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Reach Texas
OFFERING

sbtexas.com/reachtexas

Made possible by your Cooperative Program Giving

WHAT IS THE REACH TEXAS OFFERING?

- The annual state missions ministry offering of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention
- A way for you and your church to participate in a Great Commission strategy for Texas
- A way to start more churches and reach more people for Christ
- A way to help change lives

STATEWIDE CHALLENGE GOAL $1.3 MILLION

100%

of your Reach Texas giving is spent on missions and evangelism strategies

Because of Cooperative Program giving all funds given through Reach Texas will go to missions and ministry with no administrative costs.

How to use this booklet

As a personal or family devotional guide for the Reach Texas Week of Prayer or another time of missions emphasis at your church

As a special Bible study for your missions group

As a resource to emphasize the Reach Texas Offering in worship services and small groups

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Reach Texas
OFFERING

AS A REMINDER THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO PRAY FOR THE GREAT COMMISSION WORK IN TEXAS

It is such an honor to be a part of a convention of churches in Texas that has such a love and passion for planting new churches in Texas. The SBTC has always prioritized the planting of new churches to reach all peoples with the message of the gospel. In Texas we have millions of lost people representing not only native Texans but hundreds of people groups from across the nation and the world.

To reach Texas, we have to continue to press back against the ever-present darkness that exists so prominently in our world. The priority of evangelism, discipleship and living on mission is to be ever present in our lives, our churches and in the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

The Reach Texas offering is an incredible way for us to give generously above and beyond our cooperative program giving to help revitalize churches; plant new churches; do collegiate and student ministry; train churches to minister to Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims; help churches learn to do missions around the world; and respond to disaster relief needs in our state and beyond.

I am amazed by the sacrificial giving of churches of all sizes to the Reach Texas offering every year. Every dollar makes a difference and goes straight to the field to do ministry in Texas.

With such great needs, not only does your giving matter but your prayers matter. James 5:16 says that "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working." Our week of prayer is one event on the calendar, but the need is much greater. Please keep the desperate needs of the lost in Texas on your hearts and spoken to God in prayer.

As we join together to pray, serve and give...may God use our efforts for his glory and his honor! May revival and renewal break forth until every soul has heard the good news of Jesus Christ!

Until the Whole World Hears,
Doug Hixson
Director of Missions
and Church Planting

Texas Churches Plant Texas Churches

The SBTC exists to help Texas churches plant Texas churches.

If your church is looking to plant churches or if you want to explore becoming a church planter, contact us for more info.

We can help you fulfill the mission God has called you to.

3 WAYS TO START THE PROCESS:

1) Call and talk to a member of the church planting team at 817.552.2500
2) Email: churchplanting@sbtexas.com
3) Go to sbtexas.com/churchplanting and fill out a pre-application

Day 1

Disciple-Makers on the College Campus

By Chris Cummings, College Pastor at Coastal Community Church

Emma was once your typical college student. Diving into the world of alcohol and hookups, she hoped to find just enough satisfaction and joy to mask the pains of the anxiety and depression that she faced on a very regular basis. As the constant pursuit of satisfaction left her feeling even more unsatisfied, eventually the darkness of depression intensified to the point where suicide was a very real possibility. Fortunately, in the midst of this Emma met Kate, a Christian on campus. It didn't take long for Kate and Emma to strike up a real, genuine friendship. Kate attended weekly gatherings and Bible studies that our church held on campus and faithfully invited Emma to join her. Even though Emma would constantly refuse, Kate continued to share Jesus with her. Eventually Emma joined Kate at one of the gatherings. That night, as Emma heard how every pain has a purpose, she decided not to proceed with her suicide plan.

As Emma continued to investigate Jesus, she eventually gave her life to Christ. In Christ she found the joy and satisfaction for which she had been looking. During her senior year of college, Emma was accepted to be a part of our student leadership team. While leading a community group of her peers, she helped lead three students to faith in Jesus. Emma is now part of our college ministry staff and is still helping students know and follow Jesus.

I love this story for so many reasons, but one of the biggest reasons is because it shows us a glimpse into what disciple-making really looks like. Emma's story started because of her friend Kate, and now Emma is helping lead others to faith in Christ just like Kate did for her. As we faithfully pursue Jesus, it is vitally important that we also faithfully pursue others.

Prayer Point

Pick someone that you want to share Jesus with and pray for them. Pray that God will open an opportunity for the gospel to be shared.

Point to Ponder

How is your church helping build up and train disciple-makers? The reality is that every disciple of Jesus is called to make disciples, not just those who are on paid staff. What are some ways that your church can help create and influence a culture of disciple-making?

make a difference by planting a church? are you serious?

Yes! The SBTC is looking for a few called men of God to make a kingdom difference in Texas.

Could you be the one God is calling to reach a city, a people, a community? Do you want to explore that possibility?

Three Ways to Start the Process:

1. Call and talk to a member of the church planting team at 817.552.2500
2. Email: churchplanting@sbtexas.com
3. To register as a a church planter with the SBTC, go to **sbtexas.com/churchplanting**

Join what God is doing in Texas today!

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Day 2

Praying for Church Renewal

By Keelan Cook

6 in 10

That's the number put out last year by LifeWay Research concerning the number of churches in North America that are plateaued or declining. That's grim news.

The majority of Protestant churches are seeing no growth at all, or worse, they are getting smaller as the years go by. What is more, unless things change that number will get worse before it gets better. We are at the front of a wave, yet to crest, concerning church decline.

We need to pause for a moment and consider why that is so important. The book of Acts records for us the astonishing birth of the church and the first 30 years of its mission. In its pages though, we find no mention of buildings or budgets. The church as an institution takes a back seat to a more important growth that Luke recounts over and over as he tells his story. Throughout Acts, Luke stops repeatedly to summarize the events taking place in and through the rapid expansion of the church, and one thing is clearly on his mind: the growth of the gospel.

In Acts 6:7, after the conflict that arose over the need for deacons to minister to the church's widows, Luke records that "the word of God continued to increase." Again in Acts 12:24, after Peter's miraculous escape from Herod and prison, Luke tells us, "the word of the Lord increased and multiplied." One chapter later we find out "the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region" (Acts 13:49), as Paul and Barnabas begin their missionary journeys. Finally, in recounting the awakening that shook Ephesus to the core, Luke records that "the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily" (Acts 19:20).

We do not mourn church decline because of a loss of power, prominence, or prestige. We mourn the 6 in 10 because of the loss of gospel witness. The growth of the gospel in Texas requires healthy, vibrant churches in our cities and towns.

Every church in decline is more than a building or a budget. These churches are not a calendar of events; they are communities of believers. When we do not concern ourselves with the health and welfare of these churches, we teach with our inaction that a declining church is just a list of programs or a dilapidated building.

Prayer Point

Let us pray for the Spirit to breathe new life into many of our established churches. Let us pray for those who labor to see it so. Ask God for a wave of church renewal that may replace this wave of church decline.

Point to Ponder

What if 6 out of 10 churches flipped from being declining churches to healthy and growing churches? How would that impact cities across Texas?

The World Has Arrived at the Bible Belt

By SBTC Staff

day 3

For many years, we talked about a region in our country labeled as the Bible Belt. In fact, many people actually referred to Texas as being in the buckle of the Bible Belt. This region was so described because of there being so many churches, literally seeming as if there was one on every corner.

There may have been a point in the Bible Belt when the church had a more prominent influence on society, a greater voice in life and a stronger representation of the gospel message. Today, there are still a lot of churches and church buildings, but the number of lost people proves that in Texas, we have a lot of work to do. Current statistics tell us that we are approaching 29 million people and at least 19 million of those are without Christ.

That means that there is plenty of work to do. The question is often posed whether it is more important to plant churches or help struggling churches. The answer is yes; both are vitally important.

We need to help struggling churches regain their focus on the community around them, make the needed changes to become a strong voice of the gospel in their cities.

We also need to plant churches in every area of our state. There are no areas of our state that are oversaturated with gospel influence and are off limits to reaching more lost people.

Statistics tell us that 2,700 people move to Dallas/Fort Worth, 1,700 to move to Houston and 1,000 move to Austin each week. That means if we planted a megachurch each week in these cities we would not keep up with the growth.

Do we still live in the Bible Belt? The numbers and the need prove that this is not a foregone explanation of the state of Texas. Instead, we live in one of the greatest opportunities to see a movement of God in our lifetime. The world is moving to Texas. Hundreds of people groups from all over the world now call Texas home. People from all over the nation have moved to Texas to work and live. Now is the time to pray, go and tell of the greatest message ever known ... Jesus is the savior of the world.

Prayer Point

Take a moment today to pray for Texas. Pray for the struggling churches in need of a movement of God. Pray for pastors, leaders and churches to rise up and take back the lands that Satan has stolen. Pray for God to call out church planters to plant new churches in cities, towns and communities all across our state.

Point to Ponder

Statistics tell us that 2,700 people move to Dallas/Fort Worth, 1,700 to move to Houston and 1,000 move to Austin each week. That means if we planted a megachurch each week in these cities we would not keep up with the growth.

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REACH CITIES

THE REACH CITIES INITIATIVE
is a strategic process to mobilize churches
for church planting and revitalization in Texas.

- Church Planting + Replanting
- Church Revitalization
- Mission Team Opportunities

REACH AUSTIN

- Area Population of 2,000,000
- 11th largest city in the United States
- 34% speak a language other than English at home
- 68% White, 35% Hispanic, 8% Black, 6% Asian/Other
- 41% lost & unchurched

Steve Cochran
Austin Strategist
scochran@sbtexas.com

REACH EL PASO

- Population of 885,226
- 82% Hispanic, 13% White, 3% Black, 2% Asian
- 98% lost & unchurched

Jorge Diáz
El Paso Strategist
jdiaz@sbtexas.com

REACH HOUSTON

- The most diverse city in North America (2010 Census)
- Population of 5,000,000
- 39.8% Hispanic, 31.9% White, 18.7% Black, 9.5% Asian/Other
- 68% lost & unchurched

Ben Hays
Houston Strategist
bhays@sbtexas.com

REACH RIO GRANDE VALLEY

- Population of 1,353,541
- 90% Hispanic, 1.2% Asian 0.5% Black
- 81% Catholic
- 11% claim no faith

David Ortega
Valley Strategist
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SBTEXAS.COM/REACHCITIES

Made possible by your Cooperative Program giving.

Day 4

The Power of the Church

By Sterling Edwards, Church Planting Catalyst
Tryon Evergreen Baptist Association

There is urgency in our need to establish new churches throughout Texas. It can be easy to lose sight of this as we see numerous churches in our communities. Yet there are several vital reasons that can be given for why church planting is so essential.

In 2015 the population of Texas grew by over 500,000 people. In 2018 there was an increase of another 380,000 people. The population of Texas continues to increase, making the need for more churches all the more important.

At the same time, we know that there are other churches in our communities that have struggled, declined or even closed. There are some church properties in Texas that have been renovated for retail space or converted into condominiums. There is no church that is beyond God's power to restore and revitalize. Yet the challenges that some of our existing churches are facing demonstrate our need for more churches to be started and established.

Finally, the primary reason for more churches to be started is because we know that every person matters. There is no one in our community, city, state, country or world for whom Jesus did not offer up his life as a sacrifice. Jesus loves every man, woman, boy and girl. Jesus has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:19), letting people know that their sins are no longer counted against them because of what Jesus has done for them.

This message is powerful. It is not just good information. It is the only hope for every person. As we look around us, we see the need for this message to be shared and shown. Let's reach our communities with this incredible truth as we show the love of Jesus to people all around us.

Prayer Point

Take time to pray for the 19.5 million lost people in Texas. Pray that a passion for the lost would begin in your heart, your church and our state. Pray for revival and renewal to begin in you.

Point to Ponder

2,750 people a week move to DFW, 1,700 to Houston and 1,000 to Austin. If we planted a megachurch a week we could not keep up with the growth. We need churches renewed and revived as well as new church plants.

The Nations in Texas

By Martin Gonzalez

DAY 5

The nations are in Texas. There are at least 421 different people groups and over 300 languages are spoken in our state. According to the U.S. Religious Census, Texas is first in the number of Muslims, second in number of Hindus and third in number of Buddhists. There are at least 100 Hindu temples, 150 Buddhist temples and 200 Islamic mosques distributed throughout the state. Besides these, there are tens of thousands of home altars in the houses of Buddhists and Hindus. Texas also hosts foreign-born people and worship places of other minority religions like Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism and Mandaeism.

The ninth verse of Psalm 86 clearly states that all the nations that the Lord has made will come and worship before him and bring glory to his name. But, how will this happen? Verses 8 and 10 give us a hint which points to the recognition of the deeds of the Lord: the nations need to see and recognize the marvelous deeds of the Lord in and through the church!

SBTC's People Groups Initiative helps churches to accomplish this by providing awareness workshops, training seminars and practical on-field experience. Besides these workshops and seminars, there are SBTC-funded People Group Missionaries (PGM) serving in different cities. From the Panhandle to the Rio Grande Valley and from Dallas to El Paso, these missionaries engage in the harvest field of the foreign-born peoples of Texas serving in different capacities and sharing the gospel. These PGMs also try to bring awareness, mobilize and help equip the local churches in their area. The task is so big that we need the whole body of Christ equipped to connect, love and share the gospel to their foreign-born neighbors, workmates and classmates!

"After this training, I am being intentional in changing my routine to connect with my Hindu neighbor born in India to share the gospel" said Liz after attending a Reaching the Nations in Texas training. "This training has helped me to see the need of the foreign-born people around me. Now, I am anxious to participate in an actual time of cross-cultural evangelism to see how it is done" commented Jay at the end of a People Groups Initiative-led training. This is a great picture of believers responding to share the gospel cross-culturally in Texas!

For the foreign born people groups in Texas to see the marvelous deeds of the Lord, the body of Christ needs to be actively witnessing to them. The SBTC's People Groups Initiative can help you and your church do that.

Prayer Point

Take a moment to pray for the salvation of the foreign-born people that you come in contact with; for example: a cashier at the gas station, workmate, classmate, next door neighbor, other. Ask God to give you an opportunity to share your faith with them.

Point to Ponder

How many Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim places of worship do you find in your city? Where are the foreign-born in your city? How can you connect with them and share the gospel? How can People Groups Initiative help you to do this?

DAY 6

A Loyal Ambassador: 2 Corinthians 5:20

By Chuy A. Avila

I moved to the Dallas/Fort Worth area a year ago. As we were house shopping, we visited many different neighborhoods. In each neighborhood we encountered different people, different skin colors, different languages and different cultures. It is amazing how the nations are already present in our neighborhoods. As I analyzed 2 Corinthians 5:20, I realized that God strategically *called* me to my neighborhood with a very clear purpose: **to establish his kingdom in my neighborhood!**

1. As a loyal ambassador, I must understand that it is *not* about me, nor my interests, my plans, my wishes or my comfort. But those of the King, whom I represent in my neighborhood.
2. As a loyal ambassador, I must understand that I was called to this neighborhood.
3. As a loyal ambassador, I must understand that God called me to serve all of the people in my neighborhood. That it is not limited to a geographic location nor is it limited to a specific segment of the population.
4. As a loyal ambassador, I must understand that God already has the tools and the strategy that he will use to transform my community. The church!
5. As a loyal ambassador I must now join God's plan of initiating churches in every community.

A few days ago I purchased new eyeglasses, my prescription was outdated and my vision was affected. As soon as they gave me my new pair of glasses, I noticed an improvement in my performance and effectiveness. Having the correct vision makes a great difference! Vision is a mental portrait of what we want to accomplish or where we want to go. In Revelation 7:9 we can see the vision in Jesus' ministry. Every race, every tribe, every language by planting new churches!

Prayer Point

Pray for God to reveal to you the ways that you can be a part of the solution. Pray! Serve! Give!

Point to Ponder

How would we see the world differently if we viewed it through the lens of the gospel? Would we see more people in need? Would we see those that might be hurting and need Jesus to change their lives?

Day 1

Hope In Crisis

By Daniel White

Geographically, Texas is an extremely large state and varied ecologically. From hurricanes on the Gulf Coast to ice storms in the high plains, floods in the Valley to tornadoes in the north, Texas receives its share of natural disasters. Industrial accidents, terroristic attacks, refugees fleeing war-torn countries and health-related emergencies also pose a need for response in Texas.

When disaster strikes, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention's Disaster Relief ministry stands ready to respond. Contrary to a common idea, the main focus of our ministry is not preparing meals or removing flood damage debris from houses. Yes, those are things we are known for and do very well, they are what give us access to affected areas, but they are not our main focus. Our main focus of ministry is responding to the people affected by disaster—people who have been displaced, lost their homes or loved ones, people who are desperate for hope. Our primary mission is demonstrating the charity of Jesus Christ and sharing the hope of his gospel with those in crisis.

Several years ago, the town of Gregory was devastated by a flood. As our teams ministered, dozens of people gave their lives to Christ. We discovered many of them were related and had prayed with our chaplains at different times during the week. However, they did not have a local church so our volunteers, via their home churches, adopted them and were able to establish a mission church.

We need Christian volunteers with a heart for missions who are willing to answer the call and GO. We need you. Please pray for the SBTC's Disaster Relief ministry and consider becoming a trained volunteer. For more information, please visit sbtexas.com/dr.

Prayer Point

The fields are ready for harvest, but the volunteers are few. Pray for God to call volunteers into Disaster Relief ministry. Pray about serving as a volunteer. Pray about giving financially.

Point to Ponder

Disaster Relief ministry has one of the highest conversion rates with 30-40% of those with whom we share the gospel praying to receive salvation.

The Four Absolutes of the Great Commission

By Jorge Diaz, El Paso Strategist

Often before leaving the office I would phone my wife to ask if she needed me to pick anything up from the supermarket on my way home. She would tell me four or five things that were needed but instead of writing them down, I would repeat them to remember them while at the store. Of the four things, I would remember three. I knew there were four but could often not remember the last one. If I struggled a little, I would sometimes remember it but if I didn't, I would arrive home having forgotten 25% of the list! Missing 25% is a lot!

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus Christ left a command to his disciples that included four absolute components. That is, everything that is included in this list is for his followers. We cannot forget any of them! Looking in Matthew 28: 18-20 we see the following:

All authority. The entire Gospel of Matthew deals with the issue of Jesus' authority. At least five times we find that Jesus taught with authority. He calmed the storm with authority. He performed miracles with authority. He rose with authority overcoming the dominion of death. You have authority in Jesus.

All nations. The word used for nations is "ethnicities." It is a concept that includes people of all races, languages, social, educational and political conditions. This is an inclusive concept of all the inhabitants of the Earth. You must share the gospel with everyone.

All I've taught you. Jesus devoted a lot of time to teaching his disciples more deeply and specifically to ensure that they understood the gospel message and were able to share it with others. You must share everything you have learned from him.

All the time, I will be with you. This is the promise of the presence of Jesus Christ with his followers until the end of the world. The followers of Jesus are not alone or left to their own fate and imagination; the Master is with them. He is with you every day.

I live in El Paso. Its people and folklore are a mixture of cultures that make this city a special place. In 2019 the population of El Paso was 885,226. 82% are Hispanic, 13% white, 3% African American and 2% Asian. It is estimated that 80% of the population understands or speaks the Spanish language. The most shocking fact is that 98% do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. El Paso is a place for you and your church to fulfill the four absolutes of the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ.

Prayer Point

Pray for places in Texas that are hard to reach and need more churches planted, renewed and sharing the gospel. Pray for each of our reach cities...El Paso, Rio Grande Valley, Austin and Houston.

Point to Ponder

God has given Texas the opportunity to reach multiple ethnicities by bringing them to our state. What can you do to reach people that do not look like you or even speak your language? How can you be a bridge for the gospel?

people GROUPS

Texas People Group Facts:

The population is expected to increase by **22.5** percent this decade, **34** percent from international migration.

420 different **people groups**

300+ languages

500,000+ Muslims and
1 million Hindus and Buddhists

200 Islamic mosques, **100** Hindu temples and **150** Buddhist temples

82,000 international students

For more information contact
Dan Acharya at dacharya@sbtexas.com

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sbtexas.com/peoplegroups

Made possible by your Cooperative Program giving.

Partnership OPPORTUNITIES

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THE REACH CITIES INITIATIVE

is a strategic process to mobilize churches for church planting and revitalization in Texas.

SBTEXAS.COM/REACHCITIES

NORTH AMERICA

NEW ORLEANS

Church planting, revitalization and evangelism

For more information on partnership opportunities, contact Eric Perkins at ericp@youturnmin.org

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention

The Cooperative Program is the regular, budgetary funding of missions and ministry for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. CP is an undesignated giving channel that provides for a wide range of gospel advance.

For more information visit whatiscp.com

Statewide Challenge Goal **$1.3 MILLION**

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Because of Cooperative Program giving all funds given through Reach Texas will go to missions and ministry with no administrative costs.

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Ready to Join the effort?

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Take the next step.

To receive more information or to be involved in ministries supported by the Reach Texas State Missions Offering, connect with the leaders on this page.

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