

GuideStone trustees affirm strategic plan

March 6, 2023

DALLAS (BP) – GuideStone trustees affirmed a new strategic plan during their regular meeting Feb. 27-28 in Plano.

“The strategy pursues stronger, more efficient and effective SBC ministry partnerships in order to expand our kingdom reach,” GuideStone President Hance Dilbeck told trustees.



Hance Dilbeck

“A year ago now, when [former president] O.S. Hawkins passed the baton to me, he reminded me that the chair of his search committee told him, ‘Take something great and make it greater.’ We’re placing this new strategic plan under the word, ‘Reach.’ That’s what the word ‘reach’ is about—taking something great and making it greater.

“We’re thankful for the foundation that we are building on so we can make an even greater impact for our members and ministry partners.”

The Reach Strategy flows from the GuideStone vision—“Every servant of Christ finishes well”— and its mission—“We enhance financial security and resilience for those who serve the Lord.”

“The reason we say ‘enhance,’ is because we can’t do this for our members or ministry partners,” Dilbeck said. “We can lead, advocate and guide, but at the end of the day, they have decisions to make.

“Financial security is our lane. Our place in the kingdom is to help those who serve Christ with financial security. It means freedom from anxiety and freedom to pursue what God calls you to do.

“The reason we say ‘resilience’ is we want to help our churches and ministries connect financial security with that larger idea of wellness. Resilience is the capacity to bounce back, to endure unexpected hardship. Living with enough margin to get through the hard times.”

Dilbeck tied the mission and vision to 1 Timothy 4:16, which reads, “Pay close attention to your life and your teaching; persevere in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.”

“Most pastors do a good job paying attention to their teaching, but we want to come alongside them and make sure they’re also paying attention to themselves and their households.” Dilbeck said.

Time of transition

Trustees reelected John Hoychick Jr. (La.) chairman and David Cox (Mich.) vice chairman.

With the retirement of longtime chief operating officer John R. Jones, the board elected Chu Soh to succeed Jones and Nadeena Kersey to serve as chief insurance officer.

Kersey joined the ministry last year, and Soh joined GuideStone as chief insurance officer in June 2020. Jones will serve the remainder of 2023 as special assistant to the executive office.

“2022 and 2023 are years that, if we had to sum them up with one word, that would be ‘transitions,’” Dilbeck said. “Transitions are a big deal, so we have approached these transitions —from O.S. Hawkins to me and from John Jones to Chu Soh—with humility, intentionality and bathed in prayer.”

Emergency Grant Fund named for Hawkins



Trustees recognized Hawkins, president emeritus of GuideStone, by renaming a special fund, the O.S. and Susie Hawkins Emergency Grant Fund. The Hawkins fund was established to provide the emergency needs of the financially poorest Mission:Dignity recipients. Those emergency needs could include hearing aids, eyeglasses, dentures, medical bills and home repairs. Today, Mission:Dignity recipients in this income level earn an average of \$1,033

monthly.

“One of the dear pastor widows we serve makes even less,” Aaron Meraz, director of Mission:Dignity, told trustees. “Her monthly income is less than \$900, and recently she needed new eyeglasses that would cost her \$550. We were able to come alongside her because of these grants and help ensure she could have the glasses she needs.”

Meraz told trustees the Hawkins Emergency Grant Fund is in addition to gifts given to continue to provide monthly grants to more than 2,800 retired pastors and their widows.

“Our history as the people of God brings both humility and hope,” Dilbeck said. “We didn’t get here without the Lord’s good hand on us. Since he’s

been faithful to us in the past, we can trust he will continue to be faithful in the future. I believe our best days are very much in front of us.”