

Executive Director's Report
Eastern Regional Convention
Fall 2021

The ongoing struggle of our staff at ACGC to minister to the local churches and partners around the world has created the need to find new ways to reach out, support, and make connections with local pastors and leaders. It has been stressful to realize the ongoing struggles of our pastors in North America and even more so the churches around the world. I so appreciate the hearts of our staff for the leaders in our churches, it has been their driving force to help them continue to reach out to those who are hurting through this pandemic. You will see from their reports and from the response of our people and the churches to the ongoing ministry of ACGC how effective they have been.

My role at ACGC has changed a lot over the last two years. During the pandemic the need for Karen to move to Fernandina Beach to care for her parents has caused me to work half time here in Charlotte and half time from our home in Florida. I appreciate the council's willingness to work with me during this time and for the advice from different leaders as to what would be best during the transition of the pandemic, the 2021 Triennial, and whatever comes next in our new normal. We have worked hard to keep the lines of communication open for all our staff with the changes that have happened over the last few years. Through the development of Ministry Training Institute (MTI), we have become spread out with staff all over the country and this has helped our ability to relate and connect with our local pastors and leaders. This made my transition easier since so many were already working and communicating through zoom. The pandemic also forced us to meet remotely even to the point of weekly devotions and staff meetings. I am not sure what the future holds at this point but I am willing to continue in this role for the foreseeable future through the 2023 Triennial.

Ryan Homes continues to move forward on the purchase of the forty-nine acres behind the office complex. This will be a long process since it involves a number of parcels of land attached to the over 500-acre deal. We are currently under a signed contract with them and waiting on all the land studies and research to be able to build homes in this area. They have expressed interest in buying our offices and two homes but I am not certain that we are ready to move forward with making that move.

Our communication staff has worked hard at developing ways and increase outreach to our churches, leaders, and supporters. This continues to be one of the greatest challenges for ACGC and regions getting the word out to let people know what we are doing and how we are available to help. It is important for all leaders to stay informed and connected through our weekly updates and to share in their circles of influence whenever possible. As our travel schedule increases and we begin to have opportunities to be at regional and conference meetings our written materials and flyers can be shared but they are also available to our churches, conferences and regional leadership to display and share.

During the last two years Leadership Development has continued to grow and expand. The development of Ministry Training Institute (MTI) has been a great encouragement to our conferences and regions. We currently have thirty students involved in the training and fifteen of those are in the pastoral track. Our partnership with Berkshire Christian continues to develop with the focus on seeing Berkshire taking a more active role in recruiting and overseeing students. We continue to have dialogue with BICS about how MTI can partner with them in the development of emerging leader and even support one another in the educational process. It is vital that our regions join in this partnership so that the expansion of field office's locations will continue in all of our regions to provide places for emerging leaders who feel the call to ministry to get the education, training, and mentorship needed to be effective.

International Missions has been a major struggle through the pandemic and political unrest of the last two years. The death of our long time India Director Immanuel from COVID left a huge hole and crisis for our ministry. Thankfully, Immanuel had already begun to prepare Dr. Ezheil Christadoss (Chris) to replace him as director. Director Jeff Walsh has been working without an administrative assist allowing his Area Directors to expand their roles in oversight and input in their areas of responsibilities. Jeff has worked tirelessly on the paper work to establish a new bank account in India to allow us to get funds to the mission to support the many ongoing ministries around the country. It is exciting to share with you that just last week the new account and government paperwork has been accepted and we should be able to send funds to our India partners to help them in their ministry. Our work to share the gospel to unreached people groups around the world continues. In Tanzania and India local pastors have been able to share the gospel with unreached people groups in their part of the world and have seen converts. These strides forward match up with our strategic plan and I believe accounts for our rise in support for Penny Crusade. There is still a lot of work to do both internationally and in North America, Jeff will share more in his report.

Church Health outreach has been limited through the pandemic but Justin has continued to reach out and be available to those already using Natural Church Development (NCD). In his report Justin shares some of the struggles reaching our churches and the future of this department. He has already made contact with a few new churches and begun talking to churches needing a different type of nurture. Please be in prayer as this is a critical need in our churches with many facing uncertain futures.

Finally, Home Mission/Church Planting came to a complete stand still through the last year. Matt Larkin and I are working together to bring new life into a church planting movement within our denomination. The MTI program has a Church Planting component and we already have one student in that track of study. Matt and I have met with Lee Stephenson with Converge and he is writing courses to complete the church planting track for MTI. We are also working together to find a Coordinator for Church Planting associated with Converge that has experiences and success in planting churches. He will work with MTI and our host churches associated with MTI to plant churches utilizing our positive momentum and active students. Many of these churches have already expressed interest in planting churches in their

geographical areas. Matt has shared in his report the goals and plans for this critical area so I will not repeat them here.

As we look forward to the next two years planning for the next Triennial it will be vital that our churches seek success in ministry in what the new normal looks like as we come through the everchanging pandemic. Even as we prepared for these meetings, we realize that our world is not going to just move back to what we called normal but that we have to continue to stretch ourselves to discover new ways we can be supportive to the local church and for our leaders to continue to step out of their comfort zones to touch lives for the cause of Christ.