

BGCT partners with Northwest and Michigan Baptists

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Texas Baptists began the new year by entering missions partnerships with the Northwest Baptist Convention and the Baptist State Convention of Michigan.

The Northwest Baptist Convention serves churches in Washington, Oregon and Northern Idaho. Both three-year partnerships include assisting with church starting and revitalization efforts.

“We aren’t just serving Texas. We are serving Texas Baptists, wherever they want to work,” said Tom Howe, director of urban missions and partnerships for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Howe encouraged Texas Baptist churches and pastors to pray about ways they can support missions in Michigan and the Northwest. Opportunities include sending mission teams, contributing financially and committing to pray for specific mission points.

As part of the reciprocal partnerships, church leaders from Michigan and the Northwest plan to support missions efforts in Texas. For example, churches from Michigan are collecting items for hygiene kits to provide to refugees and deportees who are served daily by Texas River Ministry missionaries along the Texas/Mexico border.

Focus on starting and revitalizing

churches



Leonard Hornsby (3rd from left), executive pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mansfield, and Roy Cotton (3rd from right, director of African-American ministries with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, visit with Detroit-area church leader to discuss community outreach. (BGCT Photo)

The partnership with Michigan Baptists will include church starting support, church revitalization and replanting support, and a specialized focus connecting evangelistic urban pastors of healthy Texas churches with church leaders in the Detroit area.

The new relationship emphasizes forming a strong alliance between the BGCT and Michigan Baptists to facilitate growth and strength in disciple-making churches in Michigan. Additionally, the Detroit Proposal aims to use a three-fold strategy to engage communities, leading churches to be attractational, relational and missional.

“Detroit is a city that has had great decline but that is poised for a great

rebound. We can be a part of that,” Howe said. “Besides Detroit, we will be helping churches and pastors throughout all of Michigan to start, strengthen and grow.”

In October, Roy Cotton, director of BGCT African-American ministries, took a group of pastors to Detroit to meet with local ministers and discuss innovative ways to reach communities. Future trips are planned to continue the work of encouraging and strengthening the inner-city churches.

Continuing collegiate ministry in Northwest

BGCT Executive Director David Hardage attended the Northwest Baptist Convention’s annual meeting in November to announce the new partnership.



Texas Baptists began sending student missionaries to serve in the Northwest in 1958. Go Now Missions student missionaries consistently have served in the region since 1990. Recently, Baptist Student Ministries sent teams from

Texas to serve in various capacities to strengthen collegiate ministry and will continue to do so through the new partnership.

Students from BSMs in the Northwest also have participated in mission trips to Texas, on campuses such as Tarleton State University in Stephenville.

In addition to partnering with collegiate ministry, Texas Baptists also will invite affiliated churches and associations to partner with church starts in

the Northwest for financial assistance, mission trips, block parties and training for pastoral staff and deacons.

Pastors and associational directors of missions interested in exploring partnerships in either region are invited to attend vision trips this spring: Portland, Ore., Jan. 27-30; Seattle, Wash., Feb. 24-27; Detroit, Mich., April 10-13; Eastern Washington, May 5-8, and Southern Oregon, May 19-22. For more information, email tom.howe@texasbaptists.org or call (214) 828-5278.