, it probably will not happen. Thus, I challenge every church, pastor, leader, and lay person to focus on preparing to receive the increase that God has for us. We must first pray. Throughout history, the big movements of God started with prayer. We need to be earnest and

intentional in our prayer life. Second, we must invest in the Kingdom work. One way to invest is through the Cooperative Program. Churches, if you are not giving to the Cooperative Program, you are missing out on this opportunity to collectively do more for the Kingdom. Pastors, lead your churches to give 1% more to CP next year. Christians, do not rob God by withholding your tithes and offerings. Give with a cheerful heart out of worship and obedience to the Heavenly Father. Third, we need to build—not barns—but churches. SCBI is on a mission to plant churches and God is honoring the effort. Support this ministry. Get involved in this ministry. Pray for this ministry. Fourth, we need to seek and call for a fresh breath from God to fall upon SCBI. Please join me in seeking the Lord deeper. Take time to listen to Him speak with open ears and hearts. Then expect His breath and wind to blow all across this state.

As we pray, seek, listen, plan, and respond to God, let us work toward building His Kingdom like never before. If we do that, I believe He will, “open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” Are you seeking, serving and expecting? Be ready... for a fresh breath of God is coming!

Again, I thank you all for your support as I have served you as your President. It has been a wonderful two years working alongside Dr. Seagle and all of our State staff. They are all men and women of God who truly love the Lord, love each other, and love Indiana Baptists. May God continue to bless our effort and the efforts of all our pastors, churches and laity here in Indiana.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

Ray Deeter, Chairman of the Board

It has been a busy year for the Executive Board. Our proposed 2014 budget is based on our 2013 actual receipts which once again show a decline in giving to the Cooperative Program. However, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) has again agreed to help us in numerous areas, including support for our Evangelism and Church Planting team leaders. Dr. Seagle has worked very closely with NAMB President Dr. Kevin Ezell to help strengthen Southern Baptist work in Indiana. Dr. Seagle, our Leadership Team and the Administrative Committee of the Board have gone through a revisioning process which will give us more flexibility within the budget to use funds most effectively.

The Board called Jim Shields as Camp Team Leader and Rick Porter as Director of Operations at Highland Lakes, which continues to expand its service to Indiana Baptists.

I challenge churches to prayerfully consider increasing their Cooperative Program giving by 1%.

Finally, it has been a great honor and blessing to serve as the Chairman of the Executive Board. I thank Indiana Baptists for the privilege to have served the last two years. I am confident in our leadership, but, most of all, I trust God and believe there are great days ahead as we reach Indiana for Christ.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Dr. Cecil W. Seagle

2014 reflections...

- 2014 continues to reflect the unraveling of long standing Ju-deo/Christian values. I do not see an end to both unraveling and persistent challenges. Indiana will likely see an intense effort to legalize same sex marriage during the next twelve to twenty four months.
- 2014 is possibly seeing the first vestiges of a larger God movement among us. Pastor after pastor is beginning to express the need to take seriously His Great Commission while talking about penetrating lostness.
- 2014 has seen a power-filled Midwest Prayer Summit that is quickly moving into Indiana Baptist life. Fall of '14 will see a call for 150 Indiana Baptists to gather at Highland Lakes to pray, persistently pray for a move of God across Indiana.

2014 Challenges and Changes...

- SCBI welcomed Jim Shields as Team Leader of Highland Lakes and Rick Porter as Director of Operations at Highland Lakes.
- SCBI office is on the market with positive inquiry in preparation for a move to Highland Lakes.
- It has been a banner year for new church plants: 28 church plants plus two additional churches affiliating with us.
- SCBI baptisms declined again last year. Puzzling in light of this reality - Indiana is a rich mission field. Point of concern for me - *what's gone wrong with the harvest?*
- A study was authorized by Executive Board Administrative Committee to review, rethink, restructure and revision our work. The study and recommendations were considered by the Executive Board in session August 2014. A full report, presentation to messengers during the 2014 annual convention is planned.
- I have worked with Dr. Kevin Ezell, Dr. Gary Frost, Dr. Steve Davis and Tim Cotler of NAMB to develop a comprehensive partnering agreement that assists SCBI with God's calling to equip leaders, penetrate lostness and plant churches. The agreement is finished with Executive Board approval.

- Cooperative Program support continues to decline. The loss gap has narrowed, but we continue to lose ground and ignore His greatest calling - reaching the nations with His good and glorious Gospel.

My appeal...

My appeal is simple, personal and answerable!

When will we, Indiana Baptists, re-establish *cooperation* as a high calling and high value among like-minded Christ followers for Kingdom advance?

Can we capture the significance of unity through the *Cooperative Program* as a God-given resource to reach the nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Is it possible to affirm the cross purpose of Christ - *REDEMPTION* - as the primary purpose for His church? (Would you give me this - with *REDEMPTION* comes Divine expectation for *DISCIPLESHIP*?)

If not, what will we embrace as our highest calling?

Will the need for a majestic move of God go unanswered and ignored? Or - will you join me in seeking Him with all our heart?

I am asking ...

Cecil W. Seagle