



Jody and I just returned from North Carolina after a wonderful visit with our son and daughter in law and our new grandson, Kaleb.

We always wonder how our children and grandchildren will end up. One thing we know is almost certain, if we do not purposefully dream, plan and invest in their lives, the outcome is usually dismal at best.

We are refreshed and ready for the summer with our NorthCoast family. However, the same questions can arise in ministry. If we don't purposefully dream, plan and invest in the ministry, the outcome is dismal at best.

I have a dream of an Association along the NorthCoast that is known for its impact around the globe. I have a dream where 50% of associational giving goes to our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the rest of the world as we send teams to these regions. I have a dream where churches of like-minded faith want to partner with us because they see the Kingdom impact made through our own partnering together. I have a dream where our churches report numbers of people not only being saved, baptized and discipled, but sent out. I have a dream where we will rejoice at "losing" people in our congregations because they are being sent to start new congregations. This dream is so much bigger than me and you and so much more than I have mentioned, but it is a dream and there is a plan.

Do you have a dream?



Over the past few months, I have been working to cast a vision for the NorthCoast Baptist Association. I have met with many of you and pray that you will partner with me in this vision that I believe is God-directed and Kingdom focused. I am praying that this will cause you to look at where you are leading your congregation and perhaps cause you to cast a unique vision for your congregation.

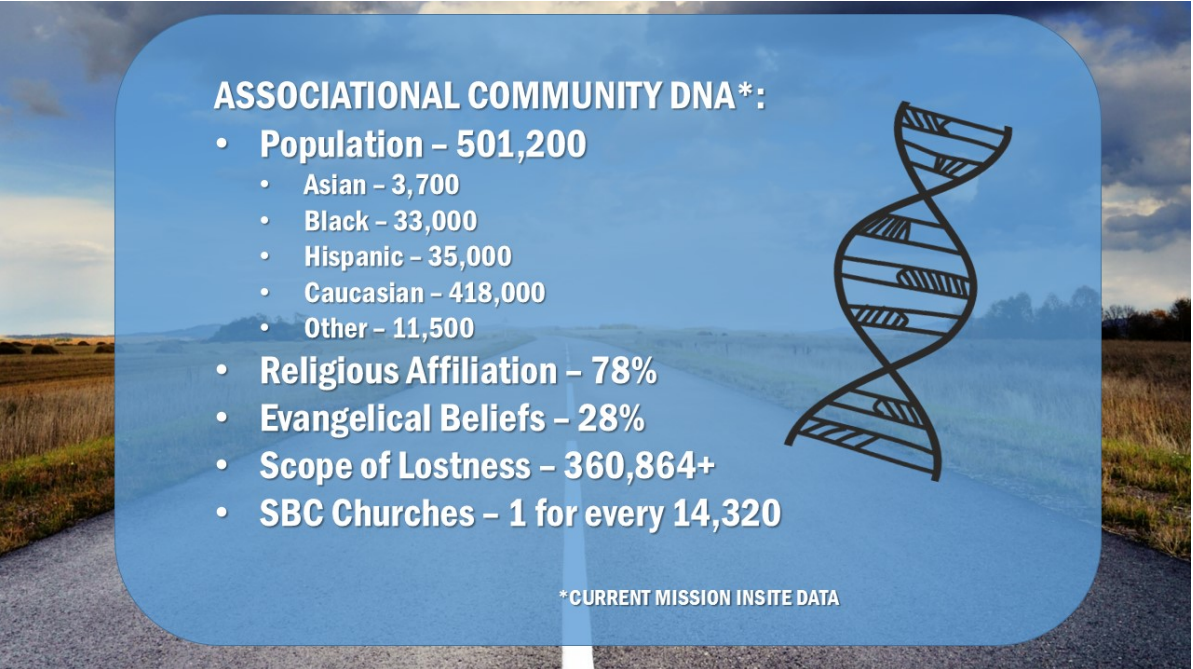
Before we get to the vision, let's look at our DNA as an association and the communities we are reaching. We have our problems, but the dream reveals greater potential.

A look at the past 5 years...



Numbers do tell stories. Over the past 5 years in ACP reporting, our Association has declined in attendance, baptisms and giving. The good news is that in 2016, we have already seen attendance climbing in a few congregations. However, we have much work to do. While we are decreasing in numbers, the lost are increasing in numbers.

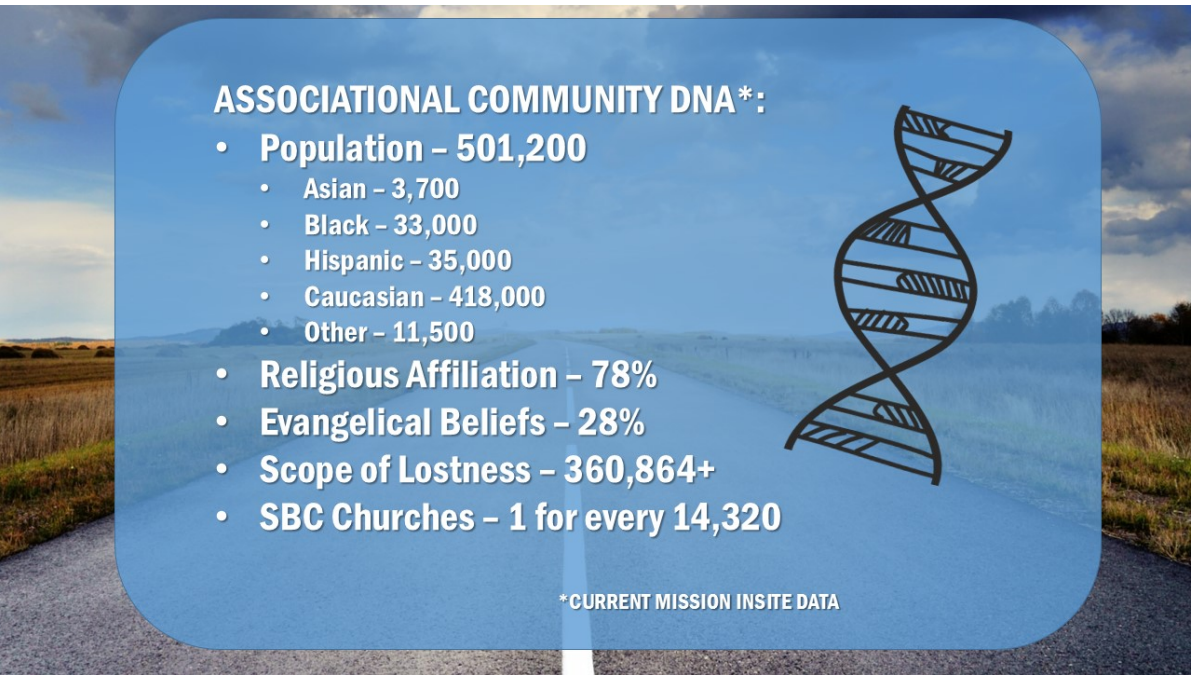
Our current community makeup...



There are plenty of people to reach with the gospel. The question to ask is are we trying to reach them? The days of people wanting to come to a revival service or attend a church outing are gone. Our mentality has to shift from "come and see our church" to "go and be the church". Numbers do tell stories, but we can write a different story.

Never has there been an opportunity to reach out to our neighbors, coworkers, and family with the gospel as we have today. We have modes of transportation, technology and social media like never before. We need to look at every method available to convey the message of Jesus Christ. We need to partner together for the greatest impact. However, we can not do this on our own.

A God sized challenge...



Will you take a moment right now and ask God to send laborers into the field? The harvest is truly plentiful. How are you planning to reach your portion of the 361,000 lost in our association? Perhaps it starts with talking to God.

The easiest thing and best thing for you to start to do is to pray for your neighbors. www.pray4everyhome.com allows you to pray for your neighbors, 100 of them, by name. Don't stop there. Greet and meet your neighbors by prayer walking your neighborhood.

In "A look at the future of the NorthCoast Baptist Association - Part 2" we will look at the mission, values, strategy and measurements for the future of our association.

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