

Annual Director of Missions Report 2008

This year our association began an exciting journey with a new vision, a lot of enthusiasm, and a new sense of purpose. The driving force behind everything we've accomplished this year has been our vision – to see our city radically transformed by the power of Christ. This vision has taken shape over the past five years, and has really come into its own this year. We praise God for all He has done, but we know this is not enough!

During the last twelve months, our association has developed, and adopted new governing documents to replace our old Constitution, and Bylaws, and revised our Articles of Incorporation. On November 6, 2008, we officially inaugurated the new, streamlined structure of our association. But, this is still not enough!

Another highlight of this past year was our focus on leadership development through the use of StrengthFinders®, an on-line assessment tool developed by the Gallup Organization. The PBA sponsored a Strengths Faith Engagement Summit at Caraway this year, and more than 25 pastors have taken the StrengthsFinder® assessment. Thirteen pastors received Level I Strengths Performance Coach Training at Hollifield Training Center (sponsored by the PBA and the Baptist State Convention of NC). Twelve pastors have participated in a special Strengths Leadership Project sponsored in part by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. The PBA staff continues to coach these pastors, and their staff in Strengths. But, we know this too, is not enough!

In addition to these exciting Strengths-related experiences, over 50 young leaders and pastors in the PBA attended the *Catalyst* Conference in Atlanta this year. In October, Calvary Baptist Church in McLeansville hosted a Faith Evangelism Training event for the southeastern US region – a LifeWay training event. Even with all of this, we know it is not enough!

Despite all we have done this year, our city is still in desperate need of radical transformation. We have seen some great partnerships develop in our association – churches coming together with a passion for reaching our city for Christ. Working with six different churches in their pastor search process, I've met some men and women totally committed to Christ, and doing whatever is necessary to impact their communities. Some of these churches have baptized more people this year than ever before. These people have inspired and encouraged me. Yet, by in large, our city remains unchanged. In other words, this is still not enough!

If all of this is not enough, what more do we need? Speaking on behalf of the PBA staff and leadership, even with all the accomplishments of this year, we are not satisfied! We want to see our city radically transformed, and we deeply believe it is possible; but it is only possible if we share the vision, and embrace the mission, as a network of congregations.

Five years ago, when I accepted the call to become your Director of Missions, someone from a large church said, "Our church, because of its size, does not really need the association." Over the past five years I've struggled with how to respond to that statement. Is it true? Is it false? What does it really mean?

Recently, God revealed to me the appropriate response. That statement can be true only under one condition. Here is that condition: If a church's vision is limited to their community, or worse, to their own congregation, then they do not need the association. If, on the other hand, the church shares the vision of bringing about radical transformation to a city through the power of Jesus Christ, then it is absolutely not true! The reason is simple. No one church alone is capable of bringing about radical transformation to an entire city. One congregation is not enough!

We simply cannot realize this vision alone. Therefore, it is imperative and urgent that we, as a community of congregations, share and embrace this vision. If there is any hope of it becoming a reality, we must come together, work together, and serve together.

Our annual session this year is a celebration. Our theme is "Sharing the Vision of a Transformed City." My prayer is that this celebration will mark the beginning of the realization of that vision.

Dr. Larry S. Doyle