News 21 November 2026 | English article

North Carolina Baptists Launch ReachNC to Break 1959 Baptism Record by 2033

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"N.C. Baptists, what would it look like if the North Star of everything we did was to see more people saved and baptized than ever before in our state?"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

North Carolina Baptists have launched ReachNC, a statewide evangelism emphasis aimed at recording the most baptisms in state history by 2033, the 2,000th anniversary of the Great Commission. Executive director-treasurer Todd Unzicker announced the push in his opening address at the 196th annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, held 16-17 November at the Joseph S. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. The meeting drew 2,194 attendees - 1,652 messengers and 542 guests - the highest attendance since 2008.

Unzicker did not open with a statistic. He opened with a confession. He told the messengers that he had lost his own burden for evangelism earlier this year, and he challenged North Carolina Baptists to renew their commitment to sharing the Gospel.

"N.C. Baptists, what would it look like if the North Star of everything we did was to see more people saved and baptized than ever before in our state?" He asked. The record he wants to break has stood for 67 years: 36,435 baptisms in 1959, the highest total in state history.

The gap between then and now is the story. In 2025, North Carolina Baptists reported 18,461 baptisms - a 49.3 Percent decrease from the record year. Unzicker framed ReachNC around three actions drawn from 1 Corinthians 3:6: pray, sow and harvest.

"We plant together, we water together, but God gives the increase," he said, echoing Paul's words to the Corinthians. Beginning on 18 November, North Carolina Baptists can receive daily ReachNC prayer prompts through the end of the year by texting "REACHNC" to 919-750-0615. The messages arrive at 3:06 p.M. Each day - a time that matches the Scripture verse at the heart of the push.

The meeting's theme, "On Mission Together," drawn from Matthew 5:16, ran through every session. Outgoing state convention president Allen Murray closed the meeting with a challenge of his own, asking messengers to turn not to Matthew 28 but to 1 Chronicles 16:23-27, a song of praise David wrote after the Ark of the Covenant was brought into Jerusalem.

The Ark represented God's presence among his people, Murray said, and believers today know that presence in a greater way through Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit. "You must realize that the Great Commission belongs to you," Murray said. "The Great Commission has been given to you."

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

READ THE FULL STORY

Continue on FaithStories -- the complete article, with sources and related stories:
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/news-1030.html?utm_source=pdf_guide&utm_medium=organic_pdf

More from FaithStories

FaithStories - Home
https://faithstories.onrender.com/

(Spanish) Hoy: Víctimas de Bolivia piden a Arturo Sosa que rompa su silencio sobre los abusos
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/es/news-1035.html

(Portuguese) Hoje: suspeito de 18 anos é preso por morte de jovem no Festival da Paz em Sobral
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/pt/news-1036.html

(French) 750 jeunes au service de la liturgie se rassemblent à Notre-Dame de Paris
https://faithstories.onrender.com/articles/fr/news-1037.html