

Mobile Baptist Association
Executive Committee Report

April 8, 2013

Brother Thomas Wright, Associational Missionary

Emphasizing Biblical Prayer. Evangelistic Ministries. Church Development. Church Planting. Partnership Missions

Biblical Prayer

“Prayer” is popular even in our secular culture. But much of that “prayer” is not biblical. Non biblical prayer is powerless and ineffective. For many our prayer is: “So far today Lord, I’ve done all right. I haven’t lost my temper, I haven’t gossiped, I haven’t been greedy, grumpy, nasty, selfish or over indulgent. I’m thankful for that. But in a few moments, Lord, I’m going to get out of bed. And from then on, I’m going to need a lot of help.” In John 17 the record of Jesus praying gives an excellent example of biblical prayer. Jesus prayed in 17:5 for *Personal Needs*, in 17:9 for *Believers*, and in 17:20 for *Unbelievers*. Our prayer time should include praying for personal spiritual and physical needs, praying for believers and praying for unbelievers. We do best at personal needs and worst at praying for specific unbelievers. Practicing this example of biblical prayer can result in powerful and effective prayer.

Praying for MBA Ministries and Events

Updates to events, meetings, missions’ opportunities and trainings are kept on the web page and the Facebook page. Please encourage your people to like us on Facebook. Please visit www.mobilebaptists.org to register to receive the weekly News Alerts and Quarterly Newsletter. Please include this information periodically in your Sunday Bulletin and Newsletters.

Praying for Churches Seeking Pastors

Please pray for the churches seeking a pastor and please let us know when their status changes: Airport, Fellowship, Kushla-Bethany, Manor, Moffett Road, Smithtown and The Cornerstone.

Praying for MBA Interns

We have completed an agreement with SEBTS to provide three to nine hours seminary credit for Interns serving at the IMC or CWP. Check with Buddy or Gil for information.

Praying for the Impact Mobile Offering

This offering was created to provide an opportunity for churches to respond to the changes in denominational funding. It also provides an opportunity for members and churches to include the level of Cooperative Giving through the budget what they would like to give.

Thank you to those churches who continue to promote the Impact Mobile Associational Offering. We can print the poster and brochure with any date that best fits your church calendar. The promoted date in the month of May each year corresponds with the nationwide Associational Missions Week emphasis. Undated materials are available at www.mobilebaptists.org and at the MBA office.

Praying for our Financial Report

Thank you for your ongoing, and in many instances sacrificial, financial support. Church receipts are down at the IMC and MBA. Insurance costs increases and decreased NAMB giving have combined to make our income unable to support our current level of staff and ministries. We are examining ways to reduce insurance and utility costs by possibly combining facilities.

The solution is for church members to tithe to their churches and churches to tithe to missions. The Finance Committee and Moderators understand churches are being encouraged to provide locally for what was formerly returned to us through the Cooperative Agreements. This means that churches need to adjust their missions tithe.

CDD Position Not Funded. The ALSBOM/NAMB subsidy for the Church Development Director will be reduced 25 percent each year beginning in 2014. Therefore the MBA budget needs to begin absorbing \$5,900 a year until we absorb the total \$23,600 we currently receive for Chuck Davis.

MBA Gifts to Cooperative Program and MBA

In 2011, 80 MBA churches completed a Uniform Church Letter (UCL). Those 80 churches reported a total income of \$45,881,673. Their total giving to Cooperative Program (CP) was \$4,369,617 (which is 9.52 percent). Those 80 churches gave \$387,410 to the MBA (which is less than 1 percent at 0.844%).

The SBC has long recommended that churches give a missions tithe of 7 percent to CP and 3 percent to the local association. Recent adaptations include 5% to CP, 3% to Association and 2% to other missions' interests. Dear ones, our local struggles will be over if our churches adopt the SBC recommendation for funding local missions *within what our churches are currently tithing to missions.*

Guidelines for Supporting Para church Ministries

All good stewards want to make the most eternal impact with our tithes and offerings. As we struggle with meeting needs in our Jerusalem Finance Committees need to evaluate which ministries receive missions' dollars.

Church members and pastors receive requests every week from Para church ministries asking for financial and volunteer help. Be careful, Para church ministries rely on churches but are not accountable to the churches that support them. They often provide ministries that our members do not realize are done cheaper and better by our denomination, state or association.

Here are six essential guidelines your members and Finance Committee should know before supporting a Para church ministry:

1. Insist on a detailed budget for the overall ministry and *each project* with every request for donations. Para church ministries are notorious for raising more money than is needed for the project and diverting those funds to personal needs for the staff (which is illegal). If they cannot provide the budget do not support them.
2. Confirm the donations are used for actual ministry instead of providing an income and expenses for one person or family. How much (or what percent) is spent on administrative expenses and staff as opposed to the actual ministry/project? Avoid Para church ministries whose primary purpose is to provide an income and expenses for an individual and family.
3. Be sure they have the legal structure and accountability of a registered 501(c) 3.
4. Be sure there is an *active* Board of Directors that meets *often* and maintains accountability. What is their role, are they administrative or honorary? How often do they meet (many never meet)? What accountability do they maintain over the staff and budget (are they rubber stamp)? Publicity lists, of known board members, does not ensure accountability or legitimacy.
5. Confirm how the total donations and volunteers are used. Confirm the completed church or project used with your donation. Find out how many other donors were also told their funds completed that same church or project.
6. Be sure there is a track record for actually starting churches or ministries that survive. Verify the pictures and reports from the field are current and legitimate. Be careful of Para church ministries having no involvement but taking credit for completed churches/projects.
7. Confirm they do not compromise theology in order to attract donors from secular and other religious movements. In short, prioritize your missions tithe through SBC missions and ministries. You can be sure of the theology, polity and accountability for your financial support.