

## Reset Team Report

During the July 2019 meeting of the Executive Committee of the Florence Baptist Association, DOM Chris Smith briefly explained his thoughts about a committee to look at the future of the FBA. The Executive Committee voted to allow Chris to pick said committee. The Reset Team was chosen, agreed to serve and the names were shared at the annual meeting. The members of the Reset team are Chris Smith, Louanne Stewart, John Collins, Steece Hayes, Ashley Neighbors, Eric Alldredge, Adam Pfahlert, Landon Reynolds, Brooke Knotts, Wesley Mayfield, and Cleve Calcutt.

The Reset Team had its first meeting on November 18, 2019. Chris set the agenda for the team including: examining and possibly updating the mission statement of the FBA, and aligning the structure and practice of the FBA to best carry out this mission statement. The rest of this first meeting was spent discussing the importance of mission statements, what they communicate, and looking at examples. The FBA's current purpose statement (found in Article II of the FBA Constitution) was also discussed.

In preparation for the next meeting, Chris prepared a brief history of Baptist Associations and the beginning of the FBA. He also shared an article, written by a fellow DOM, explaining associations. These were shared on a private Facebook group to which each member of the Reset Team had access, and which also included a forum for discussion between meetings. Chris also shared a piece on what we do and why we do it, as well as the current ministries of the FBA.

After working via the Facebook forum through the holidays, the team met monthly in January, February, and March. The April meeting was postponed due to the pandemic. We transitioned to ZOOM online meetings and met in May and June continuing to refine a mission statement and a more workable structure for the future.

### Synopsis of the Findings and Recommendations of the Reset Team

#### I. Mission Statement

- A. After months of discussion, deliberation, and prayer, the following is proposed as the mission statement of the Florence Baptist Association:

**The Florence Baptist Association is a network of churches cooperating to make disciples and advance the gospel for the glory of God.**

- B. Rationale behind key words and phrases:

1. Network – In a professional setting, to “network” is to interact with people and have conversations pertaining to the work/mission at hand. The term network is more pertinent to what the FBA does, and to today's culture.

2. Make Disciples – These two words are the core and substance of the Great Commission.

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

*Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)*

3. Advance – This term indicates a purposeful moving forward of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It also aligns with the Advance strategy of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.
4. Glory of God – This is what it's all about! We interact and partner as cooperating churches to make disciples and advance the gospel, so that Christ may build His Kingdom through us.

## II. Structure of the FBA

- A. The current structure is dated and has been only slightly modified during the last eight years. It currently requires 42 people as officers and multiple committee members, not including WMU or BCM. The majority of these committees meet only once or twice a year. Care is always taken to include both pastors/church staff and lay people in these nominations. We have also attempted to include persons from all of our churches at some time. Understandably, the fact that some churches are more involved in associational ministries than others is often reflected in the nominations.
- B. In the past few years, there have been some associations that have transitioned to functioning with some level of a *Leadership Team*. The Reset Team envisions a 12-person Leadership Team for the FBA that would take the place of the 42 officers and committee members mentioned above. **The Leadership Team would consist of one clergy and one layperson from each of six Geographical Church Clusters.**\* This team, along with the FBA staff, would serve in the following areas that currently have committees: nominating, personnel, properties, and stewardship. For legal purposes, we would retain the trustees. The focus of the Leadership Team would be on the spiritual, the mission of the FBA, and the necessary elements of the FBA as an organization and its structure.
  1. Rationale: Including less people facilitates a higher level of participation in the direction and ministries of the FBA. These 12 would be much more active in the life of the FBA than the 42 previously meeting 0, 1, or 2 times a year. In today's world, decisions are often made by less people

and much more quickly than we have become accustomed to in “Baptist Life.”

2. Nominations and Elections: The Leadership Team would be staggered with 4 members elected each year to serve a 3-year term. These would be nominated by the Leadership Team with input from the churches within each Geographical Church Cluster.
3. Transition to Leadership Team Structure
  - a) On July 16<sup>th</sup> the Executive Committee approved allowing the nominating committee to refrain from nominating replacements for the two people rotating off of the committees this year. This would leave 4 committee members rather than 6.
  - b) Some of those remaining committee members would transition to the Leadership Team based on their Geographical Church Cluster and their willingness to serve. This ensures people elected for the purpose of serving will continue to serve (\*example included in the structure document.)
  - c) In order to fill the remaining seats on the Leadership Team, the nominating committee will, in cooperation with the pastors in each Geographical Cluster, secure nominations of laypersons and/or clergy from the different Geographical Clusters and present them for election at the October 2021 Annual Meeting of the FBA. Every effort will be made to ensure a pastor and lay person from different churches within the cluster are nominated as mentioned in II.B. above.
  - d) Upon approval of the recommendations of the Reset Team, the process of transitioning our written documents (Constitution and By-laws) to reflect the new structure would begin.
  - e) The timeframe for the transition would be October 2020 – September 2021 with the Leadership Team being officially elected at the October 2021 annual meeting of The Florence Baptist Association.

### III. Church Admission Process

- A. The Reset Team also recommends a re-evaluation of the process by which a new church or an existing church from another association is admitted into the FBA.
- B. Current example: In January 2020, First Baptist of Johnsonville requested to be admitted for membership in the FBA. Under the current rules, First Johnsonville

cannot be presented for membership until the October 2020 meeting, after which they must undergo a year of watch care. The result of this is that it would be nearly 2 years until they are considered a member church. (This, along with possibly other practices, would be reconsidered should the body vote for the Constitution and By-laws to be restructured.)

### Motions

1. The Reset Team moves that we adopt the following Mission Statement of the FBA:

*The Florence Baptist Association is a network of churches cooperating to make disciples and advance the gospel for the glory of God.*

2. The Reset Team moves that we transition to a Leadership Team as described in the report.
3. If the motion for transition passes, the Reset Team moves that the Constitution and By-laws Committee be instructed to draft changes to reflect the change to a Leadership Team structure.
4. The Reset team moves that the Constitution and By-laws Committee be instructed to draft changes reducing the timeline for admitting new member churches.

\*Church Clusters:

Timmons ville (5): First Timmons ville, Cartersville, Sparrow Swamp, Peniel, Sardis

Lake City/Coward (6): Coward, Ariel, Lake City, Northside, Calvary, Hebron

Pamplico/Johnsonville (7): First Pamplico, First Johnsonville, Kingsburg, Union, Mt. Zion, Beulah, Willow Creek, Alanza

South Florence (7): Elim , Evergreen, New Covenant, Unity, Greenwood, Tans Bay, South Florence

West Florence (8): Hoffmeyer, Ebenezer, Ridgecrest, College Park, Grace, Northgate, Oakdale, New Hope

Florence/East (9): First Florence, Southside, Calvary, Immanuel, Pee Dee Community, Quinby, Mizpah, Rehoboth