



20
19

ANNUAL
REPORT

FLORIDA BAPTISTS ARE STILL COMMITTED TO RELEASING MORE RESOURCES TO MINISTRY OUTSIDE THE STATE OF FLORIDA.

That the GOSPEL will be shared + That LIVES will be transformed + That GOD'S KINGDOM will be expanded

TOGETHER we have a greater reach than we ever could alone

51%

to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program

49%

to the Florida Baptist Convention Cooperative Program

GIVING AWAY MORE THAN WE KEEP

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 2 | COOPERATIVE PROGRAM | 12 | PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS |
| 3 | MISSIONS | 13 | WOMEN'S MISSIONS & MINISTRIES |
| 4 | MISSION OFFERINGS | 14 | COMMUNITY MINISTRIES |
| 6 | CHURCH GROWTH | 16 | DISASTER RELIEF |
| 7 | REGIONAL INVESTMENT | 17 | MIGRANT MINISTRIES |
| 8 | FAMILY GATHERING | 18 | MULTICULTURAL |
| 10 | BAPTISMS | 20 | NEXT GENERATION |



PRAISE THE LORD!

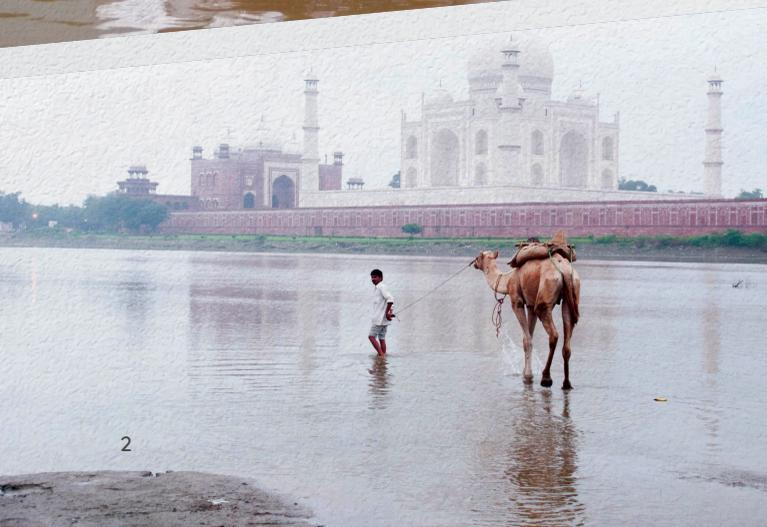
It is my joy to celebrate with you just a few ways that Florida Baptists have propelled missions across our state and around the world. This annual report is a celebration of what God is doing through the great network of churches who comprise the Florida Baptist Convention. Our annual report is never intended to be a moment where we say “look what we did”—rather it is an opportunity to gather life changing stories and statistics that capture what God is doing among us. This report is your report; you are part of this story. Each time your church generously gives through the Cooperative Program, you continue to be a participant in these mission endeavors.

It can be easy to forget the impact a few dollars can make. In these pages you will read stories of how a \$1 gift was an answer to prayer, how a few dollars spent on lunch helped spread the Gospel on a college campus and how a week of ministry with the Mobile Dental Clinic helped to revitalize a church. It is so easy for these stories to get lost when you look at multi-million-dollar budgets. Your church’s compassion and generosity are making a difference each and every day through simple investments in missions. To the churches who faithfully give through the Cooperative Program—I say thank you. To those of you who might look through this annual report simply wondering what the Cooperative Program is all about—I pray that you will be stirred with compassion and generosity and join fellow Florida Baptists in propelling missions from your church to the ends of the earth.

Executive Director—Treasurer

\$29,396,356

Total CP gifts from Florida Baptist churches through the Cooperative Program



2019 COOPERATIVE PROGRAM GIVING

\$14,404,215

Total Portion of CP receipts utilized in Florida

- Plant, revitalize, strengthen churches
- Meet community needs
- Reach the next generation
- Provide compassionate care

\$1,650,000

to the Baptist College of Florida

\$1,140,000

to Florida Baptist Children's Home

\$200,000

to Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center

Missions

imb INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

\$13,216,042

given by Florida Baptist Churches to International Missions through CP and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

13,898 churches planted overseas

3,692 IMB missionaries

847 people groups engaged by IMB personnel

18,428 pastors trained overseas

3,176 unreached people groups remain to hear the Gospel



North American Mission Board

\$5,880,703

given by Florida Baptist Churches to North American Missions through CP and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

5,200+ Southern Baptist missionaries serving in North America

246,442 baptisms in SBC

624 new churches planted in North America





MAGUIRE STATE MISSION OFFERING

SEND NETWORK FLORIDA

The SEND Network Florida partnership allows for the entire state of Florida to be included as a part of the SEND City emphasis. Any church in Florida has access to the resources of the Florida Baptist Convention and the North American Mission Board (50/50 support partnership) for church planting.

The entire Maguire State Mission Offering supports SEND Network Florida. As you give generously to the Maguire State Mission Offering, you and your church are supporting church planting all across Florida.

RECEIPTS FROM FLORIDA BAPTISTS

\$642,345

100% of your donations support church planting all across Florida



CHURCHES PARTICIPATING

538



Almost
800 million

people around the world live
with constant hunger

1 in 6 in North
America are undernourished

Southern Baptist organizations
are working together through
hunger relief to meet needs
and see lives transformed.

HUNGER RELIEF OFFERING

YOU GAVE

\$127,848

TO GLOBAL HUNGER RELIEF

100% of your donations go toward
hunger needs in Florida,
nationally and beyond

COALITION OF CHURCHES RESPOND TO THE VILLAGES' EXPLOSIVE GROWTH

THE VILLAGES—A collaborative church planting effort is currently underway at The Villages in Central Florida, deemed by the U.S. Census Bureau as the country's fastest growing metropolitan area.

Called the Kingdom Coalition, this local effort is spearheaded by First Baptist Church in The Villages. Other coalition churches are First Baptist Church in Bushnell; First Baptist Church in Webster; First Baptist Church in Oxford; Immanuel Baptist Church in The Villages; and Adamsville Baptist Church.

"We've been talking and praying about how to effectively reach out to that area of The Villages that is now beginning to explode south of the turnpike," said Ronnie Walker, ministry consultant at First Baptist Church of The Villages. "We recognized that this is an opportunity for a number of churches and entities to come together to make a collaborative effort—but we're calling it a coalition."

"Rather than looking to launch with a core group, we're starting backwards" with weekly Bible studies, said Kent McDowell, who is serving as a missionary of the coalition. "We want to start small and grow organically and missionally with emphasis on people who are disconnected from church and people who are not yet Christians."

Their vision statement: A church without walls, a kingdom without borders and a God without limits.

"We're going to try to live that out in the community as we go at it together," said McDowell, who now lives in The Villages with his wife, Rachel. The couple is experienced in organic church planting as former missionaries with the International Mission Board.

The Kingdom Coalition sees the explosive growth occurring in The Villages as a great opportunity for reaching people for Christ. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of The Villages grew from 93,420 in 2010 to 128,754 in 2018, an increase of

about 38 percent. In the southern part of The Villages in Sumter County an estimated 89,000 homes are planned for the area over the next 20 years, with about 4,000 new homes being built each year.

"We're on the wave of this growing area," said McDowell. "Ten years from now we're going to be in the middle of The Villages rather than in the southern edge. It's just phenomenal."

In January, students from Baptist College of Florida spent a week in the area completing a variety of tasks including prayerwalking in The Villages, feeding the homeless in Bushnell, painting at First Baptist Church in Oxford and more.

"They got a big mixture of experiences and opportunities," McDowell said. "As we get further along and deepen relationships here, we'll have more and more opportunities to get these folks into our area."

—David Moore

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

2018—2019 REPORT ON NEW CONVENTION CHURCHES

BREVARD

Iglesia Bautista Eau Gallie
Iglesia Bautista Bethesda

CHURCH AT LARGE

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Community Baptist Church
Mercy Fellowship

GADSDEN COUNTY

New Destiny Christian Church

GREATER ORLANDO

Eglise Baptiste Des
Rachetes De Sion
Remnant Church

GULF STREAM

Hope Life Ministry Baptist Church
Iglesia La Familia De Dios
New Life Cathedral
Siloam Evangelical Church
of Jesus Christ

Tabernacle De La Foi

Transformation Evangelical Church

JACKSONVILLE

Love Gave Baptist Church

LAKE COUNTY

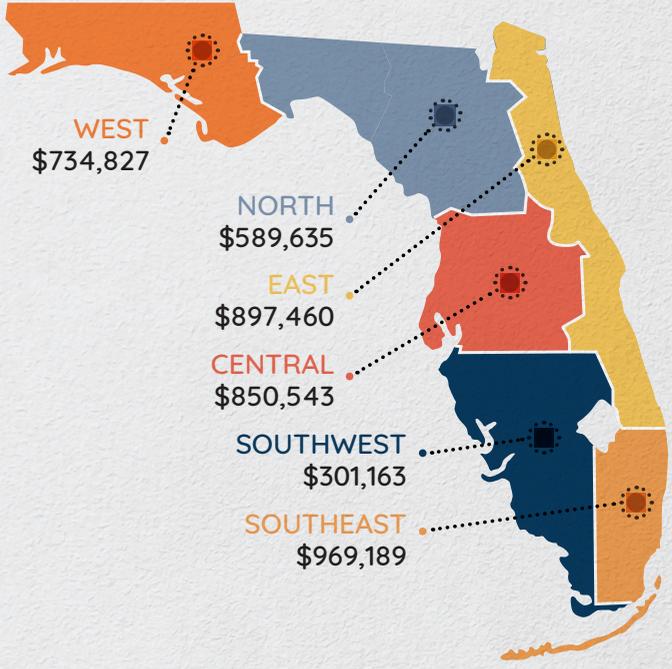
Liberty Baptist Church



REGIONAL INVESTMENT

\$4,342,817

2019 Florida Baptist Convention Partnership
Distribution of Resources through Churches and
Associations



MIAMI

- Iglesia Jesus Para Todos
- God's Grace of Worship
- St. Andrew Missionary Baptist Church
- Iglesia Bautista Saron
- Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church
- Village Church
- Pasos De Fe Inc

NEW RIVER

- Cornerstone Baptist Church

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

- Salt Church of Gainesville

OKALOOSA

- Connect Church

PALM BEACH

- City View Church Inc
- Vietnamese Community Church

RIDGE

- Oasis Church
- Iglesia Bautista Nuevo Amanecer

ROYAL PALM

- New Beginnings Ministries of Naples

SANTA ROSA

- The Point Church SBC

SEMINOLE

- Bansok Korean Church of Orlando
- New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

SOUTH FLORIDA

- Great Commission Worship Center
- University Church

TAMPA BAY

- New City Church
- No Greater Love Baptist Church
- Living Faith Bible Fellowship



STATE CONVENTION



November 8-10, 2020

**LAKES CHURCH
LAKELAND**

Join us for an intentional time of encouragement, perspective, prayer and worship.

Every November we gather together as the family of Florida Baptists. We come together as one to not only celebrate what God is doing across our state—from Pensacola to Key West and everywhere in between—but also to encourage and strengthen one another. While every pastor, church leader and church member face unique challenges in diverse ministry contexts, we are united for the common cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We truly are better together than we ever could be alone.

**STATE CONVENTION IN 2019
WE GATHERED:**

 **2,241** TOTAL ATTENDANCE

 **1,180** MESSENGERS

 **1,061** VISITORS

 **531** CHURCHES



BLACK MULTICULTURAL

GOSPEL UNITES DIVERSE FLORIDA BAPTISTS

The childhood experiences of Patrick Coats left an indelible mark. A native of Miami, Coats, Florida Baptists' black multicultural church catalyst, was raised by his grandfather, Joe Coats, the first African American pastor to affiliate with the Florida Baptist Convention in 1968.

The younger Coats has fond childhood memories of racial unity among Florida Baptists.

Those memories, he said, are "part of the reason why I identify with Southern Baptist Convention life today."

Still, today's world is vastly different from the world in which he grew up. Today, Coats is seeing renewed unity among diverse Florida Baptists, with its 206 African American churches and 116 multi-ethnic churches.

"It has been great to see God produce an organic sense of unity and inclusion among our churches in Florida," he said.

Elijah Simmons, pastor of Norwood Community Church

in Jacksonville, agreed, saying that Florida Baptists' 2019 annual meeting in Orlando demonstrated "a beautiful picture of unity" during times of worship and fellowship.

Simmons and Coats both believe the key to such unity is the gospel. "I know the gospel unites us. It breaks down walls and barriers and brings us together in love," said Coats.

"Focusing on the gospel and wanting to see people saved fuels the unity," Simmons explained.

Jerome Symonette, pastor of Restoring Grace Community Church in Ft. Lauderdale, said the leadership of Erik Cummings, Florida Baptist State Convention president and pastor of New Life Baptist Church of Carol City, along with Tommy Green, Florida Baptists' executive director—treasurer, have contributed to the spirit of harmony.

"Unity is their heart," he said, "and it is reflective of the

relationship we have with Christ and ... with each other. It is both horizontal and vertical."

Such unity "is very important to our witness. It gives us credibility," said Jon Matthews, pastor of New Philadelphia Ministries in St. Petersburg and missional strategist for the Suncoast Baptist Association.

"When we are not segregated in our witness, it says love. It says Jesus is real—real in our hearts."

Unity doesn't mean uniformity. "The message never changes," Coats explained, "but methods and practices are impacted by context and culture." It is "profitable," he said, to have training conferences that address a church's culture and local context.

"The key is to not allow the cultural arm to become the only home for engagement, but only one of many ways to experience life together—in unity—as Florida Baptists."

—Margaret Colson



BAPTISMS REPORTED BY
FLORIDA BAPTIST CHURCHES

1,312

PRAY GIVE GO

YOUR COMPASSION TO
PRAY

PLUS YOUR GENEROSITY TO
GIVE

PROPELS OUR PARTNERING
MISSIONARIES TO



ACROSS THE STREETS IN YOUR
COMMUNITIES AND ACROSS THE WORLD



PARTNERSHIPS WITH



WC Western Cuba

WV West Virginia

H Haiti

EC Eastern Cuba

M Montreal

VI US Virgin Islands

CUBAN WOMEN BLESSED WITH THE WORD AND SCISSORS

HAVANA, CUBA—A simple gift of a pair of scissors was an answered prayer for a 90-year-old Cuban Baptist woman.

“The one pair of scissors she had for many, many years had finally just worn out,” said Cindy Bradley. “She didn’t know how she was going to be able to afford to get another pair.”

“So, she prayed and asked God to provide—and He did. She was so thankful.”

The \$1 pair of scissors was a gift from Florida Baptists, delivered by a group of women who traveled to Cuba to lead a women’s retreat in November.

Bradley, Florida Baptists’ Women’s Missions and Ministries catalyst, was accompanied by former International Mission Board Missionary Teresa Bass, a member of Bell Shoals Baptist Church’s Palm River Campus, and Loida Reyes, a ministry assistant with the Florida Convention. Reyes, a member of Iglesia Bautista Neptune in Jacksonville, had lived in Cuba until she was 20 and translated for the Cuban women.

While purchasing a pair of scissors is a routine experience for most Florida women, it is a precious treasure for women in Cuba, said Bass.

“We don’t understand that because here we get what we need when we

need. There things are hard to find even when you have the money.”

But more than that, she added, Cubans are focused on everyday living and their priorities are food and clothes—scissors are a luxury.

Nearly 250 women were blessed with much needed supplies and spiritual encouragement during the retreat held at Campamento Bautista (Baptist Camp) in Yumurí, Matanzas, located about 62 miles east of Havana.

The retreat’s theme, “Being Filled with the Holy Spirit” based on Ephesians 5:18b, was fleshed out in large groups and teaching sessions, Bible studies and worship sessions, as well as arts and craft classes.

Yudy Moreno, vice-president of Women’s Missions and Ministries for the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba, said the retreat was a “beautiful time where all the women waiting on an answer to a petition to God, were able to come together at the throne of God.”

During the afternoons the Florida women led their Cuban sisters in Christ in making crafts. The first craft created was a prayer box decorated with the names of the people in need of prayer. The second craft was a cross-shaped ornament out of craft foam.

“The activities required a lot of cutting, so we brought scissors

with us—250 pairs of scissors,” said Bradley.

While she originally “prayed and debated” about carrying so many pairs of scissors through Cuban customs, “in the end I felt strongly impressed to take enough scissors for every woman to receive a pair,” Bradley said. “Our little team had several people praying for us and we asked them to pray those scissors through customs...and they did.”

At the end of the day’s craft time, the women were told they could keep the scissors to which they responded with claps and shouts of joy “like they had been given a gift of tremendous value,” recounted Bradley.

Florida Baptist “gifts through the Cooperative Program helped to purchase those scissors and the other supplies we took with us,” said Bradley.

“Thank you for partnering with us to provide a moment of joy for those women. Also thank you for partnering with us as we encouraged and prayed with their leadership team and many of the women who attended the retreat.”

—Keila Diaz

WOMEN'S MISSIONS & MINISTRIES



1,631

Organizations serve Florida Baptist churches

MISSIONS EDUCATION

763

Women lead age-level missions education in their church

679

Attended Haitian Women’s Retreat

605

Attended Hispanic Women’s Retreat



COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH LIVES ON MISSION THROUGH MOBILE DENTAL UNIT

ST. AUGUSTINE—The extraction of 96 teeth from 71 needy patients may have highlighted the week when Moultrie Baptist Church in St. Augustine hosted the Florida Baptist Mobile Dental Unit this past summer, but the good will resulting from that ministry continues to reverberate in the community.

“For a church who has really struggled in the past, the dental clinic is the best positive publicity that we have had in the last five years at least,” said Pastor Johnny Weldon, as he thanked Florida Baptists “for helping us make a real difference in our community.

“The 96 teeth that were pulled were wonderful, but the uptick to the heartbeat of the church and what the community noticed us for is deeply refreshing to Moultrie.”

The congregation discovered its newfound standing in the community when the church started evangelism training and

visitation in the fall. As part of the effort, the church promoted a free flu shot clinic designed to invite their neighbors to church, share the gospel and give away clothes.

Weldon admits they likely would not have hosted the flu shot clinic had they not sponsored the mobile dental unit before and caught the “vision for it.” Church members were already trained and “stoked,” he said.

“We went to four different neighborhoods that are very close to us. We made 16 contacts,” promoting Moultrie Baptist and the Free Flu Shot Clinic, he said.

“It was easy,” he said. “Want to know why? Because as soon as we told them who we were, they said, ‘Yeah, I saw the sign. You guys are the ones that ran that free dental clinic thing.’”

“That happened to us nine times. None of those people went to the clinic, but they knew what we

were doing from the signs and promotions alone.”

The Florida Baptist Mobile Dental Unit is a renovated state of the art bus that contains treatment rooms and equipment needed for basic dentistry. The bus, staffed by volunteer dentists and dental assistants, travels across the state as a ministry tool for local churches and associations to provide a ministry of free dental care.

Weldon, who has served the church since 2018, said the congregation “absolutely loved working together for the gospel, to help the people of St. Johns County.

“They believe that it is time for Moultrie be a church of love . . . to be living on mission together for the sake of the gospel, and not just survive, but thrive.”

—Barbara Denman

COMMUNITY



SEAPORTS

7 Seaport ministries of the Florida Baptist churches and associations have reached thousands of seafarers that come into our ports



HOSPITALITY

126.1 million visitors come to Florida annually

118.1 million domestic visitors

10.8 million overseas visitors

3.5 million Canadians

Florida continues to be a huge mission field. We can touch the whole world with the gospel.



MOBILE DENTAL UNIT

27 Churches and **8** Associations hosted the Florida Baptist MDU

1,960 Patients treated

80 Professions of faith

96 Other spiritual decisions

\$922,770 Value of services provided

861 Fillings **1,929** Extractions **1,370** Evangelistic Encounters

865 Church Volunteers **180** Dentists Volunteered



ENGLISH LANGUAGE MISSIONS

39 churches offer English as Second Language ministries

Ministries range from small (20 students) to very large (500) students. Many churches include Citizenship Classes within their ESL Ministry.



HUNGER OUTREACH

78 Florida churches and

35 Associations received hunger funds

189,194 Individuals fed

8,100 Volunteers

34,099 Evangelism Encounters

\$92,168 Distributed to Florida churches;

1,562 Professions of Faith **484** Baptisms



HEALTHCARE

22 Medical Clinics **11** Dental Clinics as Florida Baptist churches and associations serve as the healing hands of God

\$43,425 Distributed to churches providing assistance to the clinics



CHAPLAINCY

900+ Chaplains serve in the Florida Baptist Chaplains Network



DISASTER RELIEF

FLORIDA DISASTER RELIEF VOLUNTEERS POISED TO RESPOND

LAKELAND—When Tropical Storm Nestor hit the Florida Peninsula in October 2019, spawning an EF-2 tornado that tore through Polk County—Florida Baptist Disaster Relief (FLDR) was there.

When Category 5 Hurricane Michael devastated dozens of Florida Panhandle beachfront communities and rural towns in October 2018—FLDR was there.

When disasters—large or small—strike Florida’s villages, towns, cities and beaches—FLDR will be there.

It’s a promise made by more than 8,000 trained volunteers of diverse capabilities who are prepared to respond when disaster strikes. FLDR stands ready to give love, help, hope and healing in the greatest time of need. And as a result, many will come to know Christ.

“It is vital that we stay sensitive to the opportunities around us to minister to people in times of disaster, and that we value our strength when we work together through our disaster relief ministries,” explained Delton Beall, FLDR state director.

“FLDR is designed to be local church led and inspired to meet whatever the crisis is in that church’s community. Whether it be a flashflood, local thunderstorm or busted hot-water heater, to a person—that is their disaster.”

Billy Ray, local evangelism pastor at Lakes Church (formerly Church at the Mall) in Lakeland, recalled that in early 2019 their congregation was encouraged to attend training for disaster relief volunteers.

“Many people trained. Several on our team took the assessment training and we purchased a trailer and equipment,” said Ray.

It would be only six months later, when the Nestor spawned tornado struck their own community, that these volunteers would be called upon to respond.

The tornado that struck Polk County with winds up to 120 mph damaged 1,500 homes. Fifty homes were condemned.

Volunteers from Lakes Church and another local church initially were staged at Mt. Tabor Baptist Church in Lakeland, which also

was heavily damaged. “Within a day we mobilized crews and began working with church members on their homes. Chaplains and assessors dispersed through the community.”

Teams cleared trees from atop cars, buildings and roads, and witnessed five professions of faith.

Volunteers often heard survivors tell amazing stories of how, “God protected them; there were no deaths,” Ray said.

To help following a disaster, all volunteers must be trained and credentialed in a specific area of ministry.

These include feeding; clean up and recovery; emergency response; temporary childcare; emotional and spiritual care; chaplaincy; and administrative and logistical support.

In 2019 alone, FLDR trained 2,000 volunteers. Volunteers from Lakes Church will bear witness—the time to prepare and train is now, before disaster strikes.

—Brandi Radella



MIGRANT MINISTRIES

A THIRST FOR HOPE GROWS MORE SEMINARIES IN THE STATE

OKEECHOBEE—As many as 150,000 to 200,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers and their families flow through Florida each year, performing manual labor in the state’s agricultural fields—planting and picking fruits, vegetables and tropical foliage plants.

Life is challenging for these men and women as they work in difficult circumstances, including hard labor, long hours and living in substandard housing.

Across the years, in a search of normalcy, many migrant families have put down roots in the state’s agrarian communities.

There is a thirst for hope among these migrants that can only be filled by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Florida Baptists are committed to reaching these often forgotten farm workers with the Good News.

The Convention’s Migrant Ministries come alongside local churches to help them discover and implement new avenues to reach migrant farm laborers and their families with the gospel.

This past year, 632 migrant workers and their family members have made professions of faith through an array of ministries, including 92 migrant congregations across the state, sponsoring 13 block parties and providing 1,474 backpacks for migrant children.

But ministries to migrants remains challenging and the need for training leaders is great, according to Misael Castillo, migrant ministries catalyst.

The Convention has developed a network of six theological

programs in the state, five in Cuba, and one in Mexico where migrant pastors are learning to share the Gospel.

“Our goal is to train people, equip them to serve in their local church,” says Castillo. “God makes the call and our job is to equip the people to do a better job.”

Castillo recalls a conversation with potential student, Tomas. “I explained to him that we don’t give credits in this seminary.”

Tomas replied, “I don’t even know what that is.”

Then the student added, “You can keep the diploma and the credits. All I’m here for is to know more about the Bible and how to share the Gospel with my family and friends in Guatemala.”

Oscar Rojas, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Lake Saunders and regional seminary director, is overjoyed to see so many getting trained to share the Gospel.

“Many have gone back to their home countries and started churches and others who have stayed have launched ministries from their home churches to reach migrants for Christ,” he said,

“It is so great to have more people trained for ministry,” he adds.

Ministry to migrant communities is difficult because of the constant movement of people, but training migrants to reach migrants is a step in the right direction, said Castillo.

—Keila Diaz

HAITIAN YOUTH CAMP OFFERS REFUGE FOR NEXT GENERATION

LEESBURG—As Florida Baptist Haitian churches struggle to reach and disciple their next generation, the annual Haitian Youth and Family Camp has become refuge where youth and young adults can be equipped and challenged in a spiritually relevant environment.

This past year’s R.I.S.E and Shine Spiritual Camp, held June 21-24 at Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center, drew 815 youth from 31 Haitian churches across the state. The camp was a sanctuary where no one was ashamed to be vulnerable at the feet of the Lord.

During the week, these students “worshipped in their heart language among peers without feeling criticized or judged,” said John Voltaire, Haitian church catalyst for the Florida Baptist Convention.

The camp provided worship services and break-out sessions that encouraged the youth in their daily walk with the Lord. As a result, dozens of the youth made professions of faiths and rededicated their lives to Christ every night.

At the conclusion of the week, a class was held for new believers

who wanted to be baptized where they learned about salvation, the importance of water baptism and church membership. After receiving permission from their parents and pastors, the new believers were baptized at the Lake Yale swimming pool.

“It is always a moving feeling to see over 100 kids accompany the kids who are walking over to the pool for water baptism to publicly confess their faith in Jesus Christ,” said Voltaire. After the baptism, the students receive a baptism certificate and participate in the Lord Supper.



HISPANIC BAPTISTS UNITED IN REACHING FLORIDA

ORLANDO—A record number of nearly 1,000 Hispanic Baptists from throughout the Sunshine State gathered Sunday, Nov. 11, for the Hispanic Baptist Celebration, held in conjunction with the 2019 annual meeting of the Florida Baptist State Convention (FBSC) at First Baptist Church in Orlando.

The celebratory gathering demonstrated how Hispanic churches and pastors are united in Christ for the purpose of reaching Florida and beyond for the Kingdom of God.

“Pastors, no matter what your calling is, you can join the cause of reaching Florida for Christ,” said Martin Vargas, pastor of Iglesia Real in Hollywood in his message.

Focusing on Neh. 12:1, Vargas called on pastors to raise up leaders who would raise the bar in service to the Lord and challenged them to work together to reach not just their communities, but the entire state and beyond.

During the past year, Hispanic pastors and church leaders have answered the Hollywood pastor’s call by participating in training

Valerie Louis of Eglise Evangelique Baptiste Galilee in North Miami Beach said the Spirit of the Lord was moving on campus and the harmony was felt. “I don’t need to be asked to do something for the Lord. I am always ready because that’s what God called me to do,” she said.

As the Haitian congregations work together for the advancement of the gospel, they see it is so much easier to share the gospel when there is a common interest to invest in each other and the gospel of Christ.

After hearing young Christian entrepreneur Delphine Dauphin of Sheridan Hills Baptist Church share about the value of money and entrepreneurship at a young age, Matthew Voltaire of Grace Connection Church in Miami, said,

“I now know how I can serve and what I want to do for the Lord.”

The annual youth camp is one of many ways Florida Baptist Haitian Ministries come alongside to encourage, strengthen and meet the unique needs of the state’s Haitian churches. Other events include regional prayer and fellowship breakfasts, youth rallies, Sharper conferences, men’s retreats and pastors’ dinners. In 2019 over 3,700 Haitians attended the training events.

—Nephtalie Hyacinthe



events across the state designed to equip and encourage them to reach the lost in their unique settings.

More than 5,000 Hispanic leaders attended the 35 training conferences planned to meet their specific needs by the Florida Baptist Convention in 2019.

These events included:

- 175 Hispanic pastors and leaders attended Sharper! ministry conference at Global Church/Iglesia Global in Miami to discover new methods in developing bilingual ministries;
- 700 Hispanic pastors and volunteers participated in Sunday school training conferences held in Miami, West Palm Beach and Orlando

in March where they were equipped to make their Sunday School ministries more effective and efficient; and

- 350 pastors and wives were renewed, refreshed and recharged to fulfill the Great Commission work in their communities during the annual Hispanic Pastor’s Retreat at Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center.

“We are stronger together and can accomplish more,” said Carlos Finale, student pastor at Iglesia Bautista Northside in Hialeah. He said he was especially thankful for the training he received at one of the Hispanic conferences.

“In the training for Cumbre de Líderes, we emphasized doing

church in small groups which is an important aspect of discipleship.”

“Praise God as He worked through pastors and churches to unite in Christ for Kingdom advance,” said Emanuel Roque, Florida Baptists’ Hispanic church catalyst.

Erik Cummings, FBSC president and pastor of New Life Baptist Church in Carol City, expressed his joy at seeing Hispanic Baptists participating and uniting to reach their communities with the Gospel.

“It’s a blessing to see what is happening,” he said. “Let’s continue to lift Jesus up in our respective communities.”

—Keila Diaz

NEXT GEN



VBS Numbers

 **2,580** Reported decisions for Christ
  **459** VBS Locations

 **80,000+** VBS Participants

 **\$353,537** Missions offering given through VBS

 **7,188** Unchurched individuals discovered

State Collegiate Conference

 **345** in attendance

23 College/Church Ministries

 **424**

individual churches attended next gen ministry equipping events

1,566



youth, kid, and college ministry leaders participated in next generation ministry equipping events

Super Summer Youth and Kids Camp

822 Campers **38** Churches

Student Evangelism Rallies

 **130+** Churches involved

Baptist Collegiate Ministry

Colleges with BCM **18**

Collegians involved **1,395**

Professions of faith **193**

Collegians involved community missions **694**

Collegians serving on summer missions **115**

Churches assisted by campus ministry **384**

Small group Bible studies **394**

Collegians impacted **20,940**

NEXT GENERATION

BBQ AND THE GOSPEL SERVED UP TO FRATERNITY LEADERS AT UCF

ORLANDO—When students at the University of Central Florida’s Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) sought to “beef up” their relationship with the school’s Greek community, they looked to a successful restaurateur and “pitmaster” who lives out his Christian faith in business and life.

John Rivers, founder of 4 Rivers Smokehouse restaurant chain, knows a lot about BBQ. This past fall he shared this passion and his faith with UCF’s fraternity presidents and leaders during an event at the university’s Live Oak Center.

The 4 Rivers restaurants were founded by Rivers as a “barbecue ministry.” His first restaurant opened in Winter Park, not far from the UCF campus.

The company’s mission statement highlights their use of “our God-given gifts” to support the local community.

The BCM’s outreach event was sparked by a desire to reach the university’s Greek community. During the fall semester a student-led team with BCM leaders, and other Christian organizations and churches with a campus presence—including Cru, University Church at UCF, CrossLife Church and First Baptist Church Orlando—began to talk about how to build relationships with fraternities, share the gospel and establish Bible studies in fraternity houses.

The group decided to invite fraternity presidents and their executive councils to a dinner hosted by the combined ministries, catered by the 4 Rivers Smokehouse and featuring Rivers as the keynote speaker.

Rivers had served as a fraternity president during his college days at Florida State University and was open and receptive to sharing his own Christian journey with the fraternity leaders.

During the event, Rivers shared that success won’t satisfy but Christ will. He told how he chose to live a life of significance, changing career paths to do what God called him to do. Throughout his presentation, he communicated the gospel, challenging the students to consider the spiritual aspect of their life and leadership.

“John took time to answer specific questions about business, 4 Rivers, his family,” said Brad Crawford, Orlando-area BCM director. “He did a great job of connecting with those young men, helping them to understand what it means to follow the call of God in their lives.”

According to Austin Nipper, a recent UCF graduate and BCM ministry partner, seven of the eight fraternities in attendance said they wanted to either start a Bible study, invite the BCM leaders to talk to pledge classes, or talk to someone about accepting Jesus as Savior.



“I would never have thought that a non-Christian fraternity would want Jesus preached, but they are hungry, searching,” said Nipper. “The Lord is on the move here at UCF.”

As an outgrowth of the dinner, a joint worship was held at the end of the semester in a backyard of a fraternity house. One of the students made a profession of faith.

According to Billy Young, Florida Baptists’ Next Generation Ministries lead catalyst, “Relationships with university organizations is key for our local churches and BCM in reaching the estimated 95 percent of lost students on college campuses.”

—Barbara Hoffmann

CHALLENGE 2025

Together we celebrate all that God has done this past year, but Florida Baptists must also prepare for the future. The population of Florida is currently increasing by 330,000 residents a year. Just as the population will continue to rise, so must our level of compassion and generosity.

The Challenge 2025 initiative is designed to address this opportunity to advance the Gospel. In this, it is our prayer that by the year 2025, Florida Baptist churches would annually:



Plant 75 new churches



Revitalize and strengthen 100 churches



Mobilize 12,000 teams on missions domestically and internationally



Baptize 30,000 new believers



Give \$33 million through the Cooperative Program and \$1 million to the Maguire State Mission Offering

All of this, so that the Gospel will be shared, that lives will be transformed, and that God's Kingdom will be expanded. Together we have a greater reach than we ever could alone.

I invite you to visit _____
FLBAPTIST.ORG/CHALLENGE-2025
to learn more. _____

