

SBCAL



Strengthen. Encourage. Partner.

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONFERENCE OF
ASSOCIATIONAL LEADERS (SBCAL)**

Vision Team Report

Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders Vision Team Report

Purpose of the Vision Team: To offer ways to make the Proficiencies and Conclusions of the 2018 Study Team Report normative and widely accessible, and to prepare SBCAL to meet increased expectations and ministry opportunities.

Vision Team Members:

Bob Lowman, AMS, Charlotte, NC, Leader
Ray Gentry, SBCAL Executive Director, Ex-Officio
Stan Albright, Pastor, FBC Oxford, AL
Mark Dance, LifeWay Pastors, Nashville, TN
Dale Fisher, AMS, Lenoir, NC
Steve Holt, Tennessee Baptist Mission Board State AMS, Nashville, TN
Jason Lowe, Bivo AMS/Executive Pastor of FBC Pikeville, KY
Mark Snowden, AMS, Cincinnati, OH
David Stokes, AMS, Lexington, KY
Rick Wheeler, AMS, Jacksonville, FL
Tony Wolfe, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention State AMS, Dallas, TX
Sherry Eason, Recording Secretary, San Antonio, TX

Reports and Recommendations

At the initial meeting it was decided that having three sub-teams would be the best method for doing the needed research and accomplishing the goals in a timely manner. Each sub-team had its own meetings, and then reported to the Vision Team. All items have been approved by the full Vision Team.

1. Associational Leader Qualifications/Succession Planning

Sub-team One: Dale Fisher, Lenoir, NC, Leader; Stan Albright, Oxford, AL; Jason Lowe, Pikeville, KY; Bob Lowman, Charlotte, NC; Ray Gentry, McDonough, GA, Ex-officio

Sub-team One gathered and considered information on guidelines to help in the areas of Associational Mission Strategist (AMS) Search Committees, AMS Coaching/Peer Learning, and AMS Succession Planning. These areas surfaced as associational needs in the SBCAL Study Team Report approved in Dallas, Texas in June 2018.

Associational Mission Strategist Search Committees

Jason Lowe took the lead and edited *AMS Search Committee Guidelines*. His work was largely adapted from the NAMB *LeaderSearch* document. He updated language, changed titles, and adapted information to meet current needs. The material consists of five phases that include Setup, Study, Search, Select and Support. NAMB was consulted and graciously gave us permission to adapt their material.

Associational Mission Strategist Coaching/Peer Learning

Bob Lowman researched several options for coaching. Bob and Ray Gentry eventually communicated with Tom Wood, co-author of *Gospel Coach*, and President of Church Multiplication Ministries. The Gospel-centered approach of this model impressed our sub-team.

We recommend that SBCAL partner with Dr. Tom Wood and Church Multiplication Ministries to provide coaching and coach training for associational leaders. This approach is a Gospel-centered model, helping those practicing it to stay focused on our primary task of making disciples. It is a blend of coaching and mentoring. While there are other good coaching models, we believe the Gospel Coach approach will serve SBCAL and AMSs very well.

The first phase is to mobilize a group of associational leaders who will take part in the Gospel Coach training Fall 2019, thus beginning the process of preparation to coach and to train coaches. Our first priority is to help AMSs learn these coaching methods so that we can help one another in associational ministry. We will also be able to use this in our own associations, helping pastors and leaders in coaching relationships.

The initial training session for those wanting to be Certified Gospel Coach Trainers will be Monday-Wednesday, September 23-25, 2019, at a hotel near the Atlanta airport. The number of participants for this session will be 18 to 24. The training event will be followed by six trihort sessions where groups of three trainees connect and learn together. Following these sessions, the participants can then take part in a Continue Workshop in which certification for teaching coaching happens.

A second certification training for 18-24 others will be in early 2020, date to be announced.

The cost for the certification training is \$1,500, payable in two installments over two calendar years. This price includes all training, materials (book & training manual), hotel room, and meals/snacks, six trihort sessions, and one Continue Workshop. Church Multiplication Ministries will handle registration with an SBCAL page on their website. The link to sign up for either training opportunity will be ready for publication in our newsletter in mid-May.

After SBCAL has a group of its own certified Gospel Coach Trainers, we will then be able to multiply the process and offer training for AMSs by AMSs starting sometime next year. Ray is excited to announce that Bob Lowman has agreed to be the SBCAL Gospel Coach Coordinator.

Associational Mission Strategist Succession Planning

Bob Lowman has prepared a document on *Associational Mission Strategist Succession Planning*. Bob focuses on the need to develop a leadership pipeline. This involves the development of relationships that provide training, mentoring, and coaching in regards to future leadership. In addition, he emphasizes the need for an emergency succession plan in the event of sudden illness, death, or dismissal of an AMS. Will Heath, who has been identified as one of the best resources on succession planning, has given Bob permission to include two of his articles in the document: *Five Critical Conversations in Succession Planning* and *Five Bible Truths to Help You in Succession Planning*.

2. Associational Leader Proficiencies/Professional Development Process

Sub-team Two: Rick Wheeler, Jacksonville, FL, Leader; Mark Snowden, Cincinnati, OH; Mark Dance, LifeWay, Nashville, TN; Ray Gentry, McDonough, GA, Ex-officio

Sub-team Two focused on the development of a comprehensive document that will further clarify and define the various roles of an Associational Mission Strategist. We enlisted 17 practitioners and asked each one to compose a 1000-word overview of one of the proficiencies. This document will be made available to the larger SBCAL family through a link on our website and on a flash drive at the Birmingham Annual Conference. Plans are underway to expand these overviews into a chapter on each proficiency, which will be a major portion of a new book on effective associations to be edited by Dr. Ray Gentry and published in 2020.

Additionally, we plan to record video presentations of each proficiency to be used for coaching and training of associational leaders. We anticipate completion of this project within the next 6-12 months. We are reviewing several options to platform this video resource and make it available to seminaries, state conventions and local associations.

We continue to recommend that SBCAL be the central hub of advocacy and communication between associational leaders and the greater SBC family, since we are the largest associational network. Having a single touch point in SBC life to access associational related topics serves Associational Mission Strategists, SBC entities, and state conventions well. We recommend that SBCAL remain closely tied and supportive of other associational groups such as Associations in Mega Cities (AIM), Network of Baptist Associations (NOBA), and Century Association Network (CAN).

Each of the leaders below completed a 1000-word paper about that Proficiency, and is now working on expanding it into a chapter in the upcoming book.

Strategic Proficiencies

- A) Vision Caster - Ray Gentry, GA
- B) Strategist - Rick Wheeler, FL
- C) Consultant - David Bowman, TX
- D) Leadership Multiplier - Matthew Gullion, IN
- E) Contextual Understanding - Josh Ellis, TX
- F) Good Communicator - Mark Snowden, OH

Foundational Proficiencies

- A) Calling - Stan Albright, AL
- B) Person of Character - Dale Fisher, NC
- C) Spiritually Mature - Johnny Rumbough, SC
- D) Commitment to Learning - Stephen Parks, TX
- E) A Leader of Leaders - Tom Billings, TX
- F) Trustworthy - Mike Pennington, TN

Relational Proficiencies

- A) Emotionally Intelligent (EQ) - Brian Nall, FL
- B) Active Listener - Bob Lowman, NC

- C) Supportive Coach - Jim Breeden, MO
- D) Authentically Vulnerable - Todd Robertson, KY
- E) Vocal Encourager - Bob Dean, TX

3. The Need for SBCAL to be a Strong Voice for Associational Missions

Sub-team Three: David Stokes, Lexington, KY, Leader; Steve Holt, TBC, Nashville, TN; Tony Wolfe, SBTC, Grapevine, TX; and Ray Gentry, McDonough, GA, Ex-officio

We want to celebrate the influence and impact the SBCAL has had on the work of associations, AMSs, and the Southern Baptist Convention. It is the conclusion of Sub-team Three that our network has increased its effectiveness and influence among Southern Baptists over the last few years. In addition, we believe SBCAL is positioned to champion the importance of the ministry of associations, as well as to help define and shape the future work of AMSs and associations. The possibility of changing our name was considered at length, but due to the trajectory of our network, the growing recognition of SBCAL in SBC life, and the desire to be a network that welcomes all advocates of associational ministry, we decided it best to keep our present name.

To help strengthen the work of our network, we reviewed and recommended changes to our Constitution and Bylaws. The changes include revising our purpose, allowing for flexibility of the size of the Executive Team, allowance for additional SBC entities - such as seminaries - to be represented on the Executive Team if they contribute at least \$1,000 each budget year, changing the title of the Conference Planning Team to the Administrative Team, streamlining our structure, and changing the title of the Executive Director to President/CEO. We believe these changes give the flexibility and proactiveness needed to allow SBCAL to continue to be the foremost organization in SBC life on behalf of Associational Mission Strategists and associations.

We do, however, recognize some challenges ahead for our network.

Two of those challenges are:

1. The need for a broader financial base.
2. The demands on our present staff.

We are a network that benefits from a staff whose hours far exceed their pay. We want to thank our staff for serving us so well and sacrificially, but we also want to acknowledge that it may not be sustainable long-term.

Because of SBCAL's desire to...

- be active throughout the year in the areas of equipping, encouraging and networking
- own the associational narrative in the SBC
- become known as the expert on associations and associational leadership in the SBC, and to offer that expertise to ministry partners
- listen and learn how to be better leaders
- leverage our expertise and assist our SBC and state partners in developing support, training, and awareness of associations
- stimulate discussion about the essential value of associational missions and ministry

SBCAL should prayerfully seek ways to identify additional financial resources, maximize current ones, and invest those resources in staffing SBCAL so that it will allow our network to maximize its influence and impact.

Respectfully submitted,

SBCAL Vision Team

Dr. Bob Lowman, Leader

May 2, 2019