

ACROSS NORTH AMERICA 2010

Association Preparation Guide



GOD'S PLAN FOR SHARING

ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

www.gps2020.net

**EVERY BELIEVER SHARING.
EVERY PERSON HEARING.
BY 2020.**

ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

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Thank You

from Dr. David Meacham & Dr. Ken Weathersby

Dear Friends,

We are extremely grateful for all you do to assist Southern Baptists in the advancement of the kingdom. Your contribution to “God’s Plan for Sharing” is already being felt across North America. If someone has failed to say “thank you,” then let us be the first.

In preparation for “Across North America 2010,” the first of six campaigns related to GPS, we have prepared a booklet especially designed with you in mind. It may seem to be excessively detailed, but we wanted to do our best not to assume anything. GPS is an initiative, a grassroots movement. Therefore, use what is best for you in your context.

This guide is not just for large associations in metropolitan areas, but it will work for town and country communities as well as rural regions. Both small membership and large membership churches will benefit by participating in “Across North America.”

See the following pages as a cluster of ideas, many of which have already been field tested by several of your peers during the 2009 pilots. Let the Holy Spirit guide you as you lead your association in “Across North America.” Let’s remember to stay focused on:

“Every Believer Sharing, Every Person Hearing by 2020.”

As always, if you need any assistance, your Acts 1:8 partners, including those of us at NAMB, are here to help you! Know that we are praying for your great success.

For His kingdom,



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An Overview of “God’s Plan for Sharing” and “Across North America”

At the Southern Baptist Convention’s annual meeting of 2008, Dr. Geoff Hammond, president of the North American Mission Board announced a national evangelism initiative called “God’s Plan for Sharing” (GPS). The goal of this initiative is to see God’s people getting out of the pews and into the streets sharing the good news of Christ among all people groups in North America. From these humble beginnings, “God’s Plan for Sharing” was begun. The rally cry is simple, yet profound—*“Every Believer Sharing, Every Person Hearing by 2020.”* It has the ingredients of church people meeting lost people, with a clear presentation of the gospel given to everyone by the next decade.

To accomplish this goal, Southern Baptists met in workgroups across the continent. It was decided that GPS would be a National Evangelism Initiative, and not a “program in a box” handed down by the denomination. In other words, GPS would be a grassroots effort, with the denomination bringing encouragement and various resources to assist in the cause. Secondly, “God’s Plan for Sharing” would have four biblical components proven throughout history to bring effective evangelism, revival, and spiritual awakening. They are:

- **Praying** - Every church praying for lost people
- **Engaging** - Every believer sharing as a trained witness
- **Sowing** - Every lost person receiving a witness
- **Harvesting** - Every church harvesting and celebrating every salvation response

Finally, it was determined that in order to keep the momentum of Southern Baptists growing six campaigns would take place between 2010 and 2020. The campaigns would happen during the even numbered years, with learning pilots taking place during the odd years. Each emphasis would have a definitive theme to rally God’s people to share the gospel. The time between campaigns would be used to develop the newly learned skills, involve more members, and develop new relationships among lost people identified through the campaigns.

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Southern Baptists chose “Across North America” as the theme for the first campaign in 2010. Already, learning pilots have taken place in early 2009 in four major corners of the United States and a mainline rural association—Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Riverside, California; Lubbock, Texas; Stone Mountain (East Atlanta), Georgia; and Dublin, Georgia. Much has been gained from the results of these associations doing “Across North America.” The plan has been well-tested, improved, and is now ready for you. See it as an initiative. Our suggestions merely give you a framework to “see God’s people out of the pews and into the streets.” Here is the concept, generally taking place over a two-month period:

- Use “Across North America” as an opportunity to **train people in evangelism**.
- Churches **prayerwalk** their communities.
- Churches **distribute hanging bags** with two items: (1) a clear presentation of the gospel and (2) their church brochure, containing an invitation to Easter Services (or another significant harvest event). They should distribute materials in the same strategic area where they have prayerwalked.
- **Harvest Sunday**—Easter Services (or another significant harvest event)
- **Follow up** with those who have responded to your invitation to Jesus.
- **Celebrate** what God has done among His people.

Note: NAMB will have *www.FinditHere.com* and the Evangelism Response Center available to assist you. In addition, *www.GPS2020.net* is available to help you with media support.

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Inspirational Stories from the Associational Pilots' Frontlines

The pilots have shown us that much synergy and unity has taken place among the churches that participated. Associations have commented about how great it was to work with sister churches simultaneously for such a cause. Certainly, God rewards the faithfulness of His people to be obedient to the Great Commission. Here are some of their stories:

From Pastor Michael Pigg, Philadelphia Baptist Church, Stone Mountain Baptist Association

I do believe that the process of distributing gospel literature, coupled with prayer, on the days prior to Easter was the one significant reason for the huge Easter attendance in the life of the Philadelphia Baptist Church. God moved in miraculous ways! From a pastor's perspective, the greatest value of the pilot was to see the congregations of our association energized and mobilized to connect with the people in their communities.

From Associate Director of Missions Ed Sena, Lubbock Area Baptist Association

I was moved to tears when I learned that a 94-year-old saint took her walker and distributed gospel literature in her neighborhood. In addition, a young mother had her 4-year-old assisting her with the hanging of gospel bags at doors. From ages 4 to 94, it brought great joy to our people to be involved in such a simultaneous effort.

From Paul Eshelman, an Observer of *www.FinditHere.com* in Corona, California, Inland Empire Baptist Association

I heard of your site on the radio. I peeked in expecting some cult from the enemy. What a wonderful and refreshing thing to see God's most beautiful gift honestly shared. I just wanted to write to thank you and to let you know that I, too, will pray to our Father through His perfect Lamb for your great success in this ministry. Thank you so much! Your brother in Christ, Paul.

From Pastor Brian King, Ezekiel Baptist Church, Moderator, Greater Philadelphia Baptist Association

Our reputation within the community went up. Neighbors commented positively about our presence. A Muslim said that he wanted to work with our church. When introducing ourselves to a neighbor, she said enthusiastically, "I know exactly who you are!" Taking the message of "*Find it Here*" to the streets of Philadelphia has made a lasting impact for some time to come.

From Bob Hylton, Associational Director of Missions, Greater Philadelphia Baptist Association

Thank you for inviting Philadelphia to participate in the GPS Pilot for 2009. The process has produced tremendous benefits to our work and has helped our churches really pull together around evangelism in the Philadelphia region.

Contact your ADOM colleagues who participated in the pilots and learn more:

- ✓ *Bob Hylton, Greater Philadelphia Baptist Association (hyltonrl@aol.com)*
- ✓ *Larry Cheek, Stone Mountain Baptist Association (lcheek@stonemountainassociation.org)*
- ✓ *Larry Jones, Lubbock Area Baptist Association (labalarryjones@amonline.com)*
- ✓ *Deryl Lackey, Inland Empire Association (dlackey@iesba.org)*
- ✓ *Bobby Jones, Laurens Baptist Association (bobby@laurensbaptist-ga.com)*

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Step-By-Step Guide To Involving Churches in “Across North America”

Once again, “Across North America” is a campaign design to enhance the GPS initiative. Southern Baptists want to support you to do what God desires within the association you serve. That being said, below is a guideline that has been tested and proven by your colleagues in other associations.

You, the ADOM, as the “Across North America” Principal Leader

As you already know, everything rises and falls with leadership. If you give “Across North America” a high priority, the pastors in your association will make it a high priority. They are looking for guidance to change their world. You are a key to that door. Ask yourself, are you:

- ✓ Praying earnestly about how God is going to change your association for the better through “Across North America”?
- ✓ Learning everything you can about “Across North America”?
- ✓ Talking with your colleagues, gleaned from their ideas about “Across North America”?
- ✓ Personally prayed up and prepared to lead your association into the days of “Across North America”?
- ✓ Developing a customized strategy well in advance of the actual days of “Across North America”? Does it contain all of the training and meeting times on the calendar?
- ✓ Thinking through the long-range plan for “God’s Plan Sharing” (Every Believer Sharing, Every Person Hearing by 2020), and how it affects your association in the long-term?

One of our pilot ADOM’s, Larry Cheek (Stone Mountain Baptist Association, East Atlanta, Georgia), makes the following suggestions to help you as the principal leader of GPS:

- ✓ A planning retreat with key leaders was an excellent way to get the project “jump-started” and underway.
- ✓ Ask God to help you enlist a Leadership Team from those who express interest at the retreat. I simply asked for volunteers and then enlisted the rest to fill out the team.
- ✓ Give your Leadership Team clear expectations, accountability, and a job description.
- ✓ Schedule bi-monthly Leadership Team meetings with a clear agenda.
- ✓ You must enlist churches individually built off strong relationships. Letters and e-mails don’t work. Relationships are the key.
- ✓ Communicate! Communicate! Communicate! You can’t talk about it enough. Tell the story and cast the vision so much that you are tired of saying it, then say it some more!
- ✓ Express appreciation for partners in ministry (state convention partner and the North American Mission Board).
- ✓ Be creative with financial resources to make GPS a reality! Every church already has budgeted monies for evangelism and outreach. They just need to be asked to use them for something with such a strategic impact.
- ✓ Remember, money follows mission!
- ✓ Tell pastors to enlist a team in their church. One can’t do it by himself.
- ✓ If I had to do it over again, we would have spent and scheduled more times of prayer. You cannot underestimate the importance of prayer!

In many ways, you, as an Associational Director of Missions, will wear many hats for “Across North America.” Most likely, you will be the:

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- ✓ **Chief Promoter.** If the ADOM is not the one heralding “Across North America,” it will not be as effective as it could have been.
- ✓ **Strategic Thinker.** Being a grassroots initiative, the ADOM will be the one everybody will look to for a plan. Even though this guide is filled with ideas and suggestions, you will be the one to set the course.
- ✓ **Training Coordinator.** Any evangelistic event ought to be an opportunity to train people how to pray, engage others with the gospel, sow, and harvest those who have made decisions for Christ. This will be a missed opportunity if you as an ADOM do not seize the moment to host a training event prior to “Across North America.”
- ✓ **Logistics Manager.** A lot of materials will be coming your way. Someone will need to be the main hub of distribution. You, as the ADOM, will need to see to this, or delegate the responsibility.

Below are some further ideas on how to administrate effectively “Across North America.”

Rally the Troops: Keep It Simple and Make It Theirs

All the pilots found great success and synergy because they involved their pastors on the front end of the campaign. They engaged them with “initiative thinking.” At the end of the first meetings, the ADOMs had given out assignments to implement their plan, with most having a key pastor (often the Moderator) as the chairman of their GPS “Across North America” Committee. They also had a specific timeline to carry out the campaign. They kept things simple and worked hard not to make it complicated or complex. The ADOMs effectively lead their pastors to accept ownership of “Across North America”. You will want to do the same.

Organize a GPS “Across North America” Steering Team

Most of our pilots had the following leadership structure and called themselves “GPS ‘Across North America’ Steering Team.” These teams included:

- ✓ **“Across North America” Team Leader.** Often this person is the Moderator of the association. That being said, it is important that you have a strong leader with good administrative skills. He will have to relate to the association at large, organize the team for various meetings, and provide productive direction to implement the initiative. He will also need to work in a healthy manner alongside the ADOM.
- ✓ **Prayer Leader.** This person brings oversight to leading the association to not only pray for the campaign, but to teach God’s people how to pray for the harvest of lost people. This prayer leader will be a principal trainer and organizer of the prayerwalks.
- ✓ **Evangelism Training Leader.** The “Across North America” campaign is an opportunity to train people in evangelism. The Evangelism Training Leader will train prior to the prayerwalks, teaching God’s people how to be witnesses.
- ✓ **Mapping Leader.** This person should be a strong strategist, with knowledge of logistics, particularly their associational community. He will help the churches devise a mapping strategy that will coincide with the larger associational-wide simultaneous effort of “Across North America.”
- ✓ **Gospel Distribution Leader.** This person will work to organize the churches to put together hanging bags containing two items: (1) A gospel presentation (available through your convention partners) and (2) a church brochure, advertising their ministry as well as giving an invitation to the harvest event (e.g., Easter). This enormous task requires someone who can get items organized and people delegated to get the materials to the local churches.
- ✓ **Follow-Up Leader.** Many churches need to be trained how to greet visitors, how to create a welcoming environment, and how to follow up on those who have responded to the gospel invitation. In addition,

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your association may want to seize this initiative as a time to “start something new.” One can be very creative here, whether it be a new Sunday School, a new church, or both. The Follow-up Leader should have imaginative skills that will enable him to help everyone create a strong “follow-up” plan for both the church and the association.

- ✓ **Media Leader.** With the assistance of your convention partners, you will have the opportunity to participate in a media blitz surrounding the phrase “Find It Here.” It has a brochure, commercials, bus board, banners, and so forth for use in your community. The Media Leader should be one with experience in advertising, and should be able to implement a budgeted plan that provides these resources which will support the association’s initiative. In addition, this person should be able to have a working knowledge of present Web site utilities that provide free advertising (e.g., Facebook, YouTube). The Media Leader will have general oversight in seeing to it that all points of advertizing look as one unified simultaneous effort of the association.

Obviously, you as the Associational Director of Missions will be providing strong leadership to the entire effort. You will also be a liaison of other resources that are available through your denominational partners. Remember, it is a team effort. You, being at the helm, with careful and prayerful leadership, will assure success to this venture.

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Association Timeline for “Across North America”

As the Associational Director of Missions, we would like to encourage you to start early with a timeline for “Across North America.” Here are some suggestions for your planning:

August 2009: Cast the vision with the Association Leadership Team.

- ✓ Whatever structure you have to lead your association, share with these people your heart and plan for “Across North America.”
- ✓ Hand out all the materials you will use during the event.
- ✓ Help them to see the advantages to the churches of the association, as well as the advantages of collaborating with all Southern Baptist Churches.
- ✓ Get all approvals necessary to proceed.

September 2009: Organize your “Across North America” Leadership Team.

- ✓ If appropriate to your context, recruit every leader mentioned in the preceding section and make clear their written job description from that section.
- ✓ Do your best to communicate one phrase again and again to your team about “Across North America”—“KEEP IT SIMPLE!”
- ✓ Meet together with this team at least once in September, and thereafter monthly (until the end of “Across North America”).

October 2009: Cast the vision of “Across North America” with the pastors and staff.

Here are some options for the vision-casting:

- ✓ Have a banquet or lunch gathering.
- ✓ Have an inspirational speaker, visualizing those who will come to Christ through “Across North America.”
- ✓ Make sure you have given them all the material you presented in previous meetings.
- ✓ Introduce your Leadership Team.
- ✓ Help them to visualize how “Across North America” is going to bless their church, the association, and the kingdom at large.
- ✓ Begin signing churches up for “Across North America.” (Remember to sign up through the entire campaign.)

November 2009: Compare notes with your colleagues.

- ✓ Use the state convention time as an opportunity to speak with your colleagues about what they are doing with “Across North America.”
- ✓ Compare notes and strengthen your cause.
- ✓ Meet with your Leadership Team.
- ✓ Order all of your materials for “Across North America” from your state partner.
- ✓ Secure warehouse to store materials.

December 2009: Have I forgotten something?

- ✓ Use this time to pray and ask God to show you anything that may be missing in your preparation of “Across North America.”
- ✓ Have Leadership Team come to the warehouse, and use this time to pray for the coming materials and work, once again casting the vision of “Across North America.”

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January 2010: Have a pastors and staff luncheon or retreat.

- ✓ Unpack and review the “Across North America” materials with them in detail.
- ✓ Utilize an inspirational speaker or speakers to encourage and motivate these leaders.
- ✓ Use this time for each of your Leadership Team to speak about their responsibility, and form any subcommittees necessary.
- ✓ Spend some time sharing your heart for the association, and lead in a season of prayer for how God will use “Across North America” to impact your part of America.
- ✓ Have all materials for “Across North America” stored in area warehouse.

February 2010: Have a training time for the entire association.

- ✓ Remember, any evangelistic event is an opportunity to train. As ADOM, seize the moment during this season to help the churches learn better how to share their faith.
- ✓ You might want to include seminars like: “Prayerwalking 101,” “CROSS Evangelism Training,” “Making Your Church Attractive for Guests,” “Now That They’ve Come, What Are We Going To Do with Them?,” and “Using NAMB’s Evangelism Response Center with Your Church” (Learn more about NAMB’s Evangelism Response Center on page 18 of ANA’s Pastor/Church Preparation Guide).
- ✓ Your state partner (as well as NAMB) can assist you with this training.

March 2010: Begin “Across North America” (see Pastor and Church Timeline).

- ✓ As Associational Missionary, continue to beat the drum, highlighting in your newsletter stories and principles around “Across North America.”
- ✓ Meet with your Leadership Team, making sure all details have been completed for the full impact of “Across North America.”

April 2010: You are in the red zone ... Pray!

- ✓ Constantly be checking in with the pastors. Any needs? Any more assistance? How can you help?
- ✓ Be the champion for prayer. Every home, every person in your community is worth it.

May 2010: Celebrate what God has done!

- ✓ Have an associational party. Worship the Lord with thanksgiving for all that has transpired.
- ✓ Look for ways to thank your Leadership Team. Everyone loves encouragement.
- ✓ Debrief with all “Across North America” groups. Learn from the debriefing. Pass on to NAMB anything that might help us with the next emphasis.

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Pastor/Church Timeline

March 20

April 11

Across North America Media Campaign

Praying	Engaging	Sowing	Harvesting	Assimilating
March 1-19 Pray Promotion Get Ready	March 20 Praying Across North America Prayerwalking	March 27 “ <i>Find it Here</i> ” Gospel Distribution Door-to-Door <i>www.FinditHere.com</i> Sharing the Gospel	April 4 Easter Sunday Every Church	April 11 - May 2 Five week follow-up plan Visit, Enroll, Lessons

Celebrate What God Has Done!

All throughout the Bible there are word pictures of God’s people giving thanks for the “great things He has done.” The same should be for us today, and in particular with “Across North America.” The pilots helped us discover how great it was to work together. In all the pilots, both the association and the churches were strengthened because of “Across North America.” They took time to meet, review, and tell “God stories” of their adventure.

You, as the Associational Leader, should calendar a time for the entire association to come together and celebrate the results of this two-month campaign. It could be built around a meal. You may want to include a time of testimonies. Perhaps you can use the meeting as a “catalyst” to ask the question, “What now?” However you choose to organize, thank God for what He has done, and for those who are now a part of God’s kingdom because His people were faithful to the Great Commission.

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Resourcing “Across North America”

Materials and Resources That Are Available for “Across North America”

The materials and resources are available by calling your State Director of Evangelism. Before calling, determine how many houses you will be attempting to connect with for this campaign. (Remember, count homes, not population.) Place your order with your state partner. He can tell you what, if any, costs there may be for your association.

To appropriately do “Across North America” you will want to make sure you have the following:

- ✓ Plenty of Pastor/Church Guidelines for “Across North America”
- ✓ Hanging bags for the “Find It Here” drop-in piece and church brochures with Easter invitation
- ✓ “Find It Here” brochures (available in multiple languages)
- ✓ Attractive brochures produced by the churches of your association to advertise their church and Easter services
- ✓ Any other training materials your state convention can give you
- ✓ Media materials or computer files made available to you by your state partner
- ✓ Are you missing anything?

Other Ideas That Can Help You Succeed

- ✓ Use this time frame to identify unreached people groups. Learn how to better reach and congregationalize these groups who are in your community. The North American Mission Board can be of great assistance to you in assisting with the identification of these groups, as well as equipping the people in your association to engage their cultures. Contact peopleteams@namb.net for more information.
- ✓ Utilize your state convention’s church planting team to help you congregationalize newly identified people groups for which there are no culturally appropriate churches.
- ✓ Work closely with other associations, asking the consistent question, “What are you doing with ‘Across North America?’” Iron sharpens iron. Benefit from the ideas of other associational leaders.
- ✓ Become a “Covenant Church” through NAMB’s Evangelism Response Center (learn more about the ERC on page 18 of ANA’s Pastor/Church Preparation Guide).
- ✓ Utilize the Mapping Center to assist in your strategic and logistic development. Go to www.mappingcenter.org for more information.
- ✓ Keep a journal of “God stories.” You will be amazed how these stories will mount up through the process. Keeping a record from the beginning of “Across North America” will be a tremendous keepsake for the archives of your association.
- ✓ Share your prayer needs with the larger Southern Baptist family. Go to www.namb.net/mcpr and leave your “Across North America” prayer needs. They will be shared with the larger SBC network of prayer warriors.
- ✓ Keep checking www.GPS2020.net for additional resources and ideas. Let the Internet be a constant companion in this “Across North America” journey.
- ✓ Let NAMB know of other ideas that you may come upon during the campaign. We would like to share those with others.

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You Can Do It ... We're Here to Help!

The North American Mission Board stands ready to assist you. In addition, your state partner stands ready to assist you. We desire the very best for your association, and ultimately the kingdom.

Let us know how we can help. We are here to serve you.

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Evangelization Group
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Jerry Pipes, *jpipes@namb.net*
(770) 410-6316

Church Planting Group
North American Mission Board, SBC
David Terry, *dterry@namb.net*
(770) 410-6214

How Can the Evangelism Response Center Assist You in Doing “Across North America?”

Would you like a way to train more people in evangelism, especially those who might be timid in sharing their faith by traditional means? Would you like to have a continued list of prospects for your visitation file? Would you want a telephone number and website you can publish in your bulletin or webpage, with confidence that a trained believer is there 24/7 to point people to Jesus Christ? The North American Mission Board’s Evangelism Response Center (ERC) is an ideal evangelism tool for you and your church (all complements of the Cooperative Program). This Southern Baptist ministry is your solution for all of the above questions and more! Here are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ’s):

1. How Does the Evangelism Response Center (ERC) Operate?

The Evangelism Response Center (ERC) works through caring encouragers and innovative technology. This ministry provides a network of believers in North America trained to communicate the message of our Lord Jesus Christ to people through the telephone and the Internet 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. These seekers contact the ERC through toll-free telephone numbers and Internet addresses that are shown through various media venues. Through the ERC technical systems, these contacts are routed directly and anonymously to the homes of Encouragers who log on to receive calls or Internet contacts.

2. How Does the ERC Follow Up on Decisions?

The work of the Evangelism Response Center is not complete when a person prays to receive Christ. Many callers leave their name and address, desiring to be put in contact with a local church. Immediately, the ERC sends follow up materials, along with a free Holman Bible to every person making a salvation decision. In addition, the ERC includes a network of Southern Baptist follow-up churches called “Covenant Churches,” who follow up on each decision within three hours to three days of receiving the name and address of the respondent.

3. How Will My Church Benefit by Being Involved with the ERC?

Encouragers from your church will be trained in Evangelism. In addition, you will be able to publish the 888-JESUS2010 number and/or the website (www.thegoodnews.org) on any promotional or evangelistic materials your church distributes (including your website), thus increasing the potential for contacts in your area.

4. How Easy Is It to Become a “Covenant Church” for the ERC?

It’s as simple as 1-2-3. First, contact the ERC office (numbers below), expressing your desire to be a “Covenant Church.” Second, Complete the “Covenant Church” Registration that you will receive and return to the ERC office. Third, once registered, you will receive contact information of those who respond to Christ through the ERC in your community. Follow up as you normally do at your church.

5. How Can I Get Started with the ERC?

Interested in being a Telephone or Internet Encourager? Ready for your Church to be a “Covenant Church? Want to host an “Encourager Training” Seminar? Increase your GPS capacity by contacting:

erc@namb.net / 770-410-6383 / www.erconline.net

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0908048 / 07-09