

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Dr. Steve McNeil, Executive Director

During the past year the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana (SCBI) has continued to add new churches and church plants and we have seen churches that have come to a time to close their doors. Overall, the SCBI experienced a historic year in our convention and country with the impact of the Covid-19 virus. Our staff has remained healthy and focused. This year has also been a year to look at the future of the SCBI.

Every year we see churches that come to a place where they can no longer justify keeping their doors open. This is a disappointing, but usually a necessary decision. We work to keep those church buildings so that we might work on a new plant or a re-plant church. We have also seen a few instances where the property was sold and the funds used in either the local association or the SCBI to plant new churches.

The good news is that SCBI in cooperation with the North American Mission Board continues to pray, assess, train, coach and care for new church plants and their planter. This year under the leadership of Team Leader Nathan Millican, the SCBI and NAMB have planted five new churches. We have assessed nine potential planters. The wheels are turning and we continue to pray for new planters who have been called by God to plant a gospel preaching church. Pray for the Church Planting Team of Nathan Millican, Jesus Pacheco, Doug Jividen and Scott McDowell.

The Covid-19 virus has been a huge distraction and an incredible opportunity to seize. Our churches were forced not to meet as the church in a person to person format. They were forced to gather with their people through the internet. It was an encouragement to see how the churches responded to add the technology that would help them, upgrading their internet and working with other churches to make sure the technology would work. Some churches were able to get funds from a grant that gave them up to \$5000. This was a huge help.

The state convention staff adapted away from the usual face to face training by going to zoom meetings. The Executive Director

started a weekly Pastors Connection zoom call to give pastors information and inspiration as they dealt with the new circumstances. The Church/Leader Development Team also began a weekly training on zoom as did the Church Planting team. It was an encouragement to see our churches adapt, to get creative and to see the increase in contacts between the pastors and the people in the church.

It was feared that Cooperative Program (CP) giving would suffer during such a dramatic time when people were losing jobs, people were quarantined in their homes and isolated. But the people have stepped up and shown their faith in God during this experience. CP is 6% behind our budget for the year, but we are in a good financial situation. The National CP has been reported at being plus 16% nationally.

The SCBI staff team has remained steady. Even through the Covid-19 Crisis, we were able to maintain our current staff due to a couple of things. Dr. Rick Hillard accepted a call to the First Baptist Church in Princeton, KY. His position was not replaced due to the timing of his departure which was the end of March. We were also able to apply and receive the PPP loan from the government which allowed us to get through the toughest period of March through June.

The convention is in a solid financial position and we are preparing for the days ahead. Will Mancini and Jim Randall of the Denominee organization have led us for the past year through a look into the future. The bottom line of the process has been that the “Future Team” has come up with a new mission statement, “Partnering with churches to discover and fulfill their next step.” The new SCBI values are,

1. Cultivating Relationships,
2. Following Jesus,
3. Inspiring Advancement,
4. Expanding Possibilities

The SCBI Measures are,

1. Clarify the Next Step,
2. Collaboration on the Process,
3. Coaching for impact,
4. Celebrate the Results.

Our SCBI “Next Step” is to determine our strategies that will accomplish the mission, values and measures.

During the past year, our number of churches has remained about the same as there have been one church affiliation, four churches merged into two and 13 churches have closed.

The 2020 year will be one that most will remember for the Corona Virus. It should also be a year that is remembered by the response of the SCBI churches, to reach out and help each other, to seize gospel opportunities, to try new methods to share the gospel and I pray it will be a year that will be measured in Heaven one day be the number of people who were touched by SCBI churches and by seeing new people in Heaven because of the response of God's people.

It is my prayer that we will choose to work with Jesus and that we as a convention of churches would reflect what Jesus prayed in John 17, "that we would be one," why? "So the world may know" of Jesus as the savior and that they would believe in the Father and bring glory to him.