

Mission Summit Conversation Topics – June 2013

Our Leaders

101. Adaptive Leadership – How can we recognize, seek, embrace, and implement the concepts of adaptive and transformational leadership amidst a rapidly changing culture?

102. Discipleship - Discipleship as the commitment and practice of mature and faithful followers of Jesus Christ is increasingly difficult to achieve. How can and will we address this challenge in the 21st Century in forming authentic Christian disciples?

103. Gifts for Ministry – Much of the giftedness of people in our congregations seems to go unnoticed or is underutilized. How can we shift from filling slots in our congregations to utilizing gifts for ministry?

104. Lay Leadership - Raising Up, Training, and Mobilizing Lay Leadership needs a new look. How can all God's people, each of whom has been given spiritual gifts, discover their giftedness and engage in active ministry in their communities?

105. Next Generation of Leaders - What must be done to help our churches be able to intentionally pass on our traditions and the responsibilities for church leadership in cultivating future leaders?

106. Pastoral Attrition - There is an increasing pattern of pastoral attrition—people leaving the ministry—especially after the first five years of ministry? How can we curb this trend?

107. Spiritual Discernment – How can we re-envision both congregational and pastoral leadership as a practice of spiritual discernment, spiritual giftedness, and maturity in matters of faith rather than as a function of organizational philosophies of a past era when life was less complex and change occurred more slowly?

108. Teaming – Many congregations and regions are being asked to do more ministry tasks with fewer staff and fewer resources. How can teams, volunteers, and partnerships be re-envisioned to respond to the demands of ministry in a resource-stretched world?

109. Women in Ministry - Women in ordained ministry continue to be under-represented in ABC ministry in terms of the proportion of ordained women who are available to serve, especially in significant leadership roles. How can these barriers be overcome?

110. Younger Generations of Women – How can the vision of recruiting, equipping, and supporting a younger generation of American Baptist women be realized?

Our Witness

201. Beloved Community - What has to happen for our congregations to be able to more deeply develop relationships where all are included in the lives of our churches—age, class, gender, ethnicity, race, etc.?

202. Church Planting – How do we prayerfully discover and be in community with the people that God misses so greatly and where God is working? Can we discover new and innovative forms of church planting that are effective in light of today's multi-cultural and post-Christian realities?

203. Communication – The new, the different, and the unknown that are so much a part of today's world often lead to communication that is guarded and unnatural. How can we develop trust and safe communication amidst our fears and uneasiness?

204. Congregational Transformation thru Missional Outreach - How can congregations be revitalized to bridge the broadening cultural gaps in our society so that they are addressing the ministry challenges that are outside the church walls?

205. Covenantal Relationships – Partnering together leads to more effective ministry and is a witness to the world. How can we more effectively be in covenant with one another as a witness to society?

206. Evangelism and Missional Outreach - How can we overcome the dual challenge of the culture's low view of the church and the church's low view of its mission? What should ministry look like in the local contexts of churches that are seeking to respond to the changing needs of their community in order to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

207. Evangelism as a Way of Life - How can our members and churches embrace evangelism (and the growth of the church) as a way of life, so that our witness flows more naturally from our discipleship journeys?

208. Identity – How do we improve awareness of and commitment to our American Baptist identity and relationships while training and encouraging followers of Christ to live out their faith by joining in missional partnerships with others in Kingdom-impacting ways?

209. Neighborhoods - How can churches which now find themselves increasingly out of step with their neighborhoods and community contexts reconnect with these communities so that they are impacting people's lives with the Gospel?

210. Violence – What voice should be given to violence in our communities and what ministry activities should occur to help us understand, respond, and reduce such violence?

Our Future

301. Aging Buildings and Viable Congregations - How can congregations which struggle with the high costs of maintaining aging buildings be freed to do the important ministry so needed in their communities?

302. Alternative Models of Pastoral Leadership - Many small congregations are unable to employ full-time, seminary trained pastors. How can we recruit, form, place and support leaders who are able to fill the ministry need—what different pastoral “mode” is required?

303. Camping – Camping ministries have transformed lives and created numerous meaningful experiences for youth and adults, but how can these outdoor assets best be used in the future as we think through a new way of doing camp?

304. Families of the Future - Given the complexities of contemporary culture and our changing contexts of ministry, what does it mean to be a 21st century family and to be supported as a family in our church today?

305. Form of Future Congregations - How will local congregations in the future be birthed, shaped, formed and supported to engage their changing ministry contexts?

306. Generational Gaps - What kind of congregational transformation will be necessary for our churches to bridge generational gaps and reach younger adults and youth more effectively?

307. Networking and Associations – How can the concepts of networking help to retrieve and recast the associational principle and how can our Baptist distinctive of associational life enhance ministry for the 21st century?

308. Small Congregations - How do small congregations, some of which are vital, but many of which are struggling, form creative partnerships for ministry that are external to their walls and memberships?

309. Social Media – How can new technologies such as social media become a ministry tool for today’s congregations?

310. Survival Tendencies – How can we move out of our comfort zones and beyond our fears and our survival mentality in order to relevantly address the needs of changing communities and new generations.