

Mobile Baptist Association
Executive Committee Report

April 18, 2016

Brother Thomas Wright, Associational Missionary

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

“Put on the Armor...”

The Governor Bentley scandal is a warning to every believer. Sin makes us stupid. Sin ALWAYS has consequences. Any sin. All sin. It will divide families, destroy careers and decimate relationships. Hence the need for the whole armor of God in daily attire as described in Eph. 6:11-18.

Many days begin with the latest emergency or deadline. It can become easy to rush outside without our armor. Beloved, the days are too dark and the enemy is too active for us to place ourselves in such danger. We have to be on the front lines. But we have to be well-armed to survive and thrive.

Two Good Podcasts

Smart phones allow us access to a massive library of training resources. Podcasts of preachers help hone our content and personal walk. Podcasts from sites like Southeastern Seminary and LifeWay’s newchurches.com provide practical lessons and application.

Multi-Housing Ministries Training

The April 25 training for Multi-Housing ministries will provide practical tips for outreach to people living in Multi-Housing units. Almost every MBA church has apartments, trailer homes or senior citizen centers in their immediate vicinity. This meeting will meet in conjunction with the weekly Ministers Conference. Contact Janice Austin christ_injan@yahoo.com to learn how your church can effectively reach those living in Multi-Housing complexes.

Community and Hunger Ministries Training

Another important training for some key leaders in your congregation is the Community and Hunger Ministries Training. Every MBA church has people who request food, money or other help. ALSBOM is co-sponsoring a training on April 25, 2:00 p.m. at First Baptist Tillman’s Corner, Room D220. Experienced leaders will be sharing “best practices” in community and hunger ministries. The session will include a tour of the very effective and efficient Community Missions center at First Baptist Tillman’s Corner.

Reviewing Associational Purposes

The denomination is changing rapidly. It is too soon to identify if we are responding to inevitable changes or creating systems which accelerate those changes. The SBC is declining in baptisms, attendance and missions support. The philosophical change from cooperation to radical autonomy/societal missions is biblically inconsistent and dangerous to cooperative missions. The North American Mission Board, International Mission Board, State Conventions and Associations are feeling the fallout from this philosophical change.

As concerns grow about the work of NAMB and IMB, keep in mind that the missions tithe is still biblical and the MBA continues to be relevant and effective in making an eternal difference in Mobile.

It is understandable that people want to support entities that have a significant public presence through obvious events, activities and promotion. But associations exist to support churches. It is not proper for associations to usurp the function, ministries or public presence of the local church. Similar to a drinking straw, the MBA is a conduit of consultation, training, support and ministry that often is behind the scenes. The indicator of an effective association is that an increasing number of churches are effective, healthy and growing.

The MBA Executive Committee affirmed that effective, healthy and growing churches will be involved in Biblical Prayer, Evangelistic Ministries, Church Development, Church Planting and Partnership Missions.

Last month the Alabama Baptist paper again identified the churches of the MBA as having the most baptisms of any association in Alabama. We are not the largest association and we do not have the mega churches present in other associations. We were near the bottom of that list a decade ago. But our churches have responded to the consistent

emphasis and training in evangelistic ministries and biblical prayer. New churches continue to join the MBA who have seen an effective strategy, philosophy and ministries. A decades-long trend of churches dying has been reversed. Struggling churches have been revitalized and systemic issues are being addressed.

Personnel Committee Report

A common characteristic of major MBA business is the involvement of multiple committees and leaders. Again we have a joint recommendation to the Executive Committee from the Moderators, Personnel, Camp Whispering Pines and Budget/Finance Committees. Over 45 people were involved in careful deliberations to call Ronnie Connell for an extended interim period in order to reallocate salary and insurance funds to capital needs at CWP. This option allows us to replace and upgrade equipment and facilities to provide a beautiful and updated Camp. The new director will not have the frustrating pressure of significant capital needs and limited resources to respond. It also allows us to reduce CWP debt to the MBA, which in turn helps maintain a balanced MBA budget.

Future Focus Committee Update

Continue to pray for Dr. Roy Stebbins and the committee as they implement the vote of the Annual session. Please remind your people of the need and process to sell and combine our aging International Ministries building and MBA office building. The committee is reviewing designs for streamlined and efficient use of the combined facilities in a new, central location. 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 capabilities. Obviously, it is impossible without the Lord's intervention. It will require the active involvement of cooperative-minded, missions-oriented people. The minimum needed facility cost, currently at \$1.2 million dollars, exceeds the possible \$1 million dollars we might receive from the sale of the two facilities.

We still 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 location needs quick access to I-65 or I-10. We recognize this is considered a prime location requiring fervent prayer and generous donor(s). We will need the donation of materials, furnishings, labor and money. It is definitely a God-sized challenge that has been accepted through careful research and stewardship considerations.

Team to Holy Land, August 29-September 10, 2016

I am leading a team of 10 to serve at the IMB facility jerusalemprayercenter.com. Five days of mission projects and 4 days of touring. We will be in walking distance to the Garden Tomb and Damascus Gate. Per person costs will be about \$2,800 including all transportation, meals, housing and touring.

Church Changes, New Pastors and Churches Seeking Pastors

Welcome Dr. Blake Newsom as the new pastor at Dauphin Way, Billy Kendrick at Lafitte, Mike Staton at Manor, Billy McQuarter at Azalea and John Blackwell at Citronelle First. Micah Gaston is the new Campus Pastor at 3Circle Midtown. Phil Boyles has transitioned to Pastor of Pastoral Care for all 3Circle campuses.

Please pray for the churches seeking a pastor and please let us know when their statuses change: Cedar Creek, Faith of Mobile, Gulfcrest, Higher Ground, Semmes FBC, Seven Hills and Trinity.

Recommendation for Missions Tithe

The SBC has long recommended that churches give a Cooperative Missions tithe of 7% to CP and 3% to the local association. Recent adaptations have recognized some churches wish to give 2% to additional missions' options, 5% to CP and 3% to the Association. Note the Associational allotment did not change. If MBA churches were to tithe 3% of current total income to the MBA, we would double our budget.

Please present this giving formula to the church Finance Committee for consideration. Following this giving formula will allow the MBA to meet staff, facility and new work needs.

Orientation Guide for Church Staff and Churches Exploring MBA Membership

Please visit mobilebaptists.org for a copy of the Orientation and New Member Guide. It presents an overview of MBA ministries, staff, philosophy and strategy. It also includes a membership application for churches wishing to explore membership with the MBA. Please download a copy for your staff and share a copy with potential members.