

Thank you for the honor of representing you this last year as your president. I have been reminded of the diversity of churches that we have represented in the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. Truly, this has been an unprecedented year. None of us have ever been through a pandemic until now. Ministry has had a new rhythm, and the rhythm changes that have come have taken some severe adjustments in my life. I am so grateful that even though many things around me have changed that there are certain things that have not. I am grateful that the mission of making disciples and giving the gospel away is still the priority of our churches. It has been an encouragement to me over the last few months to watch our churches adjust to a changing society through different methodologies while still elevating Jesus and His good news. As we have been reminded, we do not know what is about to happen in life, we are also reminded that the mission does not change; therefore let us stay focused on making disciples and sharing the gospel in an ever changing world.

I am personally grateful for Dr. Steve McNeil as our Executive Director and the leadership that he provides to the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana (SCBI). He has led our team with integrity and has demonstrated great flexibility during this crazy pandemic as SCBI made the necessary adjustments in how they have come alongside churches in their mission of making disciples. I have been a part of the Denominee team that Dr. McNeil was instrumental in bringing to Indiana to help us think through how SCBI can add greater value to the churches that make up the convention. This has been personally helpful and also encouraging to see what can happen in the future as SCBI helps churches discover and fulfill their next step. I know that the church I pastor needs this, and I am completely confident that I am not alone.

I want to encourage our churches to utilize the resources of our SCBI. We have a great SCBI staff team who are ready and willing to walk with our churches as they think through their specific context and circumstance in order to take their next step in making disciples. I want to encourage you to call the SCBI staff and ask for their time, coaching, facilitation, prayer and tools as

you continue to face the challenges of leadership in these very strange days. I have made the call to our SCBI staff for assistance, and I have personally not been disappointed. I was not handed a program, but I was handed a person who gave me their time and energy who simply assisted me through my personal situation. I am grateful for the presence of God who is with me through His Spirit at all times and I am grateful for the presence of God that is demonstrated through His people who have been a great encouragement to me when I have so desperately needed them as well. Let's help each other take our next step from church to church and by calling on the SCBI staff to help us think through things that we have not yet thought about. Please know that I am praying for you as you continue making disciples across Indiana.

EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT

Tom Savage, Chairman of the Board

The new Executive Board year started off fairly normal with much to do. As you can find in the Bylaws of the Convention, the SCBI Executive Board is a very active board made up of duly elected men & women, ministers and laymen from all over the state of Indiana. Our purpose is to “act for the Convention in all areas of the Convention’s work between sessions of the Convention...” Board Members are organized into multifaceted committees – Camp, Evangelism, Church Planting and Church & Leader Development. During this Annual Meeting you will hear from each staff person who leads in four of these specific areas of the work.

The Executive Board has two official meetings per year; one in March and one in August with additional meetings as needed to care for matters that come before us. Several days after the March meeting, the Covid-19 reared its ugly head in Indiana, and we are still dealing with this bothersome and deadly monster. In our August meeting everything possible was done by our SCBI Staff to provide a safe and sanitary environment to conduct the needed business of the Board.

As a result of the virus, a technology tool that was somewhat known by many, became a very valuable communication tool. That technology tool is called Zoom. Of all the negatives of Covid-19, one of the positives has been the expansion of our body of knowledge and the learning of new methods of communicating with each other and sharing the gospel. Along with you we long for the day when the Covid-19 is behind us, but until that happens, we remain committed to carrying out our Lord’s Commission to us until He returns and takes us home to be with Him.

The Executive Board has several items to bring to your attention and consideration this year. These items can be found later in this Book of Reports under the heading: Executive Board Recommendations.

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.