

**BIVOCATIONAL AND SMALLER
MEMBERSHIP CHURCH
COUNCIL REPORT**



**SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
901 Commerce Street
Nashville, Tennessee**

**Submitted to
Dr. Frank Page
Chief Executive Officer
June 14, 2016**

SBC Bivocational and Small Church Advisory Council

In 2014 Dr. Frank Page, Chief Executive Officer, SBC Executive Committee, appointed an Advisory Council to develop a report for the Executive Committee on how the Southern Baptist Convention and its entities can better understand and work with the vast number of smaller membership churches and those whose pastor is bivocational. This Council was formed through the leadership of Dr. Ken Weathersby, Vice President for Convention Advancement, SBC Executive Committee. Ray Gilder, pastor of First Baptist Church, Gordonsville, Tennessee and Executive Director of the Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network was asked to serve as Chairman. Dr. Mark Tolbert, Director, Caskey Center for Church Excellence, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary was asked to serve as Vice Chairman. The Council was composed of the following members:

Antoine, Jr., Ira

Director, Bivocational Pastors Ministry, Baptist General Convention of Texas
Houston, TX

Beachum, Jr., Vernon E.

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Fort Ashby, WV

Biswas, Paul

Pastor Cambridgeport Baptist Church, Cambridge, MA

Brabson, Sr., Fredrick

Pastor, New Covenant Baptist Church, Knoxville, TN

Clark, Bobby

Pastor, Abbot Baptist Church, Mansfield, AR

Donahoe, Gordon

Pastor, Neely's Bend Baptist Church, Madison, TN 3

Gilder, Ray

Executive Director of the BSCLN

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Gordonsville, TN

Heath, Kenny
Director of Missions, Western Baptist Association
La Vale, MD

Hopkins, Hal
Pastor, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Breinigsville, PA

Jones, Stephen R.
Pastor, Central Baptist Church, Alameda, CA

Losch, Pusey
Pastor, Mountain View Community Church, Richfield, PA

Luckel, Henry
Regional Consultant for the BSCLN
Colorado Springs, CO

Mitchell, Gary
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Chataignier, LA

Perez, Joel
Pastor, Iglesia Bautista La Cosecha
Okeechobee, FL

Pigg, Michael
Pastor, Philadelphia Baptist Church, Lithonia, GA

Smith, Chip
Bivocational Ministry, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions
Montgomery, AL

Smith, Shannon
Regional Consultant for the BSCLN
Fremont, NE

Tafoya, A. Scott

Pastor, Indian Nations Baptist Church, Albuquerque, NM

Tolbert, Mark

Director of the Caskey Center for Church Excellence, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA

Villarreal, Elizondo Marcos

Pastor, Iglesia Cristiana Bautista, Lufkin, TX

Woodman, Cliff

Pastor, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Carlinville, IL

Young, Joe

Pastor, Calvary Chapel, Parchman, MS

Small is the ~~New~~ ^{True} Big

Prepared by:

The Leavell Center for Church Health

(Dr. Bill Day: bday@nobts.edu)

And

The Caskey Center for Church Excellence

(Dr. Mark Tolbert: mtolbert@nobts.edu)

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Bottom Line

The Size of Our (SBC) Big
Is Determined by the
Fruitfulness
Of Our Small (churches)

The SBC

Is a

LARGE

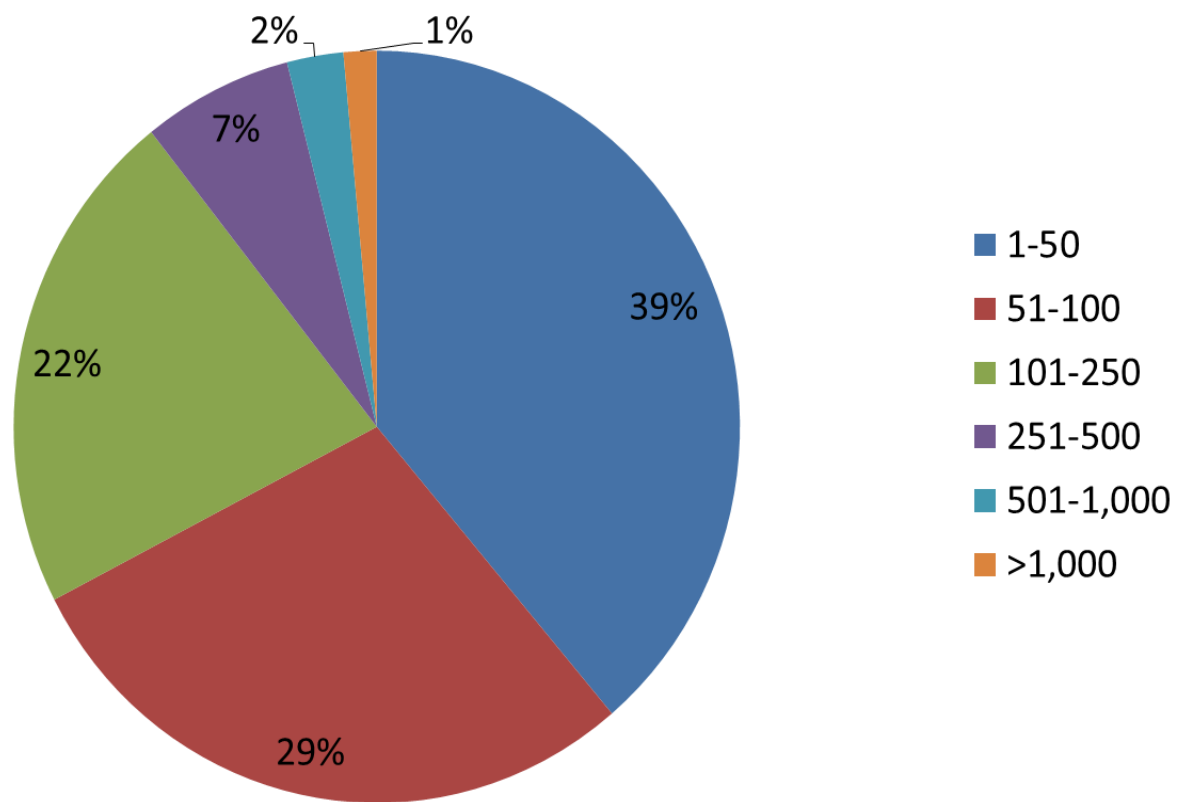
Convention

Of mostly

SMALL

churches

SBC Percentages of Churches by Worship Size

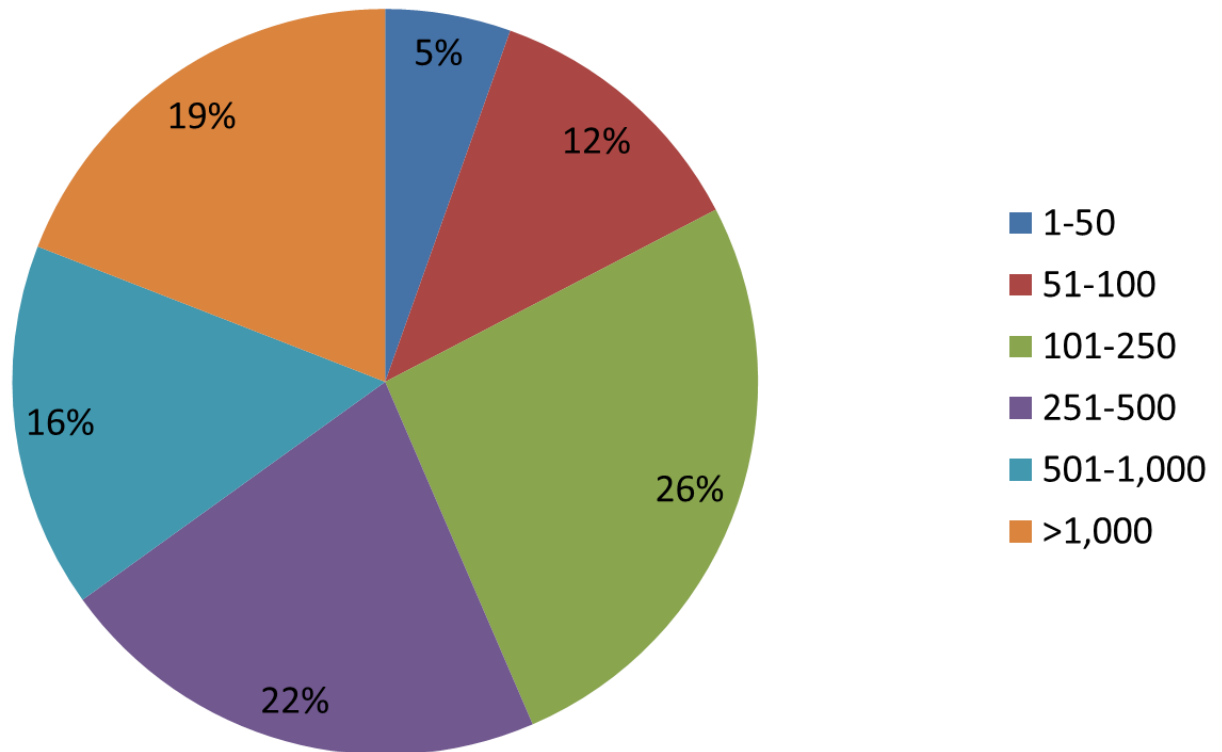


67.40% of SBC churches have 100 or less in worship

89.33% of SBC churches have 250 or less in worship

1.47% of SBC churches have more than 1,000 in worship

SBC Percentage of CP by Worship Size



17.36% of CP from churches of 100 or less

43.52% of CP from churches of 250 or less

65.06% of CP from churches of 500 or less

80.90% of CP from churches of 1,000 or less

Biggest segment: Churches from 101-250!

**2013 SBC Cooperative Program Giving
by Worship Attendance Category**

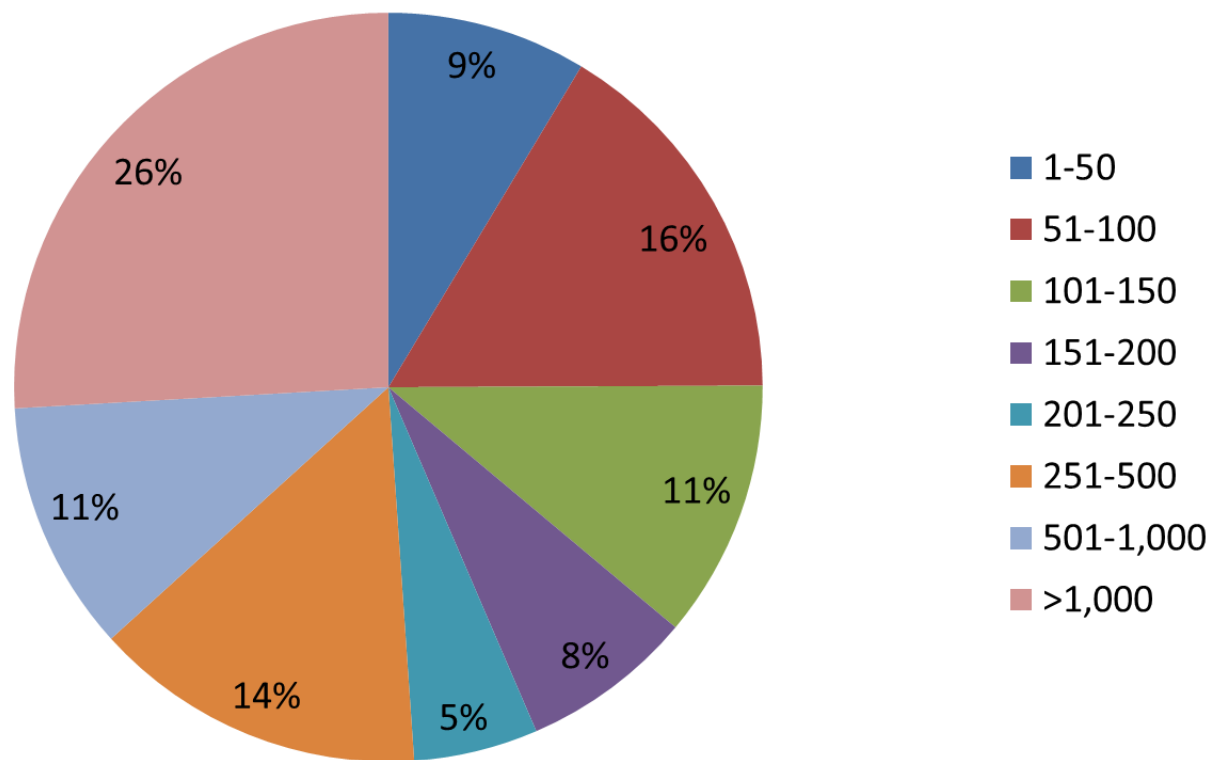
Worship Attendance Category	Cooperative Program Funds	Percent Cooperative Program/ Undesignated Gifts
1-50	\$24,522,219	5.53
51-100	\$53,554,705	5.89
101-150	\$48,770,270	6.46
151-200	\$37,804,036	6.51
201-250	\$31,047,870	6.75
251-500	\$96,828,026	6.70
501-1,000	\$71,190,538	6.04
>1,000	\$85,836,209	4.17
1-250	\$195,699,100	6.22

Data from 2013 Annual Church Profile. The Cooperative Fund amount includes funds give to both state and national conventions.
Prepared by Dr. Bill Day, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, October 2013.

Data from the 2013 Annual Church Profile. The Cooperative Fund amount includes funds given to both state and national conventions.

Biggest cash segment: 251-500. Biggest percentage segment: 201-250.

SBC Percentage of Total Baptisms by Worship Size



48.90% of baptisms: churches of 250 or less (80.07%)

63.28% of baptisms: churches of 500 or less (96.05%)

25.90% of baptisms: churches of > 1,000 (1.43%)

Smaller Churches Reach the Lost!

**2013 SBC Total Financial Receipts Per Baptism Ratio
by Worship Attendance Category**

Worship Attendance Category	Total Receipts Per Baptism
1-50	\$20,387
51-100	\$22,035
101-150	\$27,497
151-200	\$31,973
201-250	\$35,400
251-500	\$43,179
501-1,000	\$47,010
>1,000	\$34,793
1-250	\$25,972

Data from 2013 Annual Church Profile. Total Receipts per Baptism determined by dividing the total receipts for all churches in a worship size category by the total number of baptisms for that category. Dr. Bill Day, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, October 2013.

Data from the 2013 Annual Church Profile. Total Receipts per Baptism determined by dividing the total receipts for all churches in worship size category by the total number of baptisms for that category.

**2013 SBC Worship Attendance Per Baptism Ratio
by Worship Attendance Category**

Worship Attendance Category	Worship Attendance Per Baptism
1-50	17.0
51-100	16.0
101-150	17.1
151-200	18.0
201-250	19.2
251-500	20.0
501-1,000	19.7
>1,000	16.2
1-250	17.1

Data from 2013 Annual Church Profile. Worship Attendance Per Baptism Ratio was determined by dividing the total attendance for a worship attendance category by the total number of baptisms for that category. Dr. Bill Day, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, October 2013.

Data from the 2013 Annual Church Profile. Worship Attendance Per Baptism Ratio was determined by dividing the total attendance for a worship attendance category by the total number or baptisms for that category.

SBC Bivocational/Smaller Membership Church Advisory Council Report

The Advisory Council was divided into five teams. Each team had a specific assignment. The following is the report from each team:

I. Team #1: Connect and Communicate Effectively

The Bivocational and Small Church Council has been tasked by Dr. Frank Page, Chief Executive Officer of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, with improving the connectivity of the Executive Committee with the leadership of smaller churches. Currently there exists a disconnect between the convention leadership and church leadership. Many in the church setting feel as if the convention leadership is out of touch with the small church, or that the convention leadership simply does not deem the small church important. There is a belief that the convention leadership is solely focused on the larger churches.

Why should the connection between the Executive Committee be of sufficient concern to bring together a council to address the situation?

A foundational belief of the Southern Baptist Convention is that together we can accomplish more for the kingdom of God. The lack of cohesiveness or connection causes fragmentation, distrust and loss of focus. Bluntly, our enemy has caused division which has kept us from fulfilling the Great Commission to the best of our ability. Increased and realistic connection should bring about a desired unity in our convention and its churches increasing our forward motion. If the connection brings about unity and trust, CP giving should also see incremental increases bringing about greater ability to accomplish our Great Commission task. If the council is effective in fostering connection, churches should see the realization of why we are working together as a convention, understanding that we are a team, no stronger than our weakest teammate.

We cannot afford to come together, rehash ineffective strategies and walk away without implementing a plan that would embrace connection in a real and measureable way. Connection can be the sound of the battle

that will call us to rally together our resources and prayers to petition God to bring a Great Awakening.

A. Objective 1: Identify Misperceptions

Misperceptions identified by team:

1. Size (Not that plentiful)

- 90% of SBC churches have 250 or less in worship.
- 44% of Cooperative Program funds come from these churches.

2. Leadership (Leaders have limited ability. Many feel that they are looked upon as 2nd class pastors, considered lacking in faith for not going full time and are probably not very good preachers or they would have a larger church.)

- Some of the most dynamic preachers in SBC family are either bivocational or lead a smaller membership church.
- Paul's model of tentmaker is biblical and effective.

3. Significance (Little impact on Kingdom of God)

- Many key leaders in SBC life come from these churches.
- They are THE church for their membership and community.

4. Health (Most small churches are not healthy)

- Health is not determined by size.
- Body life is often more evident in small churches.

B. Objective 2: Recognize and Affirm their Significance

Actions:

- Challenge and encourage local associations to help in identifying and recognizing special accomplishments.
- Celebrate these ministers and churches on local, state and national levels.

- Embrace and promote spiritual health not solely size as a standard of measurement.
- Intentionally include bivocational and smaller membership pastors in key leadership roles at local, state and national levels.
- Provide a viable platform where we can hear from these pastors not just about them.
 1. Seriously consider restructuring the “meeting life” of state and national conventions for this to happen.
 2. Recognize that many associations are already a model for this.

C. Objective 3: Learn From and not About Bivo and Smaller Membership Church Pastors

- Identify successful bivo/sc ministry models.
- Seek and provide ways for these pastors to be mentors and not always the mentees.
- Share what we have learned through our networks of communications.

II. Team #2: Encourage and Involve Them

A. Encourage Them

1. Address self- worth.
 - a. Promote the sharing of information about them.
 - b. Use social media to affirm them.
 - c. Share stories of impact through SBC communications
 1. Measure number of articles.
 2. Articles on needs.
 3. Identify smaller church impact on larger churches.

4. Adjust the numerical success mindset.
2. Connect with resources
3. Relationships
 - a. Association or cluster groups.
 - b. Replicate pray4everyhome.com model with pray4everychurch.com.
4. Increase value and relevance
5. Provide incentives for first time attendees at SBC Annual Meeting.

B. Involve Them

1. Associational
2. State
3. Convention
 - a. Track attendance of these pastors over last few years.
 - b. Look at involvement in leadership roles as well.
 - c. Check for proportionate representation.
4. Provide ways for them to participate in mission work.
5. Help them to see their connection to CP missionaries.

III. Team #3: The Importance of the Local Association

Basic premise: The local Baptist association is the basic unit of denominational life among Baptists. Therefore, we conclude:

- It is imperative that our national and state agencies recognize the primacy of the local association in denominational life.
- Every denominational entity needs to work with the local associations to effectively complete its own assigned tasks.

- Every agency should have leadership which understands and appreciates the local association.
- The associational director of missions must be recognized as the best link the denominational agencies can utilize in accomplishing their tasks.
- Baptist national and state agencies need to be proactive and intentional in the delivery of their products to the churches through the local association.

As representatives of bivo/smaller membership churches across the SBC, we believe we represent them in offering the following insights and suggestions to SBC agencies:

Guidestone

- The bivocational and smaller membership church leaders often feel left out of the denomination's retirement program.
- We recommend that Guidestone work with local directors of missions to develop a network of advocates who understand the smaller membership church.
- Guidestone might employ a full-time Bivo/Smaller membership church specialist.
- Guidestone could enhance its ministry by providing training for directors of missions and these small church advocates.

North American Mission Board

- Regrettably, we learned that leadership in many small churches and their associations feel alienated from the North American Mission Board in recent years.
- The leaders of bivo and smaller membership churches would like NAMB leadership to understand that it is impossible to accom-

plish its assigned tasks without the local associations as a means to reach individual churches.

- One of the best ways NAMB can restore confidence in their agency would be to employ a full-time liaison between NAMB and the local association, with adequate budget for travel and training of associational leadership.
- NAMB needs to recognize that defunding directors of missions unless they are planting a number of churches at any given time is unreasonable. NAMB should work aggressively to restore confidence in itself by returning to a plan of funding associations in pioneer areas without the church start requirement.

Lifeway

- Among bivo/small churches, Lifeway is perceived as beginning to make a turn toward providing materials that meet their unique needs.
- Lifeway should be commended for its recognition of the association in the delivery of its products and information regarding those products.
- Lifeway should continue to acknowledge that the local association is the best place to provide training for Sunday School and discipleship programs.

The Six Seminaries

- It was noted that several seminaries are providing training that will prepare the unique leaders needed in bivo/small churches. The Caskey Center at New Orleans Seminary is one example.
- The Contextualized Leadership Development programs of some seminaries are to be applauded.

- It would be productive for the seminaries to consider providing training of future directors of missions with special emphasis on working with bivocational and smaller church leaders.

International Mission Board

- IMB needs to continue its connection to local associations as an avenue to involve workers from bivo and smaller membership churches.
- IMB should be commended for recognizing that sending a bivocational pastor/missionary to a limited access area is the most productive way to evangelize and plant churches.

Untapped Resources

It should be noted that the Bivocational and Small Church Leadership Network (BSCLN), headquartered in Nashville, is currently the best place to turn for help in learning about bivo and smaller membership church needs, capabilities and possibilities in ministry. It is not necessary for each agency to reinvent the wheel. Working with the BSCLN would prove productive in strengthening the work of this large portion of SBC churches.

IV. Team #4: Provide Practical Resources for Church Health

A variety of helpful resources are available for bivocational and smaller membership pastors and their churches. This team's assignment is to discover resources, communicate the availability of resources and connect pastors and churches with these resources. The following is a list of eight areas of concern for which practical resources would positively affect the health of a church.

1. Physical health of the pastor and his wife.

- Stress in the pastor's family is a growing concern.

- Bivocational ministers and wives retreats are greatly needed on the state level as well as regional.
- Training for ministers who have little formal ministry preparation will help produce confidence in a job well done.
- A training program for the pastor and his leadership team on a regional basis would be quite effective in producing health for the pastor and his church.

2. Marriage enrichment for the pastor and his wife.

- These resources may be provided or sponsored by Lifeway, Baptist state conventions, or local Baptist associations.
- Pastoral support is provided by NAMB at www.namb.net/pastor-support/.

3. Management of church conflict, conflict resolution

- Need may be greater in smaller churches because of the possibility that prominent members often have a greater influence and control.
- Lifeway and our seminaries could help provide these resources.
- A practical strategy could be developed to minimize the possibility of a catastrophic conflict arising.

4. Time management for pastors

- This is the number one issue with bivo pastors.
- Help in planning, prioritizing and organizing is desperately needed.
- A bivo pastor needs help in accepting the fact that he cannot do everything he would like to do. He must be at peace with this fact. It is also imperative he equip and delegate.

5. Leadership skills

- It should be noted that many bivocational and smaller membership church pastors have not had formal ministry training and will need help in developing these skills.
- These resources must be practical and easily accessible.

6. Evangelism

- NAMB should develop and implement intentional training and strategies for evangelism in the smaller church.
- The potential of increase in conversions and baptisms through bivocational and smaller membership churches in the SBC should not be underestimated.

7. Spiritual vitality

- The smaller church deals with a sense of inadequacy when confronted with the numerical success in the larger church.
- Spiritual vitality involves authentic worship. These churches could benefit from training in leading and experiencing genuine worship.
- Spiritual vitality emphasizes church health. Spiritual growth should be measured by other standards than a simple increase in numbers.

8. Secular side of a bivo pastor's life.

- They need help in finding balance.
- They need help in find secular employment which is compatible with the life of a minister.
- They need help in finding ways to increase their earnings through secular employment.

V. Team #5: Elevating Bivo Models of the SBC

With 90% of all SBC churches being labeled as smaller membership (250 or less in Worship Attendance) or are led by a bivocational pastor, it is time to:

- See the SBC recognize and affirm this vast majority of its churches.
- Acknowledge that having a pastor who is bivocational is a biblical, proven and acceptable model for church leadership.
- Make a paradigm shift from mega church models to marketplace/ bivocational models.
- Promote bivocational status as possibly the most successful model of church planting.

This is not an attempt to discredit or criticize fully-funded or mega church pastors. This is an attempt to move the focus to the true base of the SBC.

In an effort to elevate bivocational models in the SBC, the Bivo/Small Church Advisory Council offers the following suggestions:

- Encourage Dr. Frank Page to continue his outstanding efforts to affirm and champion the work of the bivocational pastor.
- Challenge SBC leadership to continue and to escalate the celebration of the work of bivocational pastors.
- Encourage Directors of Missions, State Convention staff and others to identify and report significant work being done by bivo pastors to state convention editors and other key leaders.
- Feature articles of outstanding accomplishments of bivo pastors in state convention papers, Baptist Press and SBC Life.
- Use outstanding bivo leaders to speak at State Conventions, SBC annual Convention and other major events in SBC life.

The SBC Bivo/Small Church Advisory Council humbly submits this report to Dr. Frank Page and the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention in hopes that these efforts will produce greater unity and fruitfulness in the Southern Baptist family.