

## CHURCH & LEADER DEVELOPMENT

**Bob Weeks, Team Leader**

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The Book of Reports is SCBI's documentation of what happened in the year since our 2019 Annual Meeting. Suffice it to say that much did and did not occur. Every report will mention that Covid19 hit us hard early in the year, and we limped all the way to the 2020 Annual Meeting.

2020 was not all negative, however.

When Rick and Michelle Hillard left SCBI in March I was asked by Dr. McNeil to add Evangelism and Prayer to my Team Leader responsibilities. Covid19 forced us to learn that we could organize an effective Prayer Ministry, with the steady help of Dr. Tom Savage, our Prayer Coordinator that could reach to the borders of Indiana without anyone leaving their homes. Those Thursday night Prayer Gatherings were the highlight of my week. While the SCBI Zoom Prayer Gatherings have ended we recognize that we are ready at a moment's notice to begin it anew at the next crisis moment.

Evangelism was certainly different in the Covid19 world. While Rick Hillard championed ESP2020 (Evangelism Strategy Plan 2020), we have shifted to the SBC's "Who's Your One" emphasis. (Free materials are available at <https://www.namb.net/evangelism#free-tools>) While it is the church's role to emphasize Evangelism, it is the call to every follower of Jesus to "do the work of an Evangelist" (2 Tim 4:5). While "Who's Your One" is not a program it is a simple reminder that people we know need Jesus and we can identify "One" and do the work to tell them about a Savior.

Our team is filled with high quality leaders. Terah Adams, Allison Kinion, Sarah Bohrer, John Horn and I have learned to do ministry in whole new ways. We did on-line women's events, Virtual Worship and Sunday School Trainings, Tuesday's Topics that dig into the current needs of our churches, as well as one-on-one coaching where we walk with a pastor as he discovers and accomplishes his church's next step. And we are pressing on with a Revitalization Process that clearly shows what avenues a church must go down to see renewal.

It has been a good year.

2020 was different, but it was not a disaster. We learned to do things more efficiently, more economically and with a greater attention to what God is doing through the churches of SCBI. Normal may never return. And that is okay. The promise we have is that Jesus will return. Let us all be about His business until we discover the ‘new normal’ in eternity!

### Church Development Strategist Report

John Horn

In addition to assisting our churches with Adult Sunday School/ Small Groups and leader training, one of my main assignments this year was Church Revitalization. We define church revitalization as “a spiritual process in which a church is guided to make changes necessary to experience and sustain new life and growth.”

The need for church revitalization is great: Thom Rainer and Mark Clifton have estimated that 70% of Southern Baptist churches are plateaued or declining. Last fall, I briefly surveyed leaders in six of our SCBI associations, and they estimated that an average of 76% of their churches are plateaued or declining. As I listened to the issues that those churches and others that I consulted with were struggling through, it confirmed that we urgently needed to develop a more effective process to assist our SCBI churches with revitalization.

In the months that followed, Bob Weeks and I researched the most effective Church Revitalization processes among our SBC State Convention partners, and other national church consulting organizations. Then with this information and what we had learned from our church leaders, we began to design a new SCBI Church Revitalization Process that we could begin to pilot with some selected churches. In doing so, we have realized that revitalization is not feasible for all of our declining churches, so we also need to develop a pathway that can guide them towards replanting or merging with another SCBI congregation.

After we have evaluated our Revitalization Process, we plan in the coming year to share it with our associational leaders, to train additional revitalization consultants, and to recruit healthy SCBI

Revitalizer Partner churches that will provide additional coaching/ resources to assist our plateaued and declining congregations. We believe that when many of our established churches have been revitalized, they will more fully reflect God's glory and bear much evangelistic fruit in our State! (John 15:8)

### Children's Ministry

Sarah Bohrer

What a strange year. We had to learn how to minister to people without being with them. We had to help families continue Bible learning at home. We were forced to become technical experts as many of our services and even children's ministries moved on-line. We have had to roll with the punches that this crazy pandemic has thrown at us!

Many churches have responded to these challenges with creativity and a passion to continue to reach the lost. Several churches still held VBS, most in a very different way than they had ever done it before. In some churches, virtual on-line VBS gave them the opportunity to reach people in their community that they had not reached before. Some did a one day evangelistic VBS with outside stations. Others did several backyard Bible clubs and were able to reach kids in their neighborhoods that may never enter the church doors on a Sunday. Another church added a second service on Sundays for five weeks and had Family VBS. And still other churches are planning a fall break VBS. Across Indiana VBS still happened in many churches and kids and adults heard and responded to the Gospel.

The church health team offered many opportunities for pastors and ministry leaders to receive training and swap ideas. These trainings included on-line worship technical help, VBS, children's ministry, outreach ideas, and evangelism during Covid-19. In August, many churches from Indiana were a part of the Virtual Resourcing Worship Conference which included over 50 breakouts and sessions led by worship leaders including Keith Getty, Matt Redman, and Matt Boswell. This was a wonderful and inexpensive (\$10-\$20) opportunity for worship leaders from Indiana and the rest of the country. Be watching for future worship conferences from Resourcing Worship.