

Pastoral Teaching: SBC's Health – Our What, Why, How, and Commitments

(Pas. Baines, Jr. 11/2015r)

Our What. In spite of over 80% of US churches being in decline, *including SBC*, and in spite of many Pastor's quitting or burning out, we have made up our minds to let God use us to bring glory to Him, by **turning SBC into a healthier church** (i.e., healthy churches are growing churches; see Jn. 11:3-4; 5:6). By prayerfully and faithfully pursuing our mission of evangelizing and edifying God's way (see Mt. 28:19-20), we envision the following by the end of 2020: at least 400 people a week experiencing transformative worship, at least 250 people a week growing in our growth groups, and demonstrating noted community involvement (i.e., 2,500 hours/yr. and \$30k donations/yr. for Avondale and vicinity).¹

Our Why. We believe that the fulfillment of our church's vision will bring glory to God and will be a rich blessing to us, our loved ones, and Avondale and vicinity.

Our How. We will pursue our mission, by using our relational influence and strategic ministry efforts to help people move from their first encounter with SBC to growing in our growth groups (i.e., our disciple making process).

Our Commitments. Based on my understanding of and belief in the above, I support our God given vision (see Acts 16:9-10) and commit to the following:

1. Prayer. *I will seriously pray for my consistent discipleship, the wisdom and strength of my Pastor, my Pastor's helpers, the health of my church family, and the binding of all demonic and negative forces.* More specifically, from January 1, 2016 until March 31, 2016, I will pray personally for these issues every day around 12 noon (or when I can); I will pray with my church family about these issues every week, during our prayer time (or when I can);² I will pray with my church family about these issues during the announced special prayer meetings (i.e., Wed. 1/6; 2/3; and 3/23; or as I am able); and I will keep my church in my regular prayers after this special effort (see *Mk. 11:17*).

I believe that prayer can change things and can change me, as God sees fit (see Jn. 14:13). I am praying for myself, because the body is made of parts like me (see Rom. 12:5). I pray for my Pastor because I love Him, and I know the devil wants to strike him and scatter the sheep (see Mt. 26:31). I believe that the Pastor needs good helpers around him, so he can focus on those things that God places on his heart (see Ex. 18:25-26; Acts 6:1-6). I am praying for the health of my church family, because growth in one area without balanced growth in other areas will cause trouble. And I am praying for the binding of negative and demonic forces, because the devil is trying to kill our church family (see Eph. 6:12; Lk. 22:3; I Pet. 5:8).

¹ We agreed to these matters on 6/30/14, in our strategic plan for 2020.

² We will add a period of pray designated for "church health" in our worship services. All ministry groups, growth groups, etc. are to make time to pray for the church's health, especially during this period.

2. Discipleship. *I will consistently study, serve, and give at SBC.* More specifically, I will be in one of the growth groups or study sessions (or at very least study one of the curriculums independently), so I can feed my faith with the word of God (see Rom. 10:17; Jer. 3:15). I will use my God given abilities (i.e., gifts; see I Pet. 4:10) and passions to serve in one of the strategic ministry groups, including being a registered reacher and regular worshipper. As a registered reacher, I will strive to be a saved disciple and reach for the salvation and discipleship of my loved ones (i.e., *5 significant invites each month, try to bring a guest each month, and try to reach a disciple each year; see Jn. 1:40-42*). I will come to worship at least three Sundays a month and worship with enthusiasm, so that God will be glorified, my spiritual siblings will be edified (see I Cor. 14:26; Ps. 100:1-2), and the unsaved will be inspired to draw closer to God. I will at least strive to tithe and give generous offerings (see Mal. 3:8-10; Mt. 6:21), so that ministry can be done with excellence, as we work on renovations and our endowment.

3. Promotion. *I will consistently affirm the good things about my church, try to recruit more vision supporters, confront challenges that need to be dealt with, and reject negativity.* More specifically, I will talk up the good of my church with those inside and outside my church (see Mk. 2:1-2). I will talk to those in my circle about the benefits of supporting the vision (including submitting the commitment forms – light Mt. 5:13-16 and spurring Heb. 10:24-25). If I am offended, I will lovingly confront the situation (see Mt. 18:15-17). If someone else is offended, I will urge them to lovingly confront the situation, instead of sowing seeds of discord (see Pro. 6:19). I will refuse to let people dump negativity into me. And I will report what I see and hear, if I feel there is a threat to my church family, my Pastor, or any of my church family members (see I Cor. 13:7; Jm. 4:17; I Cor. 5:6-7; Mt. 18:15-17).