

## Report from Superintendent- August 13, 2021

It has been a challenging pleasure to serve this past year. As I have become more familiar with our churches, it has been great to talk with people, pastors and clerks. There is both joy and distress as we evaluate where we are. We can be thankful that God has entrusted to us a task Bigger than we are, which forces us to our knees in prayer, and to Faith beyond ourselves.

One of the main responsibilities of the Superintendent is to work with “small, churches.” More of my time this year has been spent in trying to provide encouragement and help for those churches. Most of our churches are smaller, but not all have equal struggles. The cries that I most often hear are about low attendance, limited willing workers, and aging congregations. Fortunately, one very bright spot for us is that very few, if any, congregations have financial problems: Church Facilities are paid for, debt is absent, and contributions are higher in many places. And many of our churches have considerable, even large, bank accounts.

Another bright spot is our group of pastors! I have met with them in various ways, but have tried to meet with all in one-on-one sessions. Most of our pastors are committed to the Lord, and doing a great job. Some face difficult circumstances with aging congregations. I believe pastors were stressed more than anyone else during the past year. I am available to our pastors essentially 24/7. They deserve support and encouragement. It is a challenge to stay fresh and in tune with the Holy Spirit. We should recognize that in society today, pastors are more important to the church than in generations past. As you enhance your pastors, their ministry will enhance you! I search to recruit pastors and youth leaders, and have some ideas about that going forward. We seek new ways to strengthen them. Ex.-Pastors zooming online to pray together. And another new idea we are working on is to bring together pastor’s wives.

It has been good to have Rusty Parsons, a retired pastor, to assist with church visitation. Between us, we have been able to worship with more congregations this year! Each week, I have emailed a short message with prayer concerns for FCNC to a representative of each church, and have posted videos through the ComTech committee on Facebook. If you would like to be on the eMail list, just give me your eMail address.

I want to encourage us to support Odre Nuevo, the Hispanic church in Yadkinville. They are doing great work for the kingdom. This might be considered as mission work in our midst, since North Carolina is now 10% Hispanic. We have translated the doctrinal portion of F&P into Spanish for them

My great concern at this juncture is that as a whole, we lack VISION, and FAITH. Too much we center on preserving the past, rather than increasing the Kingdom of Christ. Growing the Kingdom was one reason we did a virtual Revival last fall- to inspire us to focus on the Kingdom. When FCNC was formed 3 years ago, we talked a lot about changing- to minister in a new way to a changed society. Becoming more innovative for the Great Commission is vital! Planting some new churches in population areas would not be a bad idea, especially if we have youth moving to those areas. But as FCNC, we have to *WANT* to do it! We have to be willing to accept newcomers where they are, rather than expecting them to adhere to our traditions. And we need to practice FAITH- that means that all answers and resources are not up front- but we step out in obedience to the Living Christ, trusting Him to bless and provide.

Pray. Keep a positive attitude. Rather than complaining about something you don’t like, roll up your sleeves and help work on something you do like! Reach out to your community. Call me for help/advice etc. when you need it. Remember - we are the Body of Christ ministering in 29 different communities; we are in this together!