

## **CHURCH MOBILIZATION, EQUIPPING AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

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**Dr. Steve McNeil, Team Leader**

The 2014-2015 year has been a busy one. The State Convention of Baptists in Indiana (SCBI) continues to **serve our churches** through camps, training opportunities, consultations and multiple efforts to mobilize and equip. Our strategy is to “connect, consult and coach churches in accomplishing the Acts 1:8 challenge.” The reports shared here will give you a glimpse of what our team has been responding to and how we have been working to serve SCBI churches.

The **Mobilization and Equipping team** is made up of two part-time directors (Sarah Bohrer as Children’s Ministry Director, Allison Kinion as Women’s Missions and Ministry Director), six Regional Strategists/Church Planting Catalysts (Steve Blanchard, Doug Jividen, Bobby Cox, Mitch Whidden, Dale Eakes, Bob Weeks). This year’s transition came as the former West Region Strategist, Garry Jones, resigned to become the pastor of First Baptist Church of Rockville. The west region was without a Strategist/Catalyst until September 1, when Bob Weeks (formerly pastor of First Baptist, North Vernon) became the West Region Strategist/Catalyst. The Southwest Region Strategist/Catalyst position became vacant when John Horn was called to the position of Church Planting Team Leader. Dale Eakes (formerly pastor of Warren Baptist Church, Indianapolis) was called to the Southwest position. As of September 1, 2015, SCBI had a full staff of Strategist/Catalysts in the north, east, west, central, southeast and southwest regions of Indiana. Our team includes two administrative assistants (Bev Olonoh and Sarah Wickersham).

Our **strategists/catalysts** work to help existing churches move toward health and plant new churches in order to reach lost people across Indiana. There are stories of changed lives through salvation, people being called to ministry and congregations that are making the choice to adapt and change so that they can be involved with Jesus as He builds His church (Matthew 16:18).

Some of the **tasks** that our team works with each week deal with coaching, consulting, resourcing, training, doing conflict resolution with churches, training search committees, helping with interim pastor work, filling pulpits, creating healthy strategies in our churches, and being available to minister and connect our churches and leaders.

Many **Indiana churches** are seeing a vibrant mission accomplished while others struggle to survive. The Mobilization and Equipping Team engages our associations and churches to be involved in our common mission (Matthew 28:18-20). Our team continues to receive relevant training so that they can answer the pertinent issues that our churches face. Our strategy is focused on one main priority, “to come alongside our churches and leaders to help them accomplish the mission and vision of each particu-

lar church or association.”

### **Children’s Ministry**

#### **Sarah Bohrer, Director**

**Pure Girl** is a weekend retreat at Highland Lakes Baptist Camp with the purpose of drawing moms and girls closer to one another and closer to God. This year Pure Girl moved from March to September 25-26. Debbie Whidden will speak about how each of us are loved and desired by God. We will be led in worship by Emily Edwards. Pure Girl – “Wanted” will be a western theme with a Friday night hoedown party. Women and girls can show their best western wear in the Friday night fashion show. Saturday they will be challenged in missions and in living their lives to honor God through speech, actions and dress. The day will conclude with a back to school fashion show that models how girls can be modest and “cool” at the same time.

**Man Camp** – “Strong” was awesome with 200 men and boys attending the weekend retreat at Highland Lakes Baptist Camp. Rob Tuma from Graceland Baptist Church in New Albany challenged the boys and men to find their strength in Christ alone. It was encouraging to see men and boys singing praises to Jesus at the top of their lungs, lifting their hands to Him together in worship. One man said, “I look forward to this time with my son every year.” A sixth grader said “I have come with my Dad every year and it has helped us to be closer to each other and God. I am sad it is my last year.” Participants had a strong man competition, threw hatchets, shot bows and arrows, heard about what God is doing through a church that sends a family mission team to Canada and worshipped our Great God.

This year at **Mission Adventure Camp (MAC)** – “Mission Possible,” 180 kids and counselors worshipped and were challenged to be on mission for God by Camp Pastor Dylan Watts (a Southern Seminary student). Each night counselors had devotions with their kids and encouraged them to seek a deeper relationship with Christ. During the week, there were ten kids who accepted Christ for the first time. Many more said that they wanted to share Christ with their friends and family. Eight campers indicated they felt called to be missionaries. Missionaries who serve in the Middle East shared what God is doing and challenged the kids to pray for those who need to hear about and know Jesus. Campers gave an offering of \$800 that will help support two children from the Middle East.

**Jesus, Arts and Music (JAM) Camp** is different from any other SCBI camp. Many of the kids and students (grades 3-12) who attend come every year and make friendships that last a lifetime. They are given the opportunity to choose from worship arts classes like guitar, keyboard, sound, drawing, drums, dance, interpretive movement, balloon art, singing and more. These classes are led by talented Indiana church members who volunteer their time, talents and passion for the week of JAM. This year, John Boggs from Portico Church in Bloomington served as camp pastor and worship was led by

En Gedi, a worship band from Indiana Wesleyan University. There were two kids that accepted Christ as Savior and many more were equipped to use their talents for the glory of God.

While the numbers for 2015 **Vacation Bible School** (VBS) are not complete, in 2014 there were 191 Indiana Churches that reported having a VBS with 15,970 people in attendance. This is 780 less people than 2013 and 2,580 fewer than in 2012. VBS is one of the most evangelistic outreaches that a church can be involved in. Don't let your church miss out on this strategic opportunity to reach kids and families for Christ.

### **Women's Missions and Ministry**

#### **Allison Kinion, Director**

In August of 2014, **associational missions leadership** gathered at the State Convention office for their annual training. With many newly installed Associational WMU Directors present, the women were trained to lead others in their association to be radically involved in missions discipleship and involvement through the vehicle of WMU in their local church. They reported on plans for offering regionally organized meetings with local church WMU directors and pastors.

On October 4, 2014, Indiana WMU celebrated the **125 year Anniversary of National WMU**. WMU membership from every corner of Indiana gathered at Calvary Baptist Church in Greenfield to celebrate. Former Indiana WMU Presidents and Executive Directors gathered to share memories of years past. Men, women, boys and girls took a trip back through time to see how missions education for Southern Baptists has changed over the years through WMU.

At the 2014 **Ultimate Sleepover**, teenage girls and their leaders met at Calvary Baptist Church in Greenfield to be encouraged and challenged. The theme was "Radiant" based on Colossians 3:12. The girls experienced exciting worship and messages as well as breakout classes on issues of importance to teenagers. They participated in a mission project by purchasing soccer balls and giving an offering to help the ministry outreach of the Hahns, IMB missionaries.

On February 6-7, 2015, women gathered at the Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel & Suites for **Transformed: Heart, Soul, Mind & Mission**. This year's theme was "All For You: Surrender, Sacrifice and Serve." The women enjoyed time spent with ladies in their church family and other women from around the state as they soaked up practical and inspirational breakout classes. They were challenged to give their all in service for Christ and his mission for reaching the lost. Feedback from the weekend showed that two women accepted Christ, 19 women restored their commitment to Christ and 82 women voiced that the Lord was calling them to a specific task, ministry or mission.

The WMU held the **WMU Connection luncheon and Annual Meeting**, where both

international and North American missionaries spoke to the group on how they value their family-like partnership with WMU. Big changes for Transformed were announced during the retreat. Special Town Hall Meetings, led by Allison Kinion and Steve McNeil, were held to talk with the women about the future of the Transformed women's retreat. In an effort to reach more women, the leadership announced they would be taking Transformed "on the road" to churches in a regional approach. There will be three locations in the Spring of 2016. The program will still consist of the same quality content, but will be less expensive and closer in location, making it possible for more women to attend.

The **Margaret E. Gillespie Endowment Fund** for missions made a way for several to learn about missions as well as be a part of the great commission. A special offering that was taken during the Transformed retreat provided scholarships for five children to attend Missions Adventure Camp at Highland Lakes and send three adults on a mission trip to Grenada to work with IMB personnel.

### **Worship**

#### **Steve Blanchard, Strategist**

As I visit large and small SCBI churches, it has become evident that **leadership development** for worship leaders and supporting audio visual teams is a key need. There are several ways I address this need.

One of these is in the area of worship leader training for various age levels. For adults we conducted the **Tri-State Music Leaders' Conference** at Northwoods Church in Evansville on September 6, 2014. This was a cooperative effort between the worship departments of three states: Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky. There were about 50 leaders who attended the event.

For children and youth we offered retreats and camps to help inspire our young people to consider ways they might be involved in worship arts of all kinds. On April 10-11 we held **Exalt Him Student Worship Retreat** at Highland Lakes Baptist Camp. Through this event we trained 34 students and 10 adults. Many times the adult counselors who attend these events take ideas back to their church and begin a particular worship ministry that they saw demonstrated at the retreat.

Another major event was **Jesus, Arts & Music (JAM) Camp**. It is actually two camps during one week at Highland Lakes Baptist Camp. Older elementary children take part in JAM Camp while students from grades 6-12 attend Super JAM. Both of these were held July 21-25. In the two camps we had a total of 137 participants. These included about 40 children in grades 3-6 and 50 students in junior and senior high school. A variety of worship arts was taught including praise band, vocal performance, worship leading, drama, puppets, balloon art, creative movement, photography and several others.

Individual churches were also helped through directly training worship leaders or as I served as an interim worship leader for several months.

## REGIONAL REPORTS

### Central Region

#### **Steve Blanchard, Strategist**

My regional assignment in the area of church health consists of Crossroads Baptist Association. We currently list 87 churches and church plants in the association with a few at-large churches to which I relate. Working with the **Crossroads Association Leadership Team**, we address various ministry needs including church health, leadership development, and church planting. Each of these areas of ministry has a team leader with whom I work very closely. The association has organized some Leader Labs on various church growth topics and plans to continue that effort. We have also worked on providing opportunities for our pastors and church planters to get to know each other for mutual benefit.

**Training events** are one of the ways we have addressed the church health needs in the region. One of these was the Midwest Leadership Summit held in Springfield, Illinois, in January of this year. This conference offered a multiplicity of training in church health, outreach ministries and church planting. Ten pastors and ten church planters from central Indiana participated. Another conference that emphasized leadership development was the Send North America Conference sponsored by the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board. We sent about 60 church planters and wives to learn how to grow new churches. The conference also inspired them to outreach through both local and international missions.

Our SCBI team has worked to train established church pastors through the **High Impact Leader Lab (HILL)**. Besides participating in the multi-day lab, I have continued coaching three HILL pastors: Roger Kinion, Calvary Baptist Church, Greenfield; Nate Butler, Water's Edge Church, Henderson, Kentucky; and Rick Hillard, Eastlake Baptist Church, Merrillville. My coaching responsibilities have also included seven church planters: Bryan Sullivan, Dan Pride, Kerry Jackson, Yosef Desta, John Maples, Michael Man, and Hang Go Thang.

The **association has grown** through 13 church plants in the past year and the addition of established churches including Castlevue Baptist Church, Indianapolis; New Life Community Church, Indianapolis; and Hope's Point Church, Shelbyville. Part of my role in these churches that are new to Southern Baptist life is to help the leaders understand our unique method of supporting missions through the Cooperative Program and consolidated missions offerings.

## Eastern Region

### **Bobby Cox, Strategist**

God has truly blessed the churches of the East region over the past 12 months. The 18 counties of this region hold over 408,000 people. Our ministry here is comprised of **55 churches** in Indiana and two church plants in Ohio. In order to reach the communities of East Indiana, we endeavor to mobilize and equip these congregations to evangelize and disciple one person at a time.

It is with joy that I report a **new Legacy plant**, formerly known as Central Baptist Church, in Richmond will launch by the end of 2015. The core team continues to train under the watchful eye of Western Avenue Baptist Church, Connersville. The planter has been called and assessed. He attended Basic Training and completed his planter projector and the essentials. He is now awaiting NAMB approval.

This year several of our Eastern Region **churches were without a pastor**. These are Weston Baptist in North Vernon, Fellowship Baptist in Richmond, Ryker's Ridge in Madison, Western Avenue in Connersville and Calvary Baptist in Seymour. They are in various stages of their search and it is essential that they find the leader that God has for their church. I have been able to assist in offering guidance and filling the pulpit for a time. I also served as interim at Chapel Baptist in Laurel until they called a pastor. This included helping to secure a mission team from First Baptist in Hartsville (Tim Talent, pastor) to help them revitalize their church on the outside and inside. Chapel called Mike Coyle as pastor in October 2014. He has led the church to grow from 10-14 to over 60 in worship consistently. They now have 40 plus in Sunday School.

Since March 2015, I have been serving as **interim pastor** at Calvary Baptist Church in Seymour. The church averages 100 in morning worship, 77 in Sunday School and 35-50 on Sunday evening. We are preparing to do the Transformational Church Assessment Tool (TCAT) in order to discover strengths and challenges. There have been three baptized with four awaiting baptism. Five people have joined the church by letter.

**Leadership training** is vital for church health. Smyrna Baptist Church in West Harrison will host a Leadership Training Summit with training sessions for deacons, Sunday School teachers and leaders, youth leaders, evangelism and coaches or mentors. I was privileged to participate in the Midwest Leadership Summit in Springfield, Illinois, the LifeWay States Summit and the 2015 SEND Conference in Nashville. I also took part in the High Impact Leader Lab (HILL) at Highland Lakes.

**One-on-one leadership training** is central. This year there are four pastors, four planters and two others who serve in ministry that I have been in coaching relationships. I am also working with two pastors on different stages of cosmetic renovations.

A church's **outreach to their communities** is an expression of God's work in and

through them. Whitewater Baptist Association and SCBI sponsored the 2014 Metamora Evangelism event at Canal Days, where 300 bags containing Gospel tracts, Bibles and church information were distributed. The Oasis church plant in Lawrenceburg had an evangelism outreach in their community. We witnessed to 15-20 people during the event and assisted Oasis with a partnership mission team from South Carolina.

With regret, Bible Baptist Fellowship and Lighthouse Baptist Church of Whitewater Association have both **disbanded**.

### **Southeastern Region**

#### **Mitch Whidden, Strategist**

#### **Churches on Mission**

In southeast Indiana there are many churches on mission and at work in the Kingdom. I would like to tell you about all of them, but space will not allow so let me tell you about one. **Fellowship Baptist in Hardinsburg** is not a large church. Like many of our churches, it has a bi-vocational pastor. Their pastor, Bill McCrary, has led them to begin reaching out to people struggling with addiction through Celebrate Recovery Ministries. They are also getting ready to enter a jail ministry in which they will educate inmates toward their GED while sharing Christ with them. In their spare time the church is exploring ways to reach the Amish community through some of their members. They support church planting and recently sponsored a new church plant in Elizabeth. Pastor Bill is also leading a group on a short term mission trip to Haiti this fall. Fellowship Baptist is a great example of how you don't have to be a "big church" with a "big budget" to do huge things in the Kingdom of God. This story could be repeated throughout many of our churches in southeast Indiana.

#### **Back to the Basics**

Last spring a group of our pastors got together to talk about getting back to the basics of ministry. We identified the three basics as being **prayer, evangelism and discipleship**. Out of these discussions and much time in prayer, we are beginning an effort we are calling Cluster Harvest Weekends. These weekends will be comprised of three to five churches getting together to focus on these three issues. It will begin with forty days of congregational prayer. Each church member will pray for two of their lost friends. Each week the pastor will challenge the congregation to reach out to their lost friends in a special way. When the harvest weekend finally arrives the congregations will come together on Friday and Saturday for joint worship and evangelistic / discipleship training. Sunday morning the congregations will worship separately, inviting all of the lost who have been prayed for the past forty days. Please pray for Cluster Harvest Weekends coming soon.

#### **Our MVPs**

In southeast Indiana we believe our **pastors' wives** are some of our most valuable people. Therefore we've decided to honor our pastors' wives by having a small group

just for them. My wife, Debbie, goes through a ministry book with the wives twice a year. We are also gearing up to bring a group to Flourish in Indianapolis in October. We are excited about how our pastors' wives can be connected with each other and encouraged through study and fellowship.

### **Southwestern Region**

#### **Dale Eakes, Strategist**

Having just a **short time** to work with the churches in the Southwestern Indiana Baptist Association, it has been my privilege to work alongside so many committed men and women of God.

We are in the process of **networking pastors** into prayer and encouragement groups so that they can better communicate and support each other in times of need and in times of celebration. A recurring need seen in many of our churches is to develop effective leadership, both from a ministerial and layperson perspective. Discovering these needs this year will allow us to move forward with specific goals for the coming year.

**Communication and leadership development** are two areas beginning to come into focus for us, but I have been encouraged by so many churches that are doing effective evangelism and outreach. Some are doing outreach through community events, while others have developed a more ministerial approach. It is exciting to report that both are working. One church that has seen God doing great things is First Baptist in Huntingburg. Their new pastor, Josh Brown, began to minister there this year and they have seen significant growth and celebrated many baptisms.

It is **my hope** that in 2016, with a full year to serve, I will be able to work alongside many more churches and see them move forward, in even greater strides, for the sake of the Kingdom.

### **North Region**

#### **Doug Jividen, Strategist**

This year has been a powerful year of **growth, change, and lives touched**. We have seen churches and pastors continue to grow closer together through Leader Labs, coaching, High Impact Leader Lab (the HILL), and new visions set for the associations as a whole. We have had men and women across the board learning and sharing leadership needs and concepts with each other. That has strengthened the journey of North Central, Miami, and East Central Associations.

We have continued to see **Disaster Relief** ministries grow in this region through trainings that took place this year. With this desire to impact through crisis times, teams have responded and supported people and communities during difficult moments.

**World Changers** again had tremendous success this year in Muncie. Bruce Reynolds

and Old Town Hill Baptist Church hosted and did a wonderful job. Chris Hubler of New Day Baptist in Alexandria, Pendleton and Muncie was a powerful leader as well. Lives were changed, souls saved, and relationships in the community were established.

**Leader Labs** in all three associations have been held each month at different locations. The response from the pastors in the associations has been excellent. Hopefully, through sharing of our ministries in each association, we are raising the bar of leadership in each church.

Churches that were **seeking pastors** have filled the pulpits. These include Sunnycrest in Marion with Troy Bishop and First Baptist in Montpelier with Jeremy Cowin. God brought Brent Joy to pastor Syracuse Baptist, a wonderful church north of Warsaw. God is working in these ministries in powerful ways.

North Central is seeing the moving of God through the growth of **Real Life Ministries** with Clarence Smith as pastor. They are continuing to grow and see lives saved.

In East Central Association God has worked in a powerful way to raise up **Integriss in Albany** to be a leader in the association though it is just a new church. God has blessed Greg Haisley in this church as it touches this community through salvations and baptisms.

### **Communications**

The purpose of the Communications Team is to **provide information** to our SCBI churches. To accomplish this task we utilize the quarterly Indiana Baptist Magazine, the website ([www.scbi.org](http://www.scbi.org)) and social media. It is our goal to communicate the stories that are happening around Indiana, to communicate where our churches can find relevant resources and tools that will help them to grow His church, strengthening existing churches and working toward all of SCBI churches participating in planting healthy churches.

The *Indiana Baptist Magazine* can be received in a printed copy mailed to subscribers. SCBI church members can receive this free upon request. The magazine is also available online at [www.scbi.org/ib](http://www.scbi.org/ib). If an email notification is desired, a request can be sent to [ib@scbi.org](mailto:ib@scbi.org). Our magazine currently mails 6,890 printed copies to subscribers. There are 111 people who currently get an email notification each time a new issue of the magazine is available online.

The SCBI **website** is the most current place to find information about events and potential resources that are available through SCBI. Links are available to Southern Baptist partners like the SBC Executive Committee, North American Mission Board, International Mission Board, LifeWay Christian Resources and WMU. We encourage you to place [www.scbi.org](http://www.scbi.org) on your favorite list in your browser and to visit often. The

web page is viewed on average by 95 people per day, with the most visits preceding SCBI events. SCBI also utilizes Facebook, Twitter and mass emails to communicate with the SCBI churches.