

# Report to California Baptists

California Southern Baptist Convention 2018



## Changes at CSBC empower the vision of local churches

Significant changes designed to enhance California Southern Baptist Convention services, and to resource

the vision of local churches, have been happening at CSBC, according to Bill Agee, executive director.

More than 33 million people in California do not have a personal relationship with Jesus, and California Southern Baptists have a mandate to provide an opportunity for everyone in the Golden State to hear about and know Jesus as Savior. The CSBC changes have a single focus: helping churches fulfill the mission God has given them to reach their community.

The most significant change over the past year has been the formation of four ministry teams – Church Planting, Evangelism and Missions, Church Revitalization and Small Church. New team leaders were called to develop these ministries and provide resources to local churches.

This document will give you greater insight into the new teams and their leaders. CSBC stands ready to serve your congregation!

The lostness in California demands that California Southern Baptists commit to renewed efforts to share the gospel. God has placed us strategically in one of the greatest mission fields in our land, and it is time for California Baptists to give our all to reach our state for Christ. California Southern Baptist Convention exists to serve its churches in that mission.

Pray today for your church as together we serve our Lord in California.



## Small Church Initiatives Team

Ken Sartain brings a wealth of experience as leader of the CSBC Small Church Initiatives Team (SCIT).

He served as a bivocational pastor for six years at First Baptist Church in Hughson before joining the CSBC staff. Sartain also was president and chief executive officer of Connecting With Purpose, a support partner to churches focusing on revitalization through church health and leadership.

Sartain, a US Navy veteran, said his goal for SCIT is to provide resources “directly to the church,” noting, “There are approximately 1,000 small congregations (defined as any church with 100 or fewer in membership for five or more years) within the Convention and we want to provide an innovative approach to

servicing them.”

Partnering with local associations and directors of missions, SCIT is “tasked with supporting, encouraging and working with the small church to reach the lost for Christ,” Sartain said, “and to strengthen discipleship and seek to be worthy of the calling of Christ Jesus.

“Our primary focus is to ensure we honor small churches by being trustworthy in our relationships, which means asking the tough questions about existing conditions (spiritual, financial, emotional, mental, etc.) to assess the impact the church is making on its local neighborhood.”



## Evangelism and Missions Initiatives Team

As the new leader of the CSBC Evangelism and Missions Initiatives Team, Pete Ramirez wants to partner with California Southern Baptist churches to spread the gospel and make disciples across the state.

Ramirez, former pastor of Iglesia Bautista White Road in San Jose, said one of his primary responsibilities is allocating Cooperative Program funds to under-resourced churches to help support evangelism and community outreach projects.

“If a church wants to do an outreach event and needs help, I ask about the event and determine how much to give them from CP gifts,” Ramirez explained.

But the team’s support extends beyond

a simple financial transaction. Ramirez and his team walk alongside the churches after they receive funds.

“I don’t want to just sign a paper. I want to be with them, meet them, pray with them, and I want them to know they are not alone on the journey,” Ramirez said. “It is so cool to show up to an event where CP gifts played a role and see how these churches are reaching out and doing a good job.”

With God’s help, Ramirez is confident he and his team will be able to offer churches the support they need to grow disciples and spread the gospel.



*More on back*

## Church Planting Initiatives Team

Ross Shepherd, leader of the CSBC Church Planting Initiatives Team, longs to see a Southern Baptist presence in every California community.

“I’ve always had a vision for the state of California,” Shepherd said. “We have about 40 million people here, and more than 90 percent of those people are lost. That’s an alarming statistic. I’d like to be able to break it down strategically and look at where we still have to get a Southern Baptist footprint. I have a desire to see a healthy, successful church plant in every city in California. That’s the ultimate goal.”

Shepherd and his team are working in cooperation with directors of missions and North American Mission Board church planting catalysts to provide resources and support for church

planting efforts across the state.

“I recruit, mentor and coach church planters,” Shepherd said. “I work with our directors of missions. I work with church planting catalysts to get churches planted in areas where there is a need. My team helps church planters with funding.

“Basically, we do all things church planting!”

The task is rewarding, but it is not always easy, Shepherd said. He believes his extensive experience in the field has equipped him to tackle the challenges he faces in his role as a CSBC team leader.



## Church Revitalization Initiatives Team

With hundreds of Southern Baptist churches permanently closing their doors each year, church revitalization efforts are more important than ever.

As the leader of the Church Revitalization Initiatives Team, former pastor and church planter Ralph Neighbour is working to breathe new life into CSBC congregations that are plateaued or in decline.

“We are at a critical intersection as California Southern Baptists,” Neighbour asserted. “The stats tell us that 80 percent of our churches are plateaued or in decline, so we’ve got a lot of work to do.”

Neighbour’s enthusiasm for church revitalization is undeniable. In his more than three decades of ministry experience, he has served on staff

with several congregations and started multiple churches.

“Having been a pastor and church planter and having dealt with many of the problems pastors and church planters face has well prepared me for this position,” he said.

“Our team does triage,” Neighbour explained. “Using ‘Count the Cost,’ a tool Dr. Bill Agee developed, we help churches get a clear picture of their current situation and then provide them with a road map to a better future.”

“Our desire is to help the churches find resources for their next step.”



## By the Numbers

Congregations: **2,369**

Anglo: **837**

African-American: **456**

Chinese: **77**

Filipino: **82**

Hispanic: **383**

Korean: **215**

Multi-ethnic: **154**

Other ethnic: **165**

Cooperating Congregations: **1,127**

Baptisms in 2017: **9,900**

Cooperative Program Gifts in 2017: **\$6,391,924**

California Mission Offering Gifts in 2017: **\$435,943**

CP Gifts for World Missions in 2018: **35%**

CSBC Staff and Missionaries: **47**  
MRC – **31**  
Jeness Park – **16**

NAMB Church Planting Catalysts: **9**

Baptist Associations: **29**

Agencies: **3**  
CSBC

The Baptist Foundation of California  
California Baptist University

CSBC churches preach the gospel in more than **70** languages, reaching more than **60** ethnic groups

Of the **39+** million people living in California, some estimate at least **33** million still need Jesus!

To learn about the services and ministries of CSBC, please visit [www.csbc.com](http://www.csbc.com).