

# YOUR **BRN** FAMILY



A GETTING STARTED GUIDE TO THE BAPTIST RESOURCE NETWORK OF PA/SOUTH JERSEY





Welcome to the  
Baptist Resource Network  
of Pennsylvania/South Jersey

Healthy Churches Start Here.

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Cover photo by Tierney Cyanne Photography  
and Grace Fellowship Church in  
Tunkhannock, Pa.



### Hello, BRN Family!

I am delighted that you want to know more about what makes the Baptist Resource Network unique, and what enables us to be a vital partner in your Gospel mission. Thank you for your interest in the BRN and for your partnership in the Gospel.

At the BRN, we say that *Healthy Churches Start Here*. We help start healthy churches, strengthen existing churches, and multiply healthy churches. If your church desires growth and multiplication, this is your network.

After studying the healthiest of churches, we discovered a few common building blocks that lead to church vitality. **Healthy churches start with healthy leaders, healthy filters, healthy behaviors, and a healthy mission.**

In fact, not only do healthy churches start here, they stay here! Like a good athlete, they practice these fundamentals over and over again.

We believe this so strongly that we've built our network around resourcing your church with these core building blocks.

Everything starts with **healthy leaders**. We care about your walk with God, your physical health, and your vital relationships, particularly your marriage. Many BRN pastors are bi-vocational, and we care deeply about helping you maintain comprehensive health even while working exceptionally hard.

**Healthy filters** provide a grid through which we consider our activities. Jesus said that we should 'Seek first the Kingdom.' That is a filter. Jesus said, 'Pray... thy Kingdom come.' That is a filter. With every decision, healthy churches do not ask, "What would we like?" but rather, "What will most effectively build the Kingdom of God in our place?" Our job is not to build the Church - Jesus will do that - but to seek first the Kingdom. The BRN helps celebrate the filters of *Kingdom* and *prayer* with you.

Healthy churches have a few **healthy behaviors** in common. They practice **MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT**, which is living out the Kingdom of God in their

particular cultural context. They have an **INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP** process in place to move people from spiritual infancy to spiritual parenthood. They invest in ongoing **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT** so that they have a strong farm team for new ministries and church starts.

Finally, a **healthy mission** is focused on *multiplication* at every level. Do you desire to see every disciple make new disciples, every ministry birth new ministries, and every church multiply new churches? At the BRN, we have a clear vision of wanting to see *every church* within our Pennsylvania-South Jersey geography become a healthy, multiplying church.

In this Getting Started Guide, I will share with you the resources that the BRN provides to assist and encourage you as you embrace these healthy building blocks. I will also share a bit about what it means to be Southern Baptist. Whether you are a new church seeking affiliation with the BRN, an existing church that wants to review the resources of the BRN, or simply a faithful disciple within one of our local churches who wants to know what the broader church is all about, I hope that you'll find this guide encouraging.

# WELCOME

Our mission is worth our partnership. Your church can be stronger when we stand together for the Gospel, and I'm truly grateful that you're exploring the BRN.

Your servant,

Dr. Barry Whitworth  
Executive Director-Treasurer



Photo by Great Commission Church, Philadelphia, Pa.

# HEALTHY CHURCHES START HERE

## LEADERS

### HEALTHY LEADERS

We care about your health and the health of your family. Your fellow leaders in the BRN are your best source of no-nonsense talk about how you are REALLY doing. We want you to find connections with other leaders in the BRN who will help you maintain a healthy YOU. This is essential, which is why healthy churches start here.



IN THIS  
BOOKLET,  
LOOK  
FOR THIS  
SYMBOL FOR  
RESOURCES

### FAMILY CARE

One key resource in BRN is Family Care. Ministry can be exceptionally lonely, so the extended support network that the BRN provides is invaluable to our partner pastors. We offer prayer encouragement and special funds for pastors when they face unexpected major life events. With assistance from the North American Mission Board, we also provide ongoing encouragement to church planter families as they start their new journey of planting a church. We sponsor retreats to help refresh leaders, pastor's wives, and women throughout the BRN.

## MISSION

### HEALTHY MISSION

Our mission is to help you multiply at every level. We want disciples who make new disciples, ministries that birth new ministries, leaders who replicate new leaders, and churches that plant new churches. We believe that this mission flows directly from the Great Commission in Matthew 28.



healthy  
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healthy  
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## HEALTHY FILTERS

All of the best behaviors in the world can be applied in the wrong way. A common example would be that we spend time trying to build the church instead of building the Kingdom. Jesus clearly said that *He* would build His Church, while we should seek first the Kingdom.

For example, when we serve the poor, are we simply trying to recruit people to join our church, or are we being Kingdom-minded? Can we celebrate when someone is discipled better by a different local congregation or are we secretly bitter when they leave ours? Would we be willing to send our best leaders out to plant another church and expand the Kingdom, or do we want to hold on to them to build up our own local church?

Furthermore, without the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we could be tempted to misapply good biblical behaviors in untimely ways.

For this reason, we teach healthy churches to filter all of their activities through the filters of the **Kingdom of God** and **Prayer**. *Kingdom* keeps our focus on the glory of the King instead of our own fame. *Prayer* keeps us in a humble posture before our King so that He might direct our steps.



HEALTHY  
CHURCHES  
START HERE

↑  
FILTERS



## BEHAVIORS

### HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

Missional engagement, intentional discipleship, and leadership development are three key behaviors of healthy churches. The following pages will highlight each behavior as well as the BRN resources that are available to help assist and encourage you in them.





# MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT

## Missional Engagement

Missional Engagement is God's people taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that is separated from a relationship with a Holy and Eternal God. Engaging people missionally with the gospel involves the church going out to people rather than just inviting and/or expecting the people to come to them.

When Jesus gave the Great Commission to His disciples, He wanted them to make disciples *as they were going* throughout the world. It was a message of pushing back darkness by proclaiming light and carefully teaching all that Jesus commanded.

With almost 14 million lost people in PA and South Jersey, it is essential that we embrace the mission of getting the church out of its buildings and into the midst of our communities.

Missional Engagement must always be contextual. How we bring the gospel to an urban environment may look quite different than a rural environment, even if some of the principles are the same. At the BRN, we believe in exegeting and understanding our communities so that we can best proclaim the gospel to every person.

*Compassion ministries* are a big part of missional engagement. Most humans feel sympathy for the hurting, but our churches ought put those feelings into action by pro-actively showing kindness to the afflicted. In this respect, we become the hands and feet of Jesus in His care for the poor and brokenhearted.

Biblical References: Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8



## MISSION HOUSING

We offer housing for missions teams in the Pittsburgh and Harrisburg areas. These are useful for retreats, as a stay-over location en route to another mission project, or as a destination for ministry nearby.

## COMMUNITY EXEGESIS

We offer tools to help you understand your local demographics and identify potential areas for outreach.

## MISSIONS EDUCATION

If you need help raising awareness about world missions, we can point you in the right direction.

## HUNGER FUNDS

We have grant funds available for food-centered compassion ministries.

## EVANGELISM GRANTS

These grants can help you fund evangelistic outreach events for your church or church plant.

## COMPASSION MINISTRY

We offer consultation to help churches develop compassion ministry within their communities. Compassion ministry connects your church to the community during its most vulnerable times.





## Intentional Discipleship

Intentional Discipleship is developing spiritual maturity within Christ-followers through deliberate learning and accountability in peer-to-peer relationships and/or small groups. Intentional discipleship brings the Bible to life in Christ-followers.

In discipling relationships, what people learn moves from their heads, to their hearts, then to their hands, as it translates into habits that produce spiritual growth in their lives. Furthermore, through intentional discipleship, the disciple becomes a disciple-maker who leads others to trust and follow Christ.

Healthy churches develop a discipleship strategy to move people from spiritual infancy to spiritual parenthood. Solid biblical preaching is a component of intentional discipleship, but is not the complete picture. In Acts 20:20, for example, we see the example of public teaching AND house-to-house teaching. We also hear about spiritual life stages throughout the Bible.

Good discipleship considers multiple contexts and different techniques to address different levels of spiritual maturity.

Biblical References: Matthew 4:19, Matthew 28:20



# DISCIPLESHIP



## 1 DISCIPLESHIP COHORTS

Local or online cohorts can help you develop and implement a discipleship strategy.



## 3 ONLINE TRAINING

We offer a library of specialized training from local experts who help you apply discipleship principles to your ministry.



## 2 RIGHTNOW MEDIA

RightNow Media is a large online library of training resources. BRN pastors receive a free personal subscription to this service or discounted rates for their churches.



## 4 DISCIPLESHIP CONSULTATION

We offer consultation and coaching to help you evaluate and enhance your discipleship strategies, as well as specialized seminars on discipleship for ministry leaders.



# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

EVERY PERSON  
EVERY GROUP  
EVERY CHURCH  
MULTIPLYING

## Leadership Development

Leadership Development is the deliberate and systematic activity by church leaders to purposely influence and develop others to become leaders within the Body of Christ. Every church needs leaders, especially for its future. The Kingdom needs leaders to advance the gospel around the world. Leadership development expands the capacity of individual Christ-followers to assume leadership roles within the Body of Christ, both locally and globally.

A church that does not develop leaders is one generation away from closing. Healthy churches help every person consider their contribution to Kingdom growth, and every leader consider their contribution to future ministries.

Multiplication is bigger than mere reproduction. We want to help you train up leaders who develop other leaders and plant churches that plant other churches.

Biblical References: Ephesians 4: 11-12, 2 Timothy 2:2



"I live in the rural area outside of Pittsburgh, but the training that I received at the BRN Advantage Seminar from the Philly guys really helped me think differently about how to build leaders where I am. Thanks, brothers!"





## THE HUB TRAINING CENTER

Located in Harrisburg, this state-of-the-art training center is where we host live and broadcast training sessions for our partner churches. We often invite experts in church leadership topics to inform, equip, and inspire our pastors and ministry leaders.

## SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

This diagnostic tool helps your church identify areas of health and potential growth based on the key BRN behaviors. Our team can help you build personalized action plans based on this assessment. The BRN is committed to you through the whole process.

## PASTORAL TRANSITION SERVICES

When a church is without a pastor, we can help with prayer, search committee training, transitional/interim pastor training, and pulpit supply.

## LEADERSHIP RETREATS

Healthy churches start with healthy pastors. At least annually, we sponsor refreshing events for ministry families, including specific events for planters, pastors, and wives.



# OTHER KEY MINISTRIES

## Disaster Relief

Southern Baptists are known for our work in Disaster Relief. When people are at their most vulnerable because of natural disasters, we are there to show compassion and bring hope.

Our team helps train and equip volunteers from your church on how to respond during disasters, and also coordinates a large fleet of disaster relief equipment that we store throughout our area.

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) also provides coordination and funding for disasters as part of their Send Relief campaign.

Disaster Relief is a comprehensive ministry that helps you with missional engagement, intentional discipleship, and leadership development.

ANYONE can be involved with Disaster Relief at some capacity, and this is a very visible way for your local church to gain a local reputation for compassion.







healthy  
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# BRN NEXT



# Collegiate

Students are at their most vulnerable when they leave home so our campus ministers are standing in the gap at this time of greatest need. As we engage college students with the gospel and the lordship of Christ at this critical juncture, we are influencing a whole generation for the Kingdom. These students will be the next leaders in our communities, businesses, and churches.

Collegiate ministry excels in equipping students for missional engagement, intentional

discipleship, and leadership development.

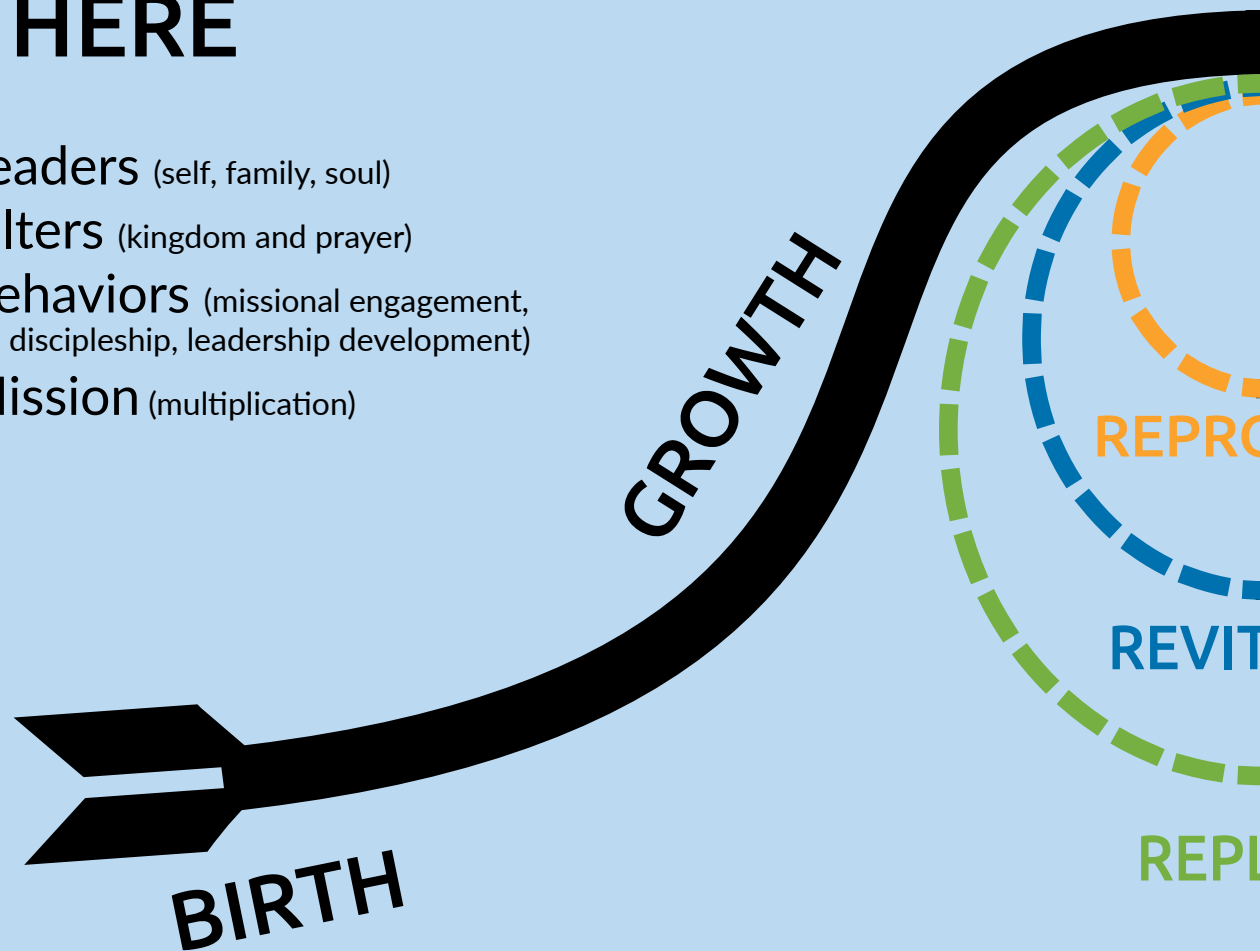
Because students often leave home during college, our collegiate ministry is an extension of ALL of our partner churches.

We have campus ministers at major universities across our states and staff experts to help you consider how to do effective collegiate ministry from your church.

# HEALTHY CHURCHES

## HEALTHY CHURCHES START HERE

- Healthy Leaders (self, family, soul)
- Healthy Filters (kingdom and prayer)
- Healthy Behaviors (missional engagement, intentional discipleship, leadership development)
- Healthy Mission (multiplication)



THE BRN HELPS CHURCHES AT EVERY STAGE

### CHURCH MULTIPLICATION

**The BRN has a strong system in place to recruit and train new church planters.** First-year church planters focus on the healthy behavior of missional engagement. Second-year planters focus on intentional discipleship. Third-year planters focus on leadership development. By the time they are stable churches, they are accustomed to practicing these healthy behaviors.

### CHURCH REPRODUCTION

A stable church teaches disciples to make other disciples who make other disciples. Their pastors are planning for reproduction through leadership development. Their ultimate desire is to reproduce disciples, leaders, new ministries, and new churches. These outwardly-focused behaviors prevent a church from slipping into “self-preservation mode,” which is unfaithful, and ultimately unfruitful. **The BRN can teach you to stay on mission.**





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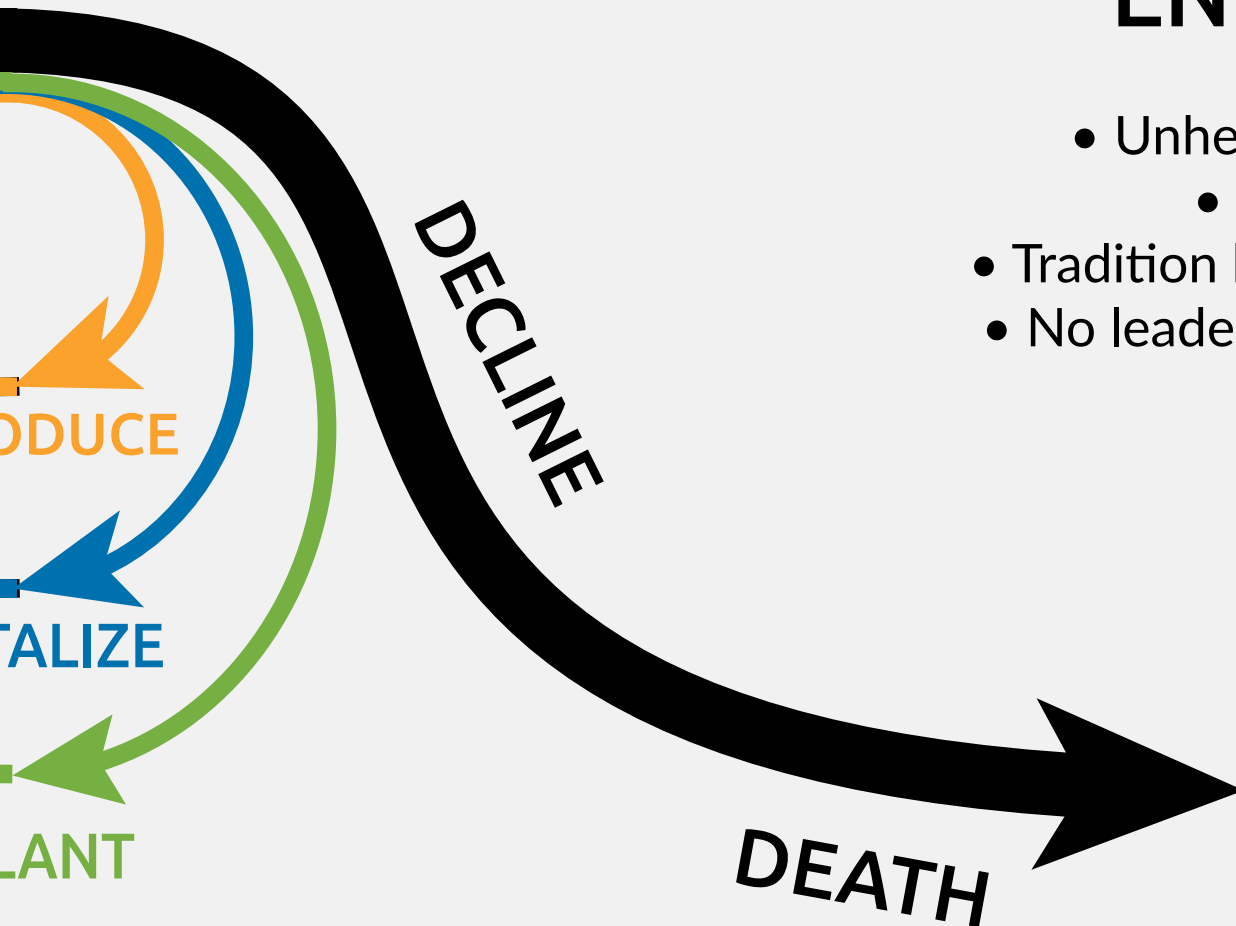


healthy  
churches

# DYING CHURCHES END HERE

- Unhealthy Leaders
  - Inward Focus
- Tradition beats mission
- No leadership pipeline

ILITY



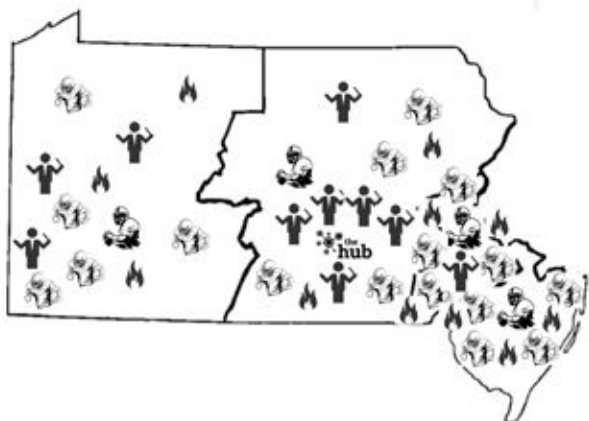
## CHURCH REVITALIZATION

A healthy church is always looking for ways to maintain a strong connection to missional engagement, intentional discipleship, and leadership development. When a church starts to decline, they are likely neglecting one of these key behaviors. **The BRN can help you identify and address these issues at the first signs of decline so that your church might be revitalized before it dies.**

## CHURCH REPLANTING

A church that fails to revitalize or reproduce can still be an effective tool for the Kingdom by choosing to close their doors and invest their remaining people and assets into a new church. By intentionally closing and passing their assets on to a new congregation, they are leaving a legacy of faith within their community that may sprout new fruit in the next season. **The BRN can help you close well.**

# OTHER RESOURCES



1

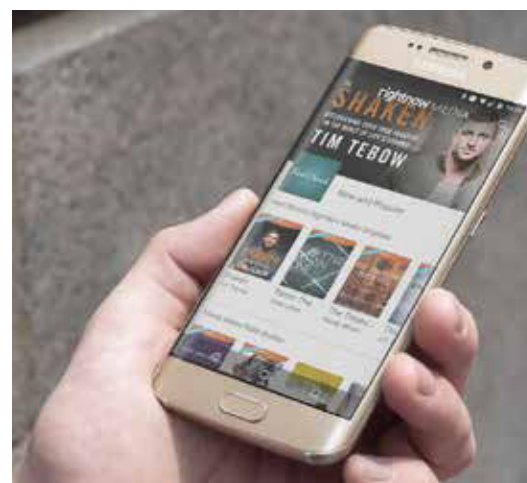
## STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

The BRN staff and consultants live around PA and South Jersey and are ready to connect you with the right resources to address your ministry needs. In many cases, they may be your front-line resource themselves.

2

## NATIONAL SBC RESOURCES

The national entities have additional resources that are available to your church. If you need some support or guidance, the BRN is your gateway to the SBC.



3

## BAPTIST PARTNERS

We partner with other ministries, local associations, and other state conventions to serve your church with missional resources.

4

## OTHER PARTNERS

The BRN has several preferred partners who provide essential ministry services at group rates.

5

## COMMUNICATIONS, ESPECIALLY THE UPDATED [WWW.BRNUNITED.ORG](http://WWW.BRNUNITED.ORG)!

Look for BRN's newly updated website, [www.brnunited.org](http://www.brnunited.org), on your favorite device, subscribe to the BRN United weekly newsletter, or find us on the major social media networks to stay connected with what is happening in the network.

# BEING SOUTHERN BAPTIST

## ABOUT THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

With more than 15 million members, the Southern Baptist Convention is the world's largest Baptist denomination, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, and the second-largest Christian denomination in the United States after the Catholic Church.

Distinctively, the SBC affirms the autonomy of every local church. These autonomous local churches choose to join together in common cause for the gospel and share some common beliefs and practices that unite them in mission.

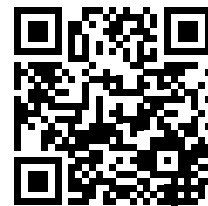
Annually, the SBC meets for a convention. We have a few standing boards and committees to coordinate our year-round work, particularly in national and international missions. Most SBC churches are also part of a local association and state convention which help them with more localized ministry.

There are three requirements to affiliate with the SBC in PA/SJ - affirming a common doctrinal statement, reporting annually, and giving financially.



## BELIEFS

The common doctrinal statement of the SBC is the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 (BF&M). This statement is thoroughly biblical, yet broad enough to allow for some theological diversity on secondary theological stances. Because of the autonomy of each local church, there are plenty of minor variations in the beliefs of SBC churches, yet most agree to hold this doctrinal statement as a common core. One thing that all SBC churches agree upon, however, is the centrality of the Scripture as the basis for our doctrine.



Visit <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp> to read the complete BF&M 2000.

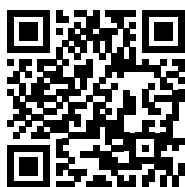


# BEING SOUTHERN BAPTIST

## REPORTING

Every SBC church submits an Annual Church Profile (ACP). This form, which may be submitted online, tracks basic statistics like membership, baptism, worship attendance, Sunday school and VBS attendance, annual giving, annual giving to SBC causes, and other missions expenditures.

This short report helps the national entities apportion resources to the regions with greatest need and greatest effectiveness.



All of our national entities also submit an annual report back to the churches. You can find the most recent reports at <http://www.sbc.net/cp/ministryreports>.

### Annual Church Profile Statistical Summary

#### 2018 Southern Baptist Convention Statistical Summary

Item/Statistic	2018	2017	2018-2017 Numeric Change	2018-2017 Percent Change
State Conventions <sup>(1)</sup>	41	42	-1	-2.38%
Associations	1,126	1,131	-5	-0.44%
Churches	47,456	47,544	-88	-0.19%
Church-type Missions <sup>(2)</sup>	4,085	4,376	-291	-6.65%
Total Members	14,813,234	15,005,638	-192,404	-1.28%
Total Baptisms	246,442	254,122	-7,680	-3.02%
Ratio of Baptisms: Total Members	1:60	1:59	—	—
Weekly Worship Average Attendance	5,297,788	5,320,488	-22,700	-0.43%
Sunday School/Bible Study/Small Group Average Attendance	3,247,681	3,345,526	-97,845	-2.92%
Cooperative Program <sup>(3)</sup>	<a href="http://www.sbc.net/cp/statistics.asp">www.sbc.net/cp/statistics.asp</a>	<a href="http://www.sbc.net/cp/statistics.asp">www.sbc.net/cp/statistics.asp</a>	—	—

#### NOTES:

1. The formal relationship between the SBC and the DC Baptist Convention ended in 2018.
2. Some state conventions no longer use the designation of church-type missions to categorize congregations which are not self-determining, self-sustaining and self-propagating. This practice has impacted the number of churches and church-type missions.
3. Cooperative Program as reported on the Annual Church Profile is not included in this table. CP based on the actual amount given through the state convention, as provided in the SBC Annual in the Executive Committee Annual Report.

#### Other 2018 Items – Not Asked by All State Conventions<sup>3</sup>

Item/Statistic	2018	2017
Other Additions <sup>(1)</sup>	177,915	187,789
Undesignated Receipts <sup>(2)</sup>	\$9,601,534,950	\$9,518,257,051
Total Receipts <sup>(2)</sup>	\$11,811,093,609	\$11,728,420,088
Total Mission Expenditures <sup>(3)</sup>	\$1,171,604,679	\$1,185,509,033
Great Commission Giving <sup>(4)</sup>	\$572,281,994	\$593,980,600

#### NOTES:

1. Totals for items in this table have incomplete data for 2018 due to the fact that not all state conventions asked the item or did so in a way not comparable with the standard definition. Similar actions occurred in 2017. Thus, comparisons between the two years may not be appropriate. See the Note in the 2017 SBC Statistical Summary for specific details to determine if a comparison is desirable.
2. Baptist Convention of New York, California Southern Baptist Convention, Florida Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention did not ask this item or the information necessary to obtain the item.
3. Baptist Convention of New York did not ask this item or the information necessary to obtain the item.
4. Baptist Convention of New York and the California Southern Baptist Convention did not ask this item or the information necessary to obtain the item.
5. Alabama State Board of Missions, Baptist Convention of New York, Florida Baptist Convention, Georgia Baptist Mission Board, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and the South Carolina Baptist Convention did not ask this item or the information necessary to obtain the item.
6. Alabama State Board of Missions, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Baptist Convention of New York, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, South Carolina Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention did not ask this item or the information necessary to obtain the item.

May 14, 2019

Prepared by: LifeWay Insights, LifeWay Christian Resources, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234

## A Southern Baptist Glossary

**Annie Armstrong Offering:** An offering held around Easter to support the field work of the North American Mission Board.

**Annual Church Profile (ACP):** Also known as the annual letter, this is the report sent from the local churches to the state convention.

**Annual Meeting:** Each local association and the state convention hold annual meetings in October and November

**Association:** A group of churches that cooperate regionally.

**Baptist Faith & Message (BF&M):** The list of beliefs held by Southern Baptists.

**Cooperative Program (CP):** This is our typical giving mechanism to support the IMB, NAMB, ERLC, and SBC seminaries.

**Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC):** This national entity addresses specific moral issues in broader cultural conversations.

**GuideStone:** A SBC entity that provides retirement accounts and taxation information for ministers.

**International Mission Board (IMB):** The missionary sending agency of the SBC that deploys outside of North America.

**LifeWay:** The publishing house of the SBC.

**Lottie Moon Offering:** An offering held around Christmas to support the field work of the International Mission Board.

**North American Mission Board (NAMB):** NAMB assists Southern Baptists in their task of fulfilling the Great Commission in the United States, Canada and their territories through a national strategy for sharing Christ, starting churches and sending missionaries, in cooperation with Acts 1:8 partners.

**Woman's Missionary Union (WMU):** A missions education, prayer support, and involvement organization that also promotes the Annie Armstrong and Lottie Moon offerings.

# GIVING

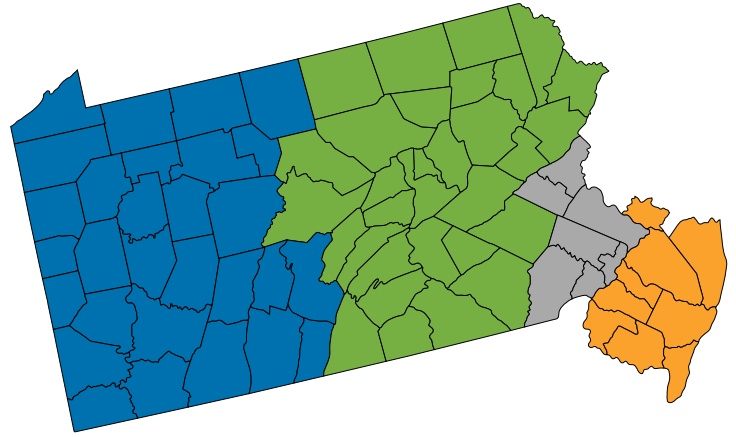
Southern Baptists excel in generous giving for the sake of mission. The Cooperative Program (CP) is an ongoing offering that supports the IMB, NAMB, SBC seminaries and the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC). Churches typically send their CP contributions to the state convention, which uses a portion of the funds within the region and forwards the rest to the SBC. The BRN forwards approximately 30% of CP receipts beyond our

region. Many churches make CP giving a percentage of their weekly giving. The CP is a replacement for the old system where missionaries would spend much of their time raising support from individual churches. With the CP, our missionaries stay in the field doing their vital work!

In addition, a few times per year, we receive special offerings to directly supplement the field work of various missions. 100% of the “Annie” offerings supports North American missions. 100% of “Lottie” supports international missions. 100% of the State Missions Offering supports in-state missions. 100% of Global Hunger funds support food-based compassion ministries. 100% of Disaster Relief offerings support Disaster Relief.



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- Join our weekly email list
- Find us on Facebook  
Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest
- Enjoy our new website:  
[www.brnunited.org](http://www.brnunited.org)

