

One Hundred Seventy-Second Annual Report



P.O. Box 6767 (3806 Monument Avenue), Richmond, Virginia 23230

2018 GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Relative to the listed Ministry Assignment, please describe accomplishments in the past year that create "value added" to the Cooperative Program dollars that IMB receives.

Ministry Statement: Assist churches by evangelizing persons, planting Baptist churches, and nurturing church planting movements among all people groups outside the United States and Canada; and, provide specialized, defined and agreed upon assistance to the North American Mission Board in assisting churches to reach unreached and underserved people groups within the United States and Canada.

In 2017, we celebrate that, where previously there was darkness among unreached people groups (UPGs) and in unreached places, we can report there are reached people groups where Christ is known – and those people groups are now also making Him known. We continue to partner with about 140 self-sustaining national Baptist conventions* and celebrate with them in the fruit of their work. In 2016, some IMB teams turned over their work to local partners and engaged elsewhere. In essence, that means as IMB's numbers may decrease in some areas, our Baptist partners' numbers therefore increase, to the glory of God.

We celebrate that we've been able to exit work among some people groups (or segments of people groups) as these local Baptist partners can now carry that work forward. This allows us to accept the challenging work of engaging new unreached peoples and places. As our missionaries move from places like Nigeria, Brazil and South Korea, they move to unengaged and underserved peoples and places where no one, or few, have gone. These are your Southern Baptist personnel who serve through the IMB where it is most difficult to share the gospel, such as jungles, deserts, megacities and war zones.

The challenges of unreached peoples and places remain great. The number of unreached people groups in the world is 7,039 at the time of completing this report. (For more information, visit peoplegroups.org.) IMB missionaries reported 45,256 baptisms last year, referring only to those people groups and urban centers where IMB continues to have direct strategic work, influence, and involvement.

The Kingdom growth seen last year was supported by abundant gospel sowing through IMB missionaries: 1,623,419 people heard a gospel witness; 875,132 had a clear opportunity to respond to the gospel; and of these, 87,287 accepted Christ as Savior.

In terms of discipleship and healthy church formation around the world, 212,487 people participated in ongoing Bible studies; 6,495 discipleship groups were formed; and 4,550 new churches were started.

In addition to engaging people groups and establishing churches, IMB missionaries reported that leaders are emerging within people groups in such a way that they are continuing to develop churches through their own efforts, and some are engaging other people groups in their own countries and beyond. This trend is growing around the world in a variety of places, and we continue to give attention to how we can best steward and catalyze this reality around the world. In the end, people groups that have been previously reached with the gospel are now able

to reach their neighbors, and the church is multiplying with a view to reaching other unreached peoples with the gospel.

**IMB partners with a great cloud of witnesses around the world. IMB missionaries adhere to the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) and partner in church planting with other evangelicals who affirm that Jesus Christ is the sole source of salvation through faith in Him, personal faith and conversion with regeneration by the Holy Spirit, recognition of the inspired Word of God as the only basis for faith and Christian living, and commitment to biblical preaching and evangelism that brings others to faith in Jesus Christ.*

In 2016, IMB partnered with 140 Baptist Conventions and Baptist Unions around the world. These conventions and unions had 54,320 churches with 3,098,380 baptized members meeting in 2016; 1,815 new churches were planted in 2016. In addition to the number of churches and members, conventions and unions had 15,314 outreach groups with the intention of becoming a church, including 951 new outreach groups. Among American Peoples, the Baptist Convention of Eastern Cuba baptized 4,194 in 3,806 groups that met with 843 new groups formed and 429 new churches started.

When partners formerly engaged by IMB teams emerge and their churches begin to send out teams to engage others, IMB teams exit and move on to engage other unengaged and underserved unreached people groups and places.

Ministry Statement: Assist churches in sending and supporting Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers by enlisting, equipping, and enabling them to fulfill their calling.

During 2017, IMB partnered with thousands of Southern Baptist churches, assisted in the development of mission strategies, provided training for pastors and mission leaders, and helped churches strengthen field partnerships to see disciples made and healthy churches established among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God.

In 2017, Southern Baptist churches sent 142 new career/long-term missionaries and 178 new mid-term missionaries (terms less than three years) in partnership with IMB. Additional team associate missionaries were sent through newly developed pathways: Global Cities Initiative (GCI) and Direct Funded Option (DFO). Specifically, through GCI (launched in 2016), IMB sent 29 missionaries to join missionary teams in global cities around the world.

IMB missionary personnel continue to reflect the geographic and church-size diversity of the SBC with missionaries having been sent from all 50 states and churches in size from a few dozen to multiple thousands. IMB is working with partner churches to grow the number of missionaries sent from churches of various ethnicities. At the end of 2017, there were 257 Asian Americans, 17 African Americans, 62 Hispanic Americans, and 203 people from additional other ethnic backgrounds serving as IMB field personnel. (This information is based on self-identification to specific ethnicities by appointed personnel.)

Ministry Statement: Assist churches and partners to mobilize Southern Baptists to be involved in international missions through praying, giving, and going.

Southern Baptist churches responded to the challenge to play their part in helping the gospel resound to all nations through their gifts to the 2016 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering® for International Missions, which neared the \$155 million goal when the books closed on the annual offering. Southern Baptists gave \$153 million through the 2016-17 campaign to support International Mission Board field personnel.

Every dollar given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) supports nearly 3,600 Southern Baptist personnel on the mission field, who are sent by their local churches to evangelize, disciple, plant and multiply healthy churches, and train leaders among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God. The IMB continues to diligently work to streamline systems and structures and explore pathways for sending, all to better serve every Southern Baptist church.

In partnership with Woman's Missionary Union, IMB conducted the annual prayer emphasis – the Week of Prayer for International Missions – Dec. 3-10, 2017. The week of prayer focused on Southern Baptist work in Nepal, Japan, Mexico City, and London; among the Muslims of Russia and Syrian refugees; as well as the stories of new believers worldwide. IMB provided prepared stories, images and videos to enable Southern Baptist churches to engage their members in a concerted, unified effort to pray for IMB missionaries. Materials for promoting the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Week of Prayer were available for free download at IMB.org/LMCO.

In 2017, IMB President David Platt contributed to a convention-wide CP promotion campaign, NetCP. For the “thank you” phase of the campaign, targeting any church that participates in cooperative missions, Dr. Platt wrote a letter regarding how gifts impact international missions. For the “new church welcome” and “welcome” phase for churches new to giving to the CP, Dr. Platt wrote letters encouraging churches to continue their CP giving. For the “giving again” phase of the campaign, Dr. Platt wrote letters of appreciation for churches who have re-engaged in the vital SBC ecosystem sustained by CP gifts.

In an effort to relate more effectively with Southern Baptist churches and help them celebrate and pray for the sending of new missionaries, the IMB hosted four livestream Sending Celebrations in 2017. These digitally broadcast celebrations provided an avenue for every Southern Baptist to participate in and observe a service for newly appointed missionaries being sent out with the gospel from Southern Baptist churches. A highlight for many Southern Baptists was attending the June Sending Celebration, conducted during the SBC Annual Meeting in Phoenix.

In addition to the sending celebrations, the IMB Training equips churches with essential tools for raising up faithful cross-cultural workers. So much of missionary training is basic discipleship – loving and following Christ. IMB Training resources work with the discipleship efforts of local churches. Our materials and courses are practical, current, and culturally informed. We draw upon the experience and wisdom of practicing missionaries from around the world so that local churches can better fulfill God's calling at home. In addition to the [online training resources available for free download](#), the IMB Training Team conducted four Missions Intensives across the country in 2017, in Missouri, Texas, Florida, and Mississippi. These events are hosted in local SBC churches but are open to all SBC churches.

Ministry Statement: Assist churches in fulfilling their international missions task by developing global strategies, including human needs-based ministries, and providing leadership, administrative support, and financial accountability for implementation of these strategies.

2017 was an exciting year for Global Engagement as we completed a cycle of greatly encouraging Affinity General Meetings. Repeatedly, missionaries all over the globe report how the Lord is moving in and through their lives, even in the midst of turmoil in many regions. Refugees and internally displaced people have been engaged with the gospel in both well-known places in Europe and the Middle East and also in South America, Africa and Asia. Consistently we see unreached people come to the Lord in these situations.

Positive first fruits have been seen in the Global Cities Initiatives. Southern Baptists have joined our city teams via finding jobs and using their professions in unreached places. A steady stream of new Southern Baptist missionaries are joining our priceless, precious, critical core of fully funded workers around the globe. More than 3,500 Southern Baptist missionaries continue to be involved in gaining access and continuing evangelism and discipleship, planting and multiplying healthy churches, and leadership development. In many places, the missionary tasks are "owned" by our local partners, and the IMB is now helping them develop their own sending processes as we move to partnership with them around the global Great Commission task.

In 2017, the IMB, with the assistance of BGR, implemented 288 relief and development projects in 54 countries worldwide. A total of \$7.1 M was appropriated for these projects. Over 250,000 people received access to clean drinking water during this year. 90,000 received some form of healthcare treatment either after a disaster or as a part of a long-term program. Almost 54,000 received help with food related needs such as improved seeds for better nutrition or as recipients of an animal distribution project. Over 22,000 children received education and nutrition assistance so that they could attend school. And over 1,100 microenterprise/small business were started. Human needs ministries and strategies continue to play an important role for IMB in order to gain access to hard-to-reach peoples and places as well as fuel the spread of the gospel in many contexts around the world where spiritual and physical needs coincide.

Please join us in prayer, asking the Lord of the harvest to direct us into the part He wants us to play in the Great Commission task in the 21st century, a time which more people will live than in any other period of history.

2016 ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORT

Global summary reflecting work in 2015, reported during 2016

Sowing

How many people heard a **gospel witness**? **1,623,419**

How many people had an **opportunity to respond** to Christ? **875,132**

How many who received a gospel witness do you believe are **seekers**? **94,168**

Reaping

How many who heard a gospel witness became **new believers**? **87,287**

How many believers were **baptized**? **45,256**

Gathering

How many **groups** intended to become churches are meeting now? **12,761**

How many **new groups** intending to become churches are meeting now? **6,495**

How many **new churches** were formed? **4,550**

How many 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-generation **churches** are meeting now? **30,815**

How many 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-generation **churches** have **ceased to meet**? **2,355**

How many **baptized believers met** in groups or churches? **410,640**

Discipling

How many people met in on-going **Bible studies**? **212,487**

How many people are being personally **mentored**? **24,619**

Training

How many men have received **practical pastoral training**? **12,883**

How many people received **training to start new churches**? **28,270**

How many individuals received **advanced theological education**? **18,217**

How many believers were trained in **other training opportunities**? **86,691**

The International Mission Board's Annual Statistical Report (ASR) contains the most accurate information for the stated reporting period available at the time of publication. Figures reported are for work related to IMB personnel only, and since 2009 no longer include reports from partner conventions and unions. Major movements that are self-sustaining and require only occasional guidance and assistance from IMB personnel have been removed from the statistics this reporting year, which results in some statistics being somewhat different from earlier reporting periods.

After publication, the board's Global Research Department continues to process both new and revised reports as field personnel continually strive to provide the most accurate picture of the board's work and influence during the given reporting period. Field offices may submit new or revised reports for a variety of reasons, including typographical errors in the original report newly received or corrected information, clarification of reporting categories, etc.

After publication of the ASR, all analyses utilize the most current data for the reporting period available at that time, including all new and revised reports submitted since the ASR's publication. Thus, subsequent ASRs will reflect corrected data and may differ from previously published reports.

For current data regarding a given reporting period, including the latest revisions, contact the Global Research Information Center (GRIC@imb.org.)

Based on the listed Ministry Assignment, what opportunities or challenges do you see on the horizon from 2018 and beyond that would necessitate changes, or new directions, in how you are accomplishing the above Ministry Assignment?

Ministry Statement: Assist churches by evangelizing persons, planting Baptist churches, and nurturing church planting movements among all people groups outside the United States and Canada; and, provide specialized, defined and agreed upon assistance to the North American Mission Board in assisting churches to reach unreached and underserved people groups within the United States and Canada.

The current world population is increasing exponentially, and so is the lost population of the world. More and more people are moving into cities, presenting unique challenges in an increasingly urban world. In addition to these realities, sustainable access among some of the world's most hard-to-reach people groups remains difficult. With this in mind, we anticipate exploring new and innovative strategies as it relates to our creative access efforts around the world.

With the many challenges before us, IMB is developing new ways to partner effectively with Southern Baptist churches, national Baptist partners and other evangelicals to engage lostness around the world. We are growing in our efforts to train and equip churches and will continue to devote considerable attention through our Training Team to strengthen churches and the missionaries that they send through the IMB. In terms of mobilization, we are currently working to streamline and simplify sending pathways for qualified and equipped Southern Baptists to serve on missionary teams. We are continually refining, reevaluating, and reviewing our processes, procedures, and policies to ensure that we are serving churches to the best of our ability and in ways that are most effective for the accomplishment of the Great Commission.

Assist churches in sending and supporting Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers by enlisting, equipping, and enabling them to fulfill their calling.

The need is too urgent, the opportunities too great, and the stakes too high for any of us to settle for status quo in regard to the Great Commission. Right now, billions of people are being born and living their entire lives without hearing a clear gospel witness, millions of refugees around the world are risking (and many are losing) their lives in search for a better life, and

countless others will join them in an eternal hell separated from God if they do not repent of their sin and trust in Christ for salvation. God has entrusted Southern Baptists with significant resources, a plethora of gifts and talents, and most importantly the good news of the gospel to join God in His mission to ransom a people from every nation, tribe, and tongue. Therefore, we must explore new strategies, systems, and structures as the IMB and the SBC if we want to see more missionaries sent from Southern Baptist churches to engage lostness around the world. We are exploring and considering all the possible ways that this can best be done through the IMB alongside every entity in the SBC.

Assist churches and partners to mobilize Southern Baptists to be involved in international missions through praying, giving, and going.

As noted above, we must improve and grow in our communication with SBC churches as we seek to make them aware of the realities of the unreached as well inform and challenge them that they might join in the work that God is doing through the IMB around the world. One area of particular focus in the year ahead continues to be strengthening relationships with Southern Baptist pastors and churches. A team leader will be hired for the newly formed Mobilization Church Relations Team in 2018. We want every Southern Baptist pastor to know how their church can partner with the IMB through praying, giving, going, and sending. We want to provide simple on-ramps for churches who want to go deeper in partnership with the IMB. Our Mobilization Team will be working to strengthen relationships, provide information through more avenues and channels, and ensure that we are communicating and making Southern Baptists aware of all the ways they can partner and work directly with the IMB.

Assist churches in fulfilling their international missions task by developing global strategies, including human needs-based ministries, and providing leadership, administrative support, and financial accountability for implementation of these strategies.

We must continue to discover the very best ways to effectively use limited resources. The need for effective human needs ministries that integrate proclamation of the gospel only increases with every conflict, war, and natural disaster in the world. We want to improve the awareness of Southern Baptists as it relates to opportunities to address human needs in 2018. Baptist Global Response (BGR) is a key partner for IMB when it comes to human needs ministry around the world, and we hope to provide more communication and ways for Southern Baptists to work in and through BGR to address human needs around the world. We must increase resources, and use those resources in consistently effective ways, both in reducing earthly suffering, and in bringing the words of truth in Christ to those who so desperately need to hear that they might be saved from eternal separation from God.