

Mobile Baptist Association  
**Executive Committee Report**

July 14, 2014

Brother Thomas Wright, Associational Missionary

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

**Responding to Challenges in Luke 5:4-7**

Another marvelous lesson from Luke the Physician in chapter 5, verse 4, Jesus encourages a weary Peter to go deep and go fishing! Verse 5 demonstrates the tendency of each of us when given directions, even when they are directly from Jesus: Whine, Gripe, Hesitantly Obey. Then experience the blessing from obedience. How many blessings have we missed because we told God no? We don't like to be inconvenienced, but focusing on eternity is inconvenient to secular prearranged plans.

We don't like to be challenged beyond what is comfortable. Many challenges we face come from the traitor of truth and the corruptor of cooperation. Some challenges come from personal passiveness or borderline bewilderment. Some challenges come because the Savior says it is time to go deeper, even when we think we have done all we can do. Theological truth, orderly obedience and coalitions of cooperation overcome challenges. The churches of the MBA are facing many challenges as is the symbiosis of churches, associations, conventions and denominations.

**Challenge of the Future Focus Committee**

Please pray for Dr. Roy Stebbins as he meets with doctors today. He is providing exceptional leadership as chair of the committee. It is significant to have a recommendation from five key leadership committees, representing over 40 people. As you know, if you get 40 Baptists in a room, you get 47 opinions. Collectively our Moderators join International Ministries, Building and Grounds, Finance and Future Focus Committees so that these changes are required to be ready for effective, cooperative evangelistic ministry in the next 50 years.

Careful study shows that combining and updating two aging facilities is necessary. Inaction will result in increased maintenance costs, decreased ministry functions, limited access and poor stewardship of missions' dollars.

The committee has preliminary designs for a streamlined and efficient use of the combined facilities. The design *decreases* facility size *and costs* by 4,501 sq. ft. The design *increases* meeting space, office space, work space, volunteer housing and Disaster Relief response capability. Analyzing the facts also show it is impossible without the Lord's intervention. It will require the active involvement of cooperative-minded, missions-oriented people and congregations. The minimum needed facility cost, currently at \$1.4 million dollars, exceeds the possible \$1.1 million dollars we might receive from the sale of the two facilities. We will need the donation of at least 3.5 *buildable* acres in a location accessible to our churches and centrally located for effective seafarer ministry. This means quick access to I-65 or I-10, which is considered prime location. We will need the donation of materials, furnishings, labor and money. A recommendation will be given in the September Executive Committee to take the proposal to the annual session October 9.

**The Challenges of Financial Needs**

The SBC has long recommended that churches give a cooperative missions tithe of 7% to CP and 3% to the local association. Following this giving formula will allow the MBA to meet staff insurance, Chuck's decreasing Subsidy, facility needs and new work needs. Please present this proposal to your Church Finance Committee and begin adjusting missions giving to reach this goal. Thank you to those churches already moving toward, and *beyond*, this goal. Our churches collective give about 1.1% to Associational Missions.

The Finance Committee, under the great leadership of Pastor Scott Griffith, has been working on the 2015 Budget. The staff and churches we assist thank you for your ongoing financial support. In 2014 we had to reduce insurance coverage for the staff in order to maintain a balanced budget.

As you heard in his report, the preliminary 2015 Budget looks like we are being forced to provide health insurance coverage only to our staff members. Beginning in July 2015 the staff will need to find health insurance coverage for family members.

This will require a change in our manual of procedures and *is a reduction in the package we offered staff when they were hired*. It is our prayer that church giving will increase to prevent this occurring.

Please also do not forget that the \$22,000 a year subsidy we formerly received from NAMB for Chuck's position is being reduced \$5,500 a year. 2015 is the second year of the four year phase down. We need that amount in additional income in over the next three years to fully fund the Church Development Director position.

Please teach your members about the ministries of the MBA. Those who are aware of what we do gladly support the work. When your Finance Committee is considering support for a para-church organization, please allow the MBA equal time to present our strategy, ministries and effective use of mission's dollars.

### **The Challenge to Participate in the Impact Mobile Associational Offering**

Please promote this special offering during whatever month your church calendar allows. This offering was created to help churches that are not able to support the MBA through their budget as much as they would like. Some congregations have begun allocating a portion of their Annie Armstrong offering to Impact Mobile to recover the lost subsidy for Chuck's and Buddy's positions.

### **Challenge Leaders for LEAD Continuing Education Center Beginning This Fall**

Biblical illiteracy is rampant in our culture. Unfortunately, it also is rampant in our churches. Even our Sunday School teachers, deacons and elders are conforming to cultural pressure about social issues and essential doctrines. The Lord led Gerald and Brenda Burch to begin an experiment to provide biblical training in the MBA. Classes begin in August. Please encourage your teachers and leaders to study the Bible through these practical and biblical classes. Please contact Gerald Burch for more information.

### **Challenged to Take Training for Church Planting and Church Revitalization, July 24-26**

Consider for a moment that all of our strongest churches 50 years ago are now gone or struggling. *We are trying to prevent this reoccurring in the next 50 years*. We have had over 70 people participate in two ALSBOM/MBA sponsored Basic Training Seminars. We are offering it again July 24-26 at Sage Avenue. Register online at ALSBOM.org under "Upcoming Events" then "Church Planting Basics." The \$100 fee is waived for MBA/SBC churches. Others are welcome to attend. In the last 50 years the MBA has had a net gain of 28 churches and had a population increase of 98,691!

We simultaneously are offering the ALSBOM sponsored Churches Planting Churches Training. It helps us respond to the challenge of new work in Mobile for the next 50 years. Register at the same site to attend this event.

### **Challenges for Church Changes, New Pastors and Churches Seeking Pastors**

Please pray for the churches seeking a pastor and please let us know when their status changes: Fulton Road, Sunrise, Spice Pond, Manor and Turnerville. Please welcome Dr. Billy Harris to Kushla-Bethany, Tom Boone to Smithtown and Justin Lott to Axis. Pavilion of Praise has disbanded. Central Baptist Church has disbanded, and the property given to the Children's Home. Spring Hill Avenue sold to Covenant Presbyterian.