

Mobile Baptist Association  
**Executive Committee Report**

January 18, 2011

Brother Thomas Wright, Associational Missionary

*Emphasizing Biblical Prayer, Evangelistic Ministries, Church Development, Church Planting, Partnership Missions*

**A New Year to Serve Jesus**

Which is harder in your church, getting people outside the church to be interested in Jesus or getting people inside the church to tell people about Jesus? The Lord has blessed MBA churches and staff with a new year to make an eternal difference in Mobile County and beyond. Please don't let the enemy discourage you from initiating the changes and outreach events that you need to reach the community. The lostness of our county indicates we cannot grow weary in doing good. In Numbers 13:17-20 the children of Israel studied the land to possess it. They did not allow giant obstacles from completing the Lord's will.

**A New Year for Biblical Prayer**

It is a good time to revitalize your Prayer Committee and continue the Prayer Walks in our community. This no-cost tactic "plows" the field to raise spiritual responsiveness to our evangelistic ministries. PLEASE include the MBA in your Wednesday night and Sunday prayer lists. Please include specific prayers for financial and strategic needs to be met.

**A New Year for New Churches**

We would be a church county if every evangelical church in Mobile County had 1,200 people attending. A look at the former churches of Mobile County shows clearly that it is the new or revitalized churches that are being most effective in reaching our community. Where will Mobile be in 25 years if each of our healthy churches does not participate in planting more churches now? The analogy to having children is accurate and applicable.

**A New Year for Partnership Missions**

The financial challenges we are facing do not need to result in an inward focus only. We need to continue to involve one more than ever before in local, state, national and international missions. We have a list of projects at CWP and the IMC for your local construction and ministry teams. Keep looking outward to help each member serve the Lord!

**New Pastors and Churches Seeking Pastors**

Welcome pastor Ricky White as pastor of Myers Memorial, Paul Sands to Spring Hill, and Robby Howard to San Souci. Please pray for the churches seeking a pastor and please let us know when their status changes: FBC Chickasaw, FBC Dawes, Heron Bay, Lafitte, Lambert Grove, Smithtown, Sunrise and Vietnamese Obedience.

**Financial Hurricane Update**

The Budget and Finance Committee continues to monitor our budget and the impending impact of NAMB changes in Cooperative Agreements. It still has the potential to have a category five impact on our association and state convention. The DOM meeting last week indicated devastating results in associations across the United States. There is no indication pioneer areas are receiving the priority emphases as proposed in the report. Many DOM's indicated that churches have understood the need to support locally what formerly was supported through the cooperative agreements. They report that churches are increasing or reversing their percentages from CP to the local association. I understand there may be some information coming after the February Trustee Meeting.

### **Cooperative Agreements**

The probable changes in NAMB/ALSBOM cooperative agreements will impact the MBA budget by as much as \$82,630 as early as January 2012. This is in addition to the \$34,300 we had to take from savings to pay all 2010 expenses. As you recall, the Executive Committee voted in July to access our savings accounts until we get past the oil spill impact and prepare for the changes from NAMB.

### **MBA Gifts to Cooperative Program and MBA**

In 2010 MBA churches sacrificially reported giving a missions tithe of \$1,768, 511.75 to the Cooperative Program (a reduction of \$372,636.13 from 2009) and \$391, 851.93 to the MBA (a reduction of \$67,235.64 from 2009). Prior to this year's SBC vote, the MBA received back \$82,630.12 through the cooperative agreements with the North American Mission Board and our State Convention. Leaders cooperatively agreed that CP funds would be used in Mobile to help underwrite the cost of an International Ministries Director, the Church Development Director and the Associational Missionary. This is due to the recognition that half of the population of Mobile is lost.

### **Preparing for the Hurricane**

Many DOM's have endorsed ALSBOM adopting a shared ministries budget as is done in Georgia. This budget system provides the CP split *after* state ministries have been funded. Alabama currently takes the CP split *before* state ministries are funded.

DOM's report the same conclusion reached by our Finance Committee and Moderators. We are being encouraged by the GCR statement to provide locally for what was formerly returned to us through the cooperative agreements. The Finance and Personnel Committees have endorsed that all MBA positions are essential to the work of the MBA. So, the recommendation is being made to take one more year from savings before we adapt the budget to new income levels. We have discussed worst case scenarios and have contingency plans in hand. I am not afraid to lead us even where I do not prefer to go in order to maintain a balanced budget.

The Finance Committee will present that it may be time to provide an associational missions offering opportunity for churches that are accustomed to special offerings. This also gives congregations an opportunity to give who feel they cannot add missions giving to the budget. It is not necessarily intended for those who already give sacrificially to associational missions.

### **Processing CP and MBA Gifts**

Your church determines how much it gives to the Cooperative Program and MBA. Those funds go from your church to Montgomery/State Convention then on to Nashville/CP. (Some send their MBA gifts directly to us). So each of our churches needs to decide how they will respond to the impending change in how we tithe to missions. Some are wisely choosing to reduce their gifts to parachurch ministries in favor of SBC ministries.

### **How to Adjust Your Church Missions Tithe**

If you choose to make any adjustments to the amount you send to the MBA, all you have to do is designate the change in your monthly missions deposit to the State Board of Missions. The total amount you tithe to missions will remain the same. The bottom line of your church budget will remain the same. The allocation of your missions tithe is all that will change.

### **The Future Remains Bright**

The Lord is not surprised by, nor worried about, these challenges. He continues to bless. We had over 600 decisions through our ministry areas last year. More than 80 percent of our churches were involved in training options. Dozens of Pastors, staff and members have received individual consulting for strategy, processes and problems in the church. We are making progress toward new Anglo and Ethnic churches and members are increasingly involved in partnership missions. The associational continues to focus on relevant and effective impact.