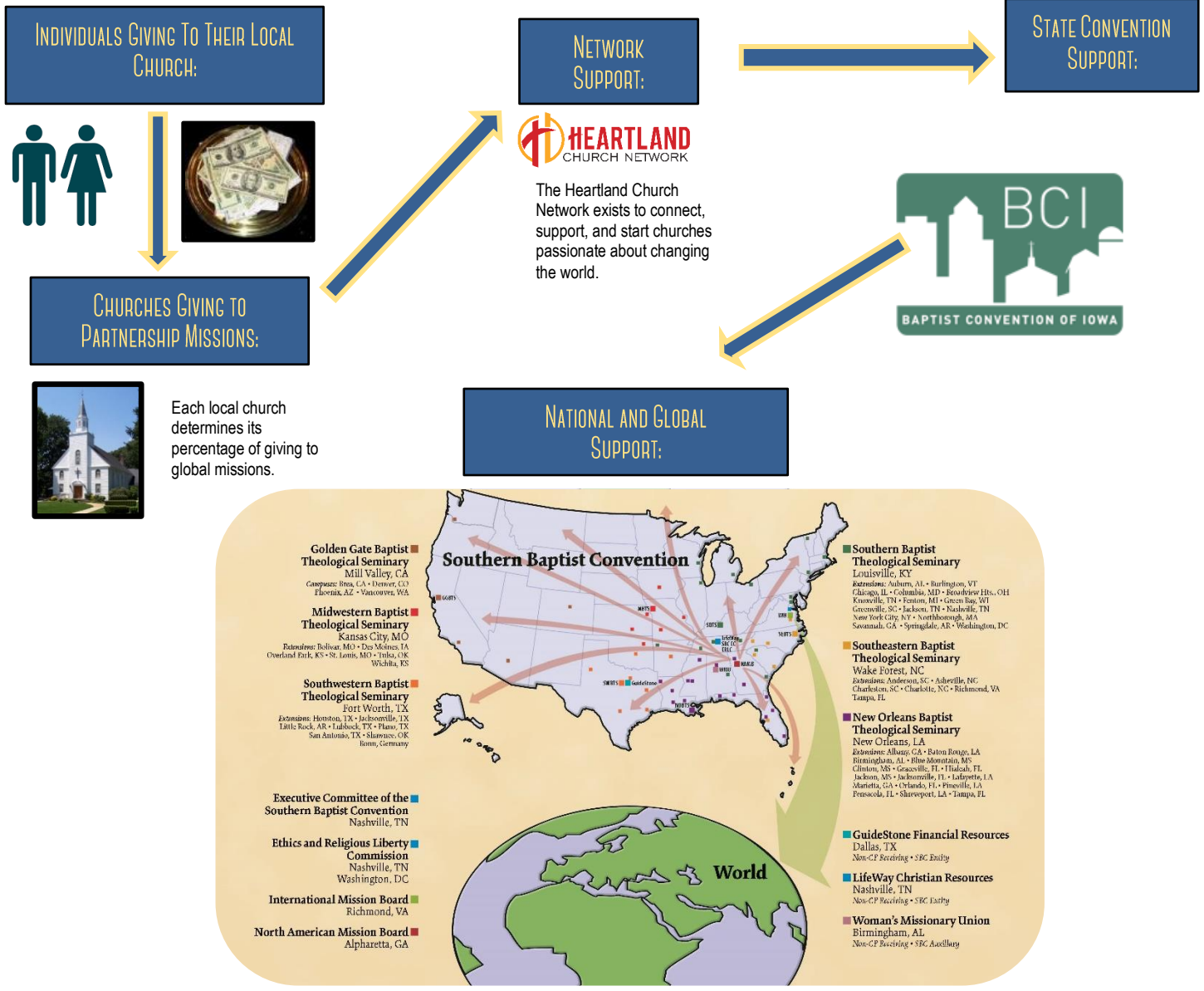


SBC COOPERATIVE MISSIONS

A STRATEGY THAT SUPPORTS AN ACTS 1:8 GLOBAL VISION



What does it mean to be a cooperating Southern Baptist Church?

An important thing to note is that every cooperating Southern Baptist Church is independent—no church loses its autonomy when it becomes part of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) world.

What it does mean is that a church has intentionally chosen to participate in a global Christian community that will expand the current and eternal impact of a local church of ANY size. It also means that your church is part of the most ethnically diverse Christian body in America.

In addition, the following values drive a typical SBC church:

- **Biblical Roots** – they are people with an unapologetic passion for God’s Word and historic Christian beliefs.
- **Baptistic Theology** – they are Baptists and share the statement of faith as communicated in the *Baptist Faith and Message*. Very few evangelical churches will have difficulty giving a hearty AMEN to this summary of key Biblical beliefs.
- **Cooperative Spirit** – because they know that no single church can do it alone, they choose to cooperate with like-minded churches. Working together, SBC churches have experienced the synergy that occurs when Christians look beyond themselves and in a self-sacrificing manner seek to be salt and light to a lost and dying world.

- **Passion for Evangelism and Missions** – SBC churches have a tradition of being evangelistic and missional with a willingness to be sacrificial in their global mission efforts to fulfill the Great Commission as commanded in Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8.
- **Commitment to Biblical Disciple Making** – with an historic emphasis on the Priesthood of All Believers, SBC churches continue to emphasize that it is every Christian’s responsibility to grow in both knowledge and obedience to our Lord’s commands. We also know that personal growth happens best in relational, accountable, obedience based, and biblically centered small groups. Such groups have been called *Sunday School* in the past and now go by a variety of names, meet in various places, and gather at different times.

Why would a church want to be part of the Southern Baptist Convention?

- **Worldwide missions engagement.** Your church would become part of the largest global mission force in Christian history. With an ever shrinking world you can have personal contact with a missionary from almost any nation in the world
- **Training for effective ministry.** Members of your church would have access to a reduced tuition rate at SBC Bible colleges and seminaries. In addition, experienced state convention and associational staff would be available for your one-on-one and church consultation needs.
- **Access to educational and outreach resources.** In addition to leadership training, consulting, and coaching your church would have access to numerous high quality resources: media library materials, Block Party Trailers, Disaster Relief Equipment, children’s and youth camps, targeted training events, etc.
- **Tax exempt status.** If your church does not have its own 501(c)(3) non-profit status, you would qualify for that status under the SBC umbrella.
- **Access to national and state convention entities.** On the state convention level you would have access to the services of the Baptist Convention of Iowa. On the national level GuideStone Financial provides an IRS qualifying retirement program with significant advantages for pastors and ministry staff.
- **Network and fellowship opportunities.** Through a local network, as well as state and national convention partnerships, you would never be very far from a sister SBC church. This network of mutual ministry support provides an instant caring and compassionate network in a time of need.
- **Financial ministry assistance.** Churches involved in evangelistic, leadership development, or church planting activities, may receive financial assistance to support their efforts.

How would my church formally connect with the Southern Baptist Convention?

The process is relatively simple. Contact the Heartland Church Network, and HCN will send you a petitionary letters. This is a “fill in the blank” form letter stating that your church officially requests affiliation with the Heartland Church Network. HCN will coordinate a mutually agreeable time to meet face-to-face with leaders from your church and representatives of the HCN Administrative Work Group. If both parties are in agreement, your church would be recommended for affiliation at the next formal meeting of HCN. For information on affiliation with the Baptist Convention of Iowa go to bciowa.org and click the *How my church can join the BCI* button under the *About* tab.

What does it mean to be an active Southern Baptist Church?

Ongoing SBC affiliation involves two broad areas: **Participation** and **Financial Support**. In the participation area, partner churches are granted voting rights as defined by the individual by-laws of the Heartland Church Network, the State convention, and the National convention. Church leaders are encouraged to be informed and involved in any and all SBC sponsored events. There are no “mandatory” events, as each church is invited to be involved as they choose.

In the financial support area, the Heartland Church Network by-laws requests a minimum financial contribution of \$300 per year. There are some minimum levels of support required at the state and national convention levels for a church to be able to take advantage of some SBC benefits. In 1925 Southern Baptist initiated what has been called the Cooperative Program – Partnership Missions might be a good way to describe it in today’s language. Each church is encouraged to designate a specific percentage of their general receipts to be pooled with other SBC churches for the support of Network, State, and National convention budgets. A “tithe” or 10% has been suggested as a baseline with 6% used for the support of state and national convention causes and 4% used for local associational ministries. Unless otherwise specified by the local church, partnership missions dollars sent through HCN will be distributed in a 60/40 ration; 60% sent on for state and national convention support and 40% retained for HCN support.