



THE POWER OF ONE

MAKING SMALL INVESTMENTS
THAT YIELD BIG RESULTS

PILOT MOUNTAIN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION • 2022 VISION



The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.

MATTHEW 13:31-32

WE ALL WANT TO DO IMPORTANT THINGS.

Every person you meet wants their lives to mean something. No one wants to think that their efforts at work, marriage, parenting, or even ministry will be wasted. The desire to matter and the drive to accomplish are so fundamental to our human condition that advertising agencies push constant messages our way to persuade us to buy products that will perhaps enhance our status or increase our productivity to the degree that we feel successful and secure.

Because of these common desires for overall life-effectiveness, we often think that the pathway to success is paved with big wins fueled by monumental dedication and unwavering discipline. We are told “to swing for the fences,” to “go big or go home,” and even the perennial favorite that “failure is not an option,” all to illustrate the attractive idea that we can accomplish anything as long as we are imaginative and disciplined enough.

While focus, hard work, dreaming big and the strategic application of talent are all basic hallmarks of getting important things done, at some point in our lives we will come to realize that there are rare occurrences when all the stars align and things happen exactly according to our plans. Most of the time, we fail more than we succeed. When we come to grips with this ongoing probability that we will often come short of our goals, we are faced with the reality that we are going to have to come up with a different definition of success.

This reality of losing more than winning is most often seen in the sports world. The sobering truth that outstrips the bravado of motivational thinking is that for every amateur athlete that spends thousands of hours in practice and dozens of visits to physicians to rehab their spent bodies, only a paltry few win championships or don the gold medal. In this view, there are a miniscule number of winners and a host of losers. Would we therefore say that those who don't raise a trophy have wasted their time?

We often apply the same superficial kind of dogma regarding success to how we approach doing church. The churches that explode onto the scene and make a big splash are celebrated, and if they are being faithful to the Gospel, this is justifiable. Smaller churches on the other hand are looked down upon by some as being inherently flawed.

Without a doubt, there are many cases of declining or dying churches that are smaller because they have lost sight for why they exist. But not all smaller churches are devoid of missional impact. This is true on one level because in our denomination, ninety percent of churches that meet on Sunday Mornings have less than two-hundred in attendance. Many of these churches faithfully proclaim the Gospel, love on their communities, give sacrificially to missional endeavors and make disciples. What is our scorecard of success for them? Is it simply for them to mirror everything their larger siblings are accomplishing?

THE POWER OF ONE

Jesus gives us a different perspective. He tells us that it is often the smallest, seemingly most insignificant investment of faith that yields results we would have never thought possible. Our problem is that we don't believe this. We think that the more people and money you have, the greater the likelihood of success.

But contrary to popular opinion, it is not the breadth of your resources that determine your church's success. Rather, it's how deeply you plant your faith in God, believing that he loves you and wants to use you for his glory. In the Kingdom of God, one simple act of faith can move a person or a church into a whole other level of spiritual effectiveness.

This principle of "the power of one" is at work all around us. For instance, moving water from 211° to 212° fahrenheit shifts it from hot to boiling. World records are measured in one-tenth of a second in such events as the 100 and 200-meter sprints. And one pivotal conversation can keep point a troubled teen down a path that results in a distinguished military career versus seeing them careen downward into a life of crime, or even worse their death. One is a big number when it nudges us over some form of a tipping point.

Beyond everyday examples like the previous ones mentioned, we see the "the power of one" at work throughout the Scripture. God uses normal people, doing ordinary things to bring about extraordinary results. In fact, we can say that God specializes in taking the insignificant and even weak things and performing miracles.

Think about the time when Jesus took five loaves and two fishes and fed over five thousand people. This story has become so rote for us that our imaginations have been dulled to how the power of God showed up in an unexpected way. When Jesus challenged the disciples to feed the hungry masses after a long day of ministry, they came up empty with any solutions except an almost sarcastic suggestion about a young man's supply.

How would you have felt if faced with the same challenge? There were no long-term strategic plans in place. Neither was there a marketing company giving advice as to what event they could organize that would motivate people to give. There was just Jesus, his bewildered followers,

a bunch of hungry people and a kid with his lunch. But Jesus' transformation of the lunch of one young man into an abundant feast illustrated that he didn't need much to do something amazing.

SUCCESS IN LIGHT OF THE PANDEMIC

In our own way, the Pandemic has stripped us down at times and left us with reduced options and resources. If the last eighteen months have taught us anything is that our best laid plans can go up in smoke in a very short time, leaving us scurrying about looking for alternative ideas, desperately hoping we can come up with quick solutions before we lose too much momentum. A lot of us have felt like Moses on the backside of the desert, complaining to God about how he expected the forgotten shepherd to fulfill his plan because he had come to believe that the days of doing something important had passed us by. Just like Moses, we feel our past failures disqualify us from future fruitfulness.

The leaders of the PMBA could have looked at all the indicators of decline and thrown their hands up in a spirit of resignation and said, "The challenge is too great!" But they didn't. They courageously took a stand and moved out in faith. The result was that over the previous five years we have seen major changes made at the PMBA to move the Association from a Resource Center Model of ministry, where church leaders came to us for help and training, to a Resource Channel Model where we have sought to take these applications out to churches across our footprint.

As we begin another five-year planning cycle for the PMBA I want us to not think in grandiose terms of large goals or audacious plans but to ask ourselves this question: What are some things we have learned over the past five years that will help our churches build lifelong followers of Jesus Christ? This vision document endeavors to do just that.

ENCOURAGING LEADERS

When we activated the diligent work of revitalizing the Association over five and one-half years ago, we realized that we were often guilty of assuming we knew what pastors and staff members needed. What we discovered was that we too frequently missed the mark. From that point of realization, we started to offer resources and services that were designed to encourage ministers so that they had the resilience to not only survive but thrive in their lives and ministries. Under the guidance of Nathan Cline, the Leadership and Development Team, staff, and our churches we were able to do the following:

- Sponsored four free Pastor Appreciation Banquets for Sr. Pastors and their wives with an average of forty-six couples in attendance per year.
 - Sponsored two heavily discounted Marriage Retreats at The Cove with an average of forty-four couples in attendance per year.
 - Provided up to five free counseling sessions for twelve different staff members/family members of PMBA churches at a local Christian Counseling Center.
 - Started seven Impact Groups made up of pastors across our footprint that met to develop collegial relationships which in turn helped to stimulate collaborative missional activities.
 - Backed three different leadership training venues that helped forty-two different pastors and ministry leaders.
 - Sent hundreds of books to local pastors on topics that would assist them in their shepherding and leadership skills.
- From everything we have learned about encouraging pastors over the last five years, I believe one thing we can focus on next year to boost this investment is to *provide an assortment of developmental tools and coaching practices which help to encourage leaders* in the following ways:
- Continue to offer the Marriage Retreat and Pastor Appreciation Banquet.
 - Increase free counseling sessions to six-per PMBA churches.
 - Launch a new service called LeaderCare designed to provide a free spiritual health checkup for any Sr. Pastor with a licensed Christian psychologist and ordained minister.
 - Partner with the BSCNC in offering free/discounted retreats to ministry couples and opportunities for pastors to take much needed sabbaticals.
 - Provide free assessments and coaching to pastors who want to improve their overall leadership skills.



EQUIPPING CHURCHES

It has been estimated that anywhere from 80-90% of churches need some form of revitalization, or in some cases even replanting. If this is true, it is incumbent upon the leaders of the PMBA to do everything within our power to help facilitate this process. Under the guidance of A. J. Reynolds, the Church Health Team, staff, and our churches we were able to do the following:

- Took eleven churches through a six-month cohort on revitalization called “Re-Focus.”
- Trained twenty pastors in revitalization consulting/coaching skills and processes.
- Sponsored a conference called “Revitalize” held at Old Town Baptist with author/speaker Mark Clifton from NAMB and Christian singer Steve Green totaling over one-hundred and fifty in attendance.
- Helped to facilitate a first-ever in the state of NC “Trauma Intervention” with a local church that suddenly lost its pastor.
- Offered “Pastor Prayer Retreats” that helped dozens of ministers find respite and renewal.
- Release a brand-new disciple-making model/curriculum called “Disciple-Cycle” to provide one way any sized church can initiate a movement.
- Train existing approved interim preachers in a Transitional Pastor process called “ReNew” for churches that are without a pastor.
- Provide free “Prayer Walks” training for churches that want to find simple ways to engage their communities.
- Launch a new partnership with the BSCNC to have missionally-effective churches partner with churches that want to boost their missional impact.
- Grow Impact Groups and continue teaching the “Leadership Loop” curriculum.
- Provide free assessments and coaching to pastors who want to improve their overall revitalization skills.
- Continue to offer more in-depth revitalization options through proven platforms like “ReFocus.”

As we have gleaned insights over the last five years regarding the offerings, one way we can boost our capacity to equip churches *by offering various types of revitalization experiences and tools*. Here are the commitments we have made for next year:



EXPANDING CHURCHES

When we began the revitalization process of the PMBA it had been a few years since we had helped to plant any church locally or abroad. Under the guidance of Mark Harrison, the Church Planting Team, staff, and our churches were able to do the following:

- Assisted in helping to plant eight local churches through financial support, coaching, and consulting resulting with these new churches baptizing over 500 people to date.
- Facilitated three replants/mergers that resulted in over 200 baptisms to date.
- Sponsored a church plant in Calgary, Canada which is working with NAMB and local agencies to reach one of the most unreached regions in North America.
- Partnered with Christ Together and the BSCNC to create the Triad Church Multiplication Initiative which helps to assess and train local church planters.
- Assisted in one local church plant that launched a school for underprivileged children in the Waughtown area of Winston-Salem.

These incredible stories of successful Kingdom expansion have caused us to see that every church should not only be a disciple-making center but also a church-planting generator. One way we can help churches do this is to *diversify our approach to church planting*. From this conviction about how to organically expand church planting, we are looking to do the following in 2022:

- Continue to support existing church plants.
- Continue to partner with BSCNC, Christ Together, NAMB, IMB and others that have solid platforms for assessing and training church planters which embrace a multiplication model of church planting.
- Create a new assessment and training platform for bi-vocational church planters to do innovative models of church planting.
- Assist churches in identifying and cultivating co-vocational church planters.
- Look for new opportunities for church planting locally, particularly in “pockets of lostness.”
- Help churches to develop a “Core-Team” approach where other leaders beyond the Lead Pastor are identified and trained,



ENGAGING BROKENNESS

The last five years have seen a shift from “one-time event” approaches of ministering to lost and broken people to more strategic investments in “boots on the ground” ministries. The heart of this shift was to enlist more churches to partner with other churches to do ministry in their regions. Under the guidance of Sherri Montgomery, the Community Impact Team, staff, and our churches were able to do the following:

- Helped local ministries like Mission NC, Backyard Bible and Healing Ministries reach hundreds of families in low-income multi-housing complexes and underprivileged areas to do various needs-based ministries from a Gospel-centered approach.
- Provided over 100,000 meals through our ministry partners and churches with multiple-Gospel presentations made.
- Gave over 15,000 children free Christmas gifts, growing Toy Store Centers from five to eight.
- Gave \$25,000 to BSCNC Baptists on Mission for hurricane relief.
- Sponsored a city-wide “Building Bridges Out of Poverty” workshop that had over one-hundred in attendance.
- Transitioned a “Hero House” initially designed for a veteran into a partnership with Habitat for Humanity to provide housing for an underprivileged family.

- Continued to support the “Dixie Classic Fair Outreach Ministry” to fair workers with free dental and medical care.
- Launched the first-ever “Missions Blast Month” with seven PMBA churches collaborating at Parkway Plaza offering free dental and medical care along with activities for children. Over 100 volunteers were present, drawing approximately 300 people. At least 75 gospel conversations took place at this event.

Learning from all of these experiences, one way we can be even more effective in engaging brokenness is to *look for more community-focused or even regionally-based ways to serve others in an ongoing manner by doing* the following things:

- Expand “Missions Blast Month” from August to include all the summer months.
- Connect more church planting initiatives to community-based ministries.
- Mobilize hunger initiatives to reach more directly into neighborhoods.
- Continue to support partner ministries like Missions NC, Backyard Bible, and Healing Ministries, providing them discipling resources.
- Focus more on neighborhood-based evangelism through an initiative call “Fill the Streets.”
- Grow Toy Stores to reach 10,000 plus kids per year.



ENTERING A NEW ERA

The past several months have been tough on everyone. They have challenged us to be more resilient, more adaptable, more patient and more innovative. As one pastor put it to me a while back, “I now have two jobs: My role as a pastor and my role as a COVID coordinator.” I know that this dynamic has worn many leaders thin. We understand and are here for you.

Yet God has not ceased to be good, sovereign, loving and powerful in the midst of these great challenges. Out of His abundant wisdom and strength He provides a way in the midst of our desert. He leads us to places where we can rest and renew. He places our feet on sure ground at the top of great heights. He opens new highways of ministry.

It is with these convictions and hope we offer a new era of ministry for the PMBA. It is built upon the sure foundations of our faithful predecessors. It has been forged in the midst of great trials and tribulations. It is anchored in the character and brilliance of our Savior Jesus Christ. Will you join us as we seek to implement the “power of one?”



**PILOT MOUNTAIN
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

407 Petree Road
Winston-Salem, NC 27106

P.O. Box 11843
Winston-Salem, NC 27116-1843

Phone: 336-830-8189

www.pmba.org