Hello Pastors/Treasurers:

It continues to be a joy to serve the Northwest Indiana Baptist Association of churches as their Director of Missions going into my second year. I’m convinced more than ever that our association has unique value and that our cooperation together as gospel focused churches is essential for our long-term vitality and relevance in Northwest Indiana. The challenges are significant but that makes it even more imperative that we are “all in” to this cooperating fellowship. As an association, we have a history of filled churches, of well-attended evangelistic crusades, and large annual meetings. Obviously that is not where we are today. But we cannot live in the nostalgic past or the apathetic present, but we must press forward toward to a hopeful future – a future that looks much different than our past…a future of healthy, gospel-centered, discipleship oriented, biblically contextualized, culturally relevant, reproducing churches cooperating together to transform Northwest Indiana for the glory of Christ. That’s the vision, but that vision can’t be attained isolated from one another…without *each part working properly,*

*making the body grow so that it builds itself up in love* (Eph. 4:15b).

There are small signs that we’re making progress toward this hopeful future. The vision of our Annual Meeting this year was to forge the beginnings of a new identity…to come together as an association of churches with greater energy, participation, celebration, God-focused worship, and forward looking anticipation. The results were a great success to God’s glory! Measured by attendance, the number of churches represented, the sense of God’s Spirit present, and the engagement of God’s people in worship – this was one of our best annual meetings in several years!

In addition we are seeing a greater fellowship among our NWIBA pastors/leaders. This is especially evident in our monthly Pastors Roundtables, which continue to grow in attendance, and encourage and equip our pastors to do effective ministry. Another significant indication that we’re moving forward is God bringing us a Hispanic church planter, Danilo Rodriguez. The fact that we’ve had a number of our churches financially partner with Danilo (as well as the NWIBA partnering with him) is an encouraging sign of increased cooperation.

There are a number of other ways that we see small indicators of moving forward, however these are just the beginning stages. There is much heavy lifting remaining in front of us to get our churches where they are having significant gospel impact in their communities. As an association, we are working to be catalytic in moving our churches toward that goal.

Therefore, as you can conclude, I am a big believer that the NWIBA is an indispensible resource in assisting our churches in fulfilling the mission of God. It is the participation and generous giving of our churches that enables us to make a collective difference throughout Northwest Indiana. Therefore, I’m urging all our churches to give generously to the mission organization closest to the local church – the NWIBA. There is much to be done in moving toward a hopeful future – but in order for this to be realized, we need the involvement and investment of all our churches.

Enclosed you will find all you need to make your church’s giving convenient. In this packet you will find an instruction sheet, giving envelopes, and offering receipts. You may also go to our website at nwibaptist.org to print off offering envelopes. If you have questions, please contact Zelma at the association office at 219-942-6485. Thank you for your generosity!

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Director of Missions. I am anticipating a hopeful future for the churches of the NWIBA!

In His Service,

Wes Rankin

Director of Missions

Northwest Indiana Baptist Association

P.S. Enclosed is an article I wrote last year to our pastors/leaders on the value of associations that will give greater detail of the relevancy of the NWIBA.