



President's Letter

North American Mission Board 2015 Ministry Report THE PRESIDENT'S SUMMARY STATEMENT

As Southern Baptists seek to stay focused on Jesus' command to "make disciples of all nations," the North America Mission Board is helping pastors and churches more effectively engage with the mission field in the United States, Canada and beyond.

Since 2011 we have seen an increasing number of churches and individuals become more directly involved in church planting and other missions efforts through our ***Send North America strategy***. This effort revolves around the priority of ***planting new evangelistic churches***—especially in the unreached and underserved areas such as our large cities and our non-South regions.

Why do we need more churches? Because in the last 100 years Southern Baptists—and evangelicals in general—have lost significant ground in the church-to-population ratio. This is true especially in the non-South regions of North America and in and around our large cities where more than 81 percent of the population lives.

To help Southern Baptists close this gap, NAMB has identified **32 "Send Cities"** that are receiving intense church planting efforts. These cities have vast influence in their regions and beyond. By reaching them, we will also reach outlying regions and many ethnic groups.

Any SBC church or individual can become involved in one of these cities by contacting our city missionary—a ***Send City Coordinator***—in that city. His job is to recruit church planters to serve in that city and to help local Southern Baptists develop a plan for reaching the city. He also assists existing churches and individuals from outside the city who want to partner in efforts to reach the city. Each coordinator can be reached by sending an email to the [name of the city]@namb.net—i.e. Denver@namb.net

Beyond our cities, ***Church Planting Catalysts*** (CPC) are responsible for catalyzing the planting of churches throughout North America. Each is to help bring about the planting of four churches annually. Our goal is to one day have a CPC in place for every 1 million people in a state or province (states with less than 1 million population still get at least one CPC).

Church planting alone will not close the gap between our number of churches and the growing population. In an average year 1,000 churches disappear from the SBC database. Many of those churches are closing their doors forever. Because of this, we have also prioritized our ***church revitalization*** efforts in order to help existing churches become healthier and focused on reaching their communities. In addition, our ***legacy church planting*** initiative is launching new churches from buildings that once housed SBC churches that have died, bringing new spiritual life to communities and keeping property in the SBC family.

If pastors aren't healthy, churches won't be healthy. Our ***pastoral care and development ministry*** is designed to encourage, equip and serve SBC pastors. In 2014 we launched a pastor care phone line for SBC pastors in crisis. Any SBC pastor, chaplain, missionary or ministry wife can call 1-844-PASTOR1 for free assistance. Our ***Flourish*** ministry for pastors wives brings similar encouragement and resources to women as they serve alongside their husbands in ministry.

To close the gap between the number of churches and our growing population Southern Baptists must ***start new churches at a pace of 15,000 every 10 years***. Those 15,000 new churches will require thousands of new church planters so we must grow our missionary "Farm System" to help discover, develop and deploy tomorrow's missionary force.

Once a church planter is on the field, we must take good care of him. Our ***Send North America Support Network*** encourages and equips planters and helps them connect with other planters and churches in their area.

As we serve and assist SBC churches, it was exciting to see how God worked in 2014.

Southern Baptists started 936 new churches in 2013, the most recent year for which detailed data is available.

Through the generosity of Southern Baptist giving, NAMB supported and resourced 5,611 missionaries 3,574 chaplains in 2014.

Our **Send North America Experience** events saw thousands of attendees and will reach an anticipated 50,000 people before concluding in Spring 2015. These events are leading up to our national Send North America Conference, which will take place Aug. 3-4, 2015 in Nashville.

Our Evangelism group launched the **Three Circles Life Conversation Guide**, a new Gospel-sharing tool, at the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Baltimore in June. Since its launch, hundreds of pastors have used the resource to train church members. More than 1 million guides are in print and more than 25,000 smartphone and tablet apps have been downloaded so far.

To address the problem of low Baptism Rates in the SBC, our Evangelism group convened a task force of SBC pastors to assess the problem and share **action points** and recommendations.

In September we released **Life On Mission** a book designed to help every Christian live in a more missional way. We produced a **Life On Mission Bible study** with Lifeway Christian Resources that can be used in Sunday school and in other small group settings.

More than 4,000 people—primarily pastors—attended our **Church Growth and Revitalization conferences** in 2014. Several more events are scheduled for 2015.

Our **Evangelism Group** launched a two-year GPS: God’s Plan for Sharing campaign, “Serving Across North America.” NAMB assisted Baptist partners as they connected churches to this ministry evangelism emphasis by providing networks and resources churches utilized to reach their communities for Christ.

We helped coordinate multistate responses to several disasters this year where **Southern Baptist Disaster Relief** volunteers met physical needs and brought spiritual hope and encouragement. Southern Baptists are among the top three disaster relief entities in the United States. Significant responses included forest fires and a mudslide in Washington State, Hurricane Sandy Rebuild, Colorado flooding and Detroit-area floods.

NAMB works closely with state Baptist conventions to assist efforts to reach their states. In 2014 we sent more than **\$41 million to state conventions** to fund missionaries and support evangelistic church planting, evangelism and church revitalization ministries.

It is a privilege to serve Southern Baptists as we push back lostness in North America. Our prayer is that more churches and individuals will respond to this call. There are encouraging signs of progress within this report, but we must maintain urgency in our efforts to share Christ with those who need Him.

Serving Together,

Kevin Ezell
President