

Thousand Hills Baptist Association Revitalization Team Report

ReFocus Strategy

Greetings Thousand Hills Churches:

During the July 2021 Executive Board Meeting, the Thousand Hills Baptist Association (THBA) Executive Board Members voted to form a Revitalization Team to develop a strategy that would help us restore purpose and vitality to our association. The leadership council enlisted the following pastors to serve on this team: Phil Bray, Sam Burkholder, Mark Drummond, Chance Glenn, Justin Honey, Jason Marlin, Steven Nelson, Zachary Rohman, and B.J. McAlpin. As DOM, Richard Nations also served on this team. Not every pastor was able to serve for the entire year, but we are grateful for each man's contribution.

We are also grateful for the leadership provided by John Vernon and Brandon Moore. John Vernon serves as Director of Missions for Cape Girardeau Baptist Association and Brandon Moore serves as Revitalization Network Specialist for the Missouri Baptist Convention. Together, these two men led our team through REFOCUS, a six-step revitalization process, to help us restore purpose and vitality to the partnership of the THBA churches.

Below you will find an outline of discoveries made and new proposals to be presented at the September 2022 THBA annual meeting.

DISCOVERY: During the discovery step we sought to answer the question, “**How are things going?**”

1. We need to come up with a clear definition (philosophy) for the association. We did reach the conclusion that **the association is “a group of churches” working together** collaboratively versus “a separate, church supported entity unto itself”. This led us to see that **the primary focus and responsibility is on churches**. Given history this creates a strong need for clear expectations that are constantly, consistently communicated.
2. We need a vision that provides greater clarity for why we associate.
3. We need a strategy.
4. **There is hope**, expressed in the following ways:
 1. Other pastors believe there is a collective desire to fulfill the Great Commission.
 2. We are seeing the same need for vision/strategy
 3. We have unity that can produce effectiveness.
5. While the associational giving has been declining, the finances of the local churches are actually increasing. People make choices with their money as they strive to steward well. The Block Party Trailer demonstrated this as the funding for it came relatively quickly.
6. The leadership structure is not poised for new vision/strategy.
7. There are things we can learn from Camp Ministry in regards to the way we can cooperatively work and minister together.

CONVERGENCE: During the convergence step we sought to answer the question, “**Where should we position the ministry?**” or “**How should our churches partner together to effect Kingdom Growth?**”

1. The “Big Idea”: The **churches assisting one another to health**. Developed from the keywords: Assist, One another, Health.
2. **Association Purpose:** What does our association believe its mission to be?
 1. Making Disciples (Shepherding churches back to the Great Commission)
 2. Assisting
 3. Developing
 4. Unity (displaying/maintaining)
3. **Community Potential:** What is our community’s/region/state’s biggest challenge?
 1. Dying/Declining Congregations
 2. Dying/Declining Communities
 3. Dysfunctional Families
 4. Mental Health Issues
4. **Leaders’ Passion:** What is our leadership passionate about?
 1. Disciples
 2. Church Health
 3. Mercy Ministry
 4. Camp
5. **Scriptural Foundation**
 1. Philippians 2
 2. John 13:34-35
 3. Ephesians 2:11-22
 4. Matthew 28:18-20
 5. 1 Corinthians 3:15-17
 6. 1 Corinthians 12

MISSION: The question: “**What do we do?**”

Proposed mission statement: “**Assisting one another to bring Christ to our communities.**”

VALUES: The question: “**Why do we partner together?**”

1. Christlike Disciples (Pursuing Christlikeness/Relying on Christ)
2. Healthy Churches (Developing/Equipping/Assisting/Strengthening local churches)
3. Unified Cooperation (Loving/Serving/Assisting/Working with one another)
4. Effective Disciple-making (striving to make genuine disciples inside/outside our local church)
5. Local Communities (engaging/caring for the community)

STRATEGY: The question: “**How do we accomplish our mission?**”

1. **Relate** (relationship building across association)
2. **Evaluate** (assessing legitimate needs of churches, church health assessment, etc)
3. **Cooperate** (engaging together in the work)
4. **Celebrate** (praising God for what he has done through our cooperative work through a shared worship experience that combines a ministry outreach which will draw in more people across the association, taking us to the first step)

VISION: The Proposed vision statement: “**We want to see Christ bring health to our churches and our communities.**”

Our vision is to see Christ bring health to our churches and communities. Sin brings isolation from God and one another. Our churches are declining and dying. Our communities are filled with the brokenness, sorrow, and misery caused by the selfish expression of sin. Jesus came into this world to reverse the curse and make all things new. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, forgave the guilty, and proclaimed the good news of unending gladness. *As our churches cooperate together, by prayerfully relying on Christ, and growing in Christlikeness our communities will experience reconciliation with God, restored relationships, and unshakeable gladness in Jesus.* As we relate to one another in genuine fellowship, evaluate one another with loving clarity, cooperate with one another in joyful service, we will celebrate with one another as God transforms our churches from declining and dying to vibrant and thriving. We will celebrate as God transforms our communities from broken and suffering to reconciled and rejoicing.

GOALS: The question: “**How do we measure progress?**”

1. Improved relational fellowship among pastors & churches in their areas.
2. A healthy pastor in every church.
3. A healthy church in every community: 10 churches revitalized or replanted.
4. Regular cooperation among churches so that...
 - a. 10 community needs are identified
 - b. 5 community needs are met
5. Five communities are transformed by the presence of the churches.
 - a. Families are restored and joy & peace saturate the community.

OBJECTIVES The objectives are:

1. Restructure, Redefine, and Rebrand Association.
 - Includes restructuring leadership and operations of the association, redefining healthy pastor, church, and community, and rebranding and executing a new communications strategy.
 - Also, creating teams to facilitate strategy
2. Evaluate Church & Community Needs
 - Includes identifying churchless & underserved communities
3. Implement leader development pipeline and disciple-making pathways.

4. Facilitating church partnerships
 - Identify regional gatherings for fellowship
5. Fueling church partnerships
6. Evaluate and celebrate results of the strategy & revision

ANNUAL PLAN: Question: “What must be done to take steps forward?”

BIG STEP #1: Restructure, Redefine, and Rebrand Association

Elements:

1. Present Refocus Plan and Celebrate Current Victories at Annual Meeting
2. Develop Restructure Proposal (Changes to Constitution & Bylaws, Leadership structure, etc)
3. Clarify Key Terms: Define healthy churches, pastors, and communities
4. Develop and Implement Communications and Rebranding Strategy
5. Begin Revitalization process with churches and give testimonies
6. Encourage pastor assessment & coaching

PTHE PATH: Strategy Details

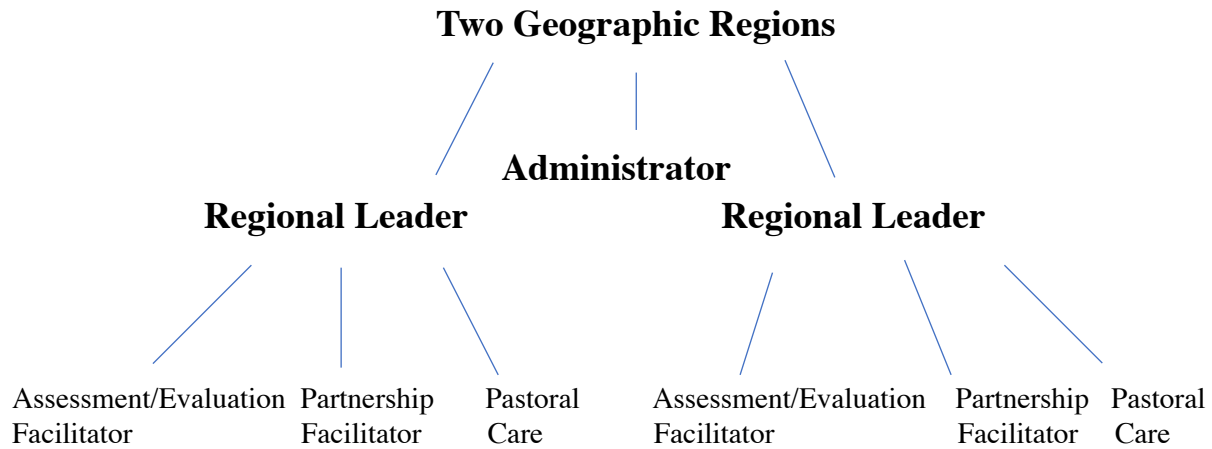
1. Relate
 - a. Gather
 - b. Connect
 - c. Communicate
2. Evaluate
 - a. Pastors
 - b. Churches
 - c. Communities
3. Cooperate
 - a. Ministry Planning
 - b. Ministry Promotion
 - c. Ministry Partnerships
4. Celebrate
 - a. Our Story (Churches)
 - b. Their Story (Communities)
 - c. His Story (Christ)

EXTERNAL LEADERSHIP LADDER: The question “How do churches serve together to accomplish the shared mission?”

1. Relate
 - a. Churches being served.
 - b. Churches serving alongside other churches.
2. Evaluate
 - a. Churches organizing churches to serve.
3. Cooperate
 - a. Churches identifying & planning opportunities to serve.
4. Celebrate
 - a. Churches measuring & Celebrating impact of serving.

INTERNAL LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE: Team Based

1. Job descriptions to be developed



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THBA REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE

The following recommendations will be presented for vote at the THBA Meeting September 11, 2022.

Recommendation 1:

The THBA Revitalization Team moves the adoption and implementation of the ReFocus Strategy as presented in the Revitalization Team report.

Recommendation 2: (If Recommendation 1 is adopted)

The THBA Revitalization Team moves to appoint the Revitalization team to oversee implementation of the ReFocus Strategy. Their oversight shall also include the development of leadership job descriptions and compensation, the nomination of leaders to leadership positions, and rewriting of Bylaws.