

WHY A RESOLUTION FOR CHURCH PLANTING AND CHURCH STRENGTHENING?

**1. RESOLUTIONS ARE AN EXPRESSION OF OUR BIBLICAL MANDATE GIVEN BY OUR LORD.**

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

**Matthew 28:19-20**

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem (Local), and in all Judea and Samaria (Regional), and to the ends of the earth (Global)."*

**Acts 1:8**

**2. RESOLUTIONS HAVE BEEN AN INTRICATE PART OF OUR HISTORY DURING ITS GREATEST EXPANSION EFFORTS BOTH DISTANT AND PRESENT.**

*"Resolve, that the ardent desires, devout prayers, untiring efforts, and liberal contributions of every member of our denomination, who intends to show his faith by his works, are urgently called for until the gospel is preached to every soul, a church organized in every town and settlement, and every church supplied with a pious, devoted and faithful pastor."*

**Isaac Merriam, 1837 Annual Meeting of the Illinois Baptist Convention**

*"The field allotted to us for labor is Illinois—our own state—our adopted country—the sphere of our immediate influence—the dwelling place of our families, and the probable burying place of our earthy remains. Although our indirect influence may and ought to be give, in aid of every evangelical effort in other portions of the world, our direct work is at home....The missionary, who is to supply the vacant village or important post in Illinois....is to meet the backslider and recall him, to cheer and console the anxious Christian, address God's warning to the impenitent, to institute Gospel churches, to withstand the efforts made by Infidels, Universalists, Mormon, and Errorists in conjunction with the man of sin, to possess this fair land. This is his object, and ours. It is one whose importance can hardly be estimated too highly".*

**1845 Annual Meeting of the Illinois Baptist General Association**

*"We affirm that the churches of Converge MidAmerica, energized by the Holy Spirit, are charged to exert every effort to evangelize the communities of our district. This will be accomplished by an aggressive plan of church renewal and extensive church planting that will establish new churches in every identifiable segment of our district. The members of these new churches will confess Christ as Savior, will be baptized by immersion and will be committed to the great commandment and the great commission."*

**Church Planting and Church Strengthening Resolution 2019 Biannual Converge MidAmerica Conference**

**3. RESOLUTIONS HELP DEFINE OUR CONTEMPORARY STRATEGY FOR FULFILLING A UNITED MISSION.**

Every generation must passionately grapple with their responsibility to reach this generation and the next generation. They must not only wrestle with that responsibility but they must also discover the ways the Spirit of God is drawing lost souls to a saving knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The methods to reach each generation change yet the message of repentance of sins, faith in the finished work of the Cross of Christ and becoming a submissive follower of Jesus Christ never, never changes.

## CHURCH STARTING AND STRENGTHENING RESOLUTION

### PREFACE

We challenge every church to lead its members in personal evangelism ministries, to mobilize those God calls to missionary service, to pray faithfully, and to give sacrificially so that the gospel of Jesus Christ could be proclaimed to all the peoples of the world.

The Great Commission is carried out when unbelievers hear the Gospel, repent of their sins and believe in the Gospel, are baptized as witnesses to the Gospel, and are taught to obey all the commands of Christ (**Matthew 28:16–20**); and

**Church planting**, church revitalization, and new works must be matched by a commitment to and engagement in intentional evangelism in order for true, Great Commission advance to occur; now, therefore, be it

That we encourage all pastors to present the Gospel message publicly in their weekly worship services and to make appeals in their sermons for people to receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord and to follow Him in believer's baptism; and be it further

Church Planting To focus on a surge of planting churches to impact the darkness in our world (Matthew 5:16; 28:18–20);

**Church Strengthening** The Bible teaches in passages like **Acts 14:21–23** that the Apostle Paul made returning to established churches a part of his mission work, so that he could strengthen disciples, encourage perseverance, and train leaders; and

The Bible also records the words of Jesus in Revelation 2:1–7, which calls churches to an action plan for revitalization consisting of remembering Christ's commission, repenting from having left their first love, and returning to their first works; now, therefore, be it

**Partnership Church Planting and Strengthening** That we as leaders encourage churches experiencing cycles of health to pray for and partner with both established and newly planted churches that are struggling so that together, experiencing His strength through our weakness (**2 Corinthians 12:10**), we can more effectively reach our neighbors and our nation with the Gospel.

85% of churches in America are plateaued or declining What if in Converge MidAmerica we could flip that script and 85% Of our churches were strong, healthy, gospel saturated, reproducing places?

If existing congregations do not thrive, there will be no one to plant, sustain, support, and lead church planting. We cannot have one without the other.

### RESOLUTION

We, the pastors and leaders of Converge MidAmerica declare our radical commitment to starting new churches and strengthening existing Churches for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. First, so that every person in every neighborhood in ConvergeMid Americas reach gets a chance to hear and respond to the Gospel!

### WE DECLARE ...

- 1. Great Commission** Our Commitment to the Great Commission and reliance on the Holy Spirit. We will lead our churches to be houses of prayer. We commit to live lives that honor and point people to Jesus. We have a Commitment to those who have accepted Christ to mobilize them to this great calling to make disciples of all people. As the pastors and leaders we will commit ourselves to do the work of an evangelist and to tirelessly lead our churches in the multiplying disciples, leaders and congregations.
- 2. Church Planting** We believe we have never lived in a greater time and opportunity to plant more churches. With the population in our region growing faster than it has in decades we have the opportunity to influence not only our country but the nations as they come to us.
- 3. Church Strengthening** The greatest needs in our culture today can be met with a thriving growing movement of local churches being started and strengthened in every community in our region. Believers in struggling churches must face reality and see things as they are, not as they wish they were or how they used to be. Courageous steps are required to start the journey toward vitality, health and a strong gospel presence in the community once again.
- 4. Humility and Unity** We are committed to be lifelong learners and we are seeking ways to innovate and create solutions for eliminating barriers that keep people from finding and following Jesus. Depending not on our own strength but the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Seeking ways to learn from each other! Finding ways to encourage and inspire one another! Generously sharing our resources with each other!
- 5. Generosity** We understand that we can not out give God. We are the owners of nothing and stewards of everything. To this we resolve to personally model generosity to our churches and to lead these churches to excel in the grace of giving. We will model generosity in our communities, to the regional ministries of Converge MidAmerica and to the ends of the earth.