

**The director of missions supports, encourages, and challenges pastors.** Pastors sometimes get discouraged, and they need encouragement from the “Barnabas in residence”, the director of missions. Nearly every pastor has been under fire sometime in his ministry, and he finds his director of missions supportive. For some pastors who have no fire, the director of missions may be their challenger.

**The director of missions puts a “face” on the denomination for churches and on the churches for the denomination.** Every director of missions has had phone calls asking him why a certain Southern Baptist Convention agency or state convention did this or that, or why they didn’t! The director of missions may not have known anything about it and certainly had no responsibility for it; but in many places and for many people, the director of missions is Mr. Southern Baptist. That’s part of his ministry. People call on him because they know and trust him.

This works both ways. People working in Southern Baptist Convention agencies cannot possibly know 37,000 churches. But, 950 directors of missions can help interpret to them the needs of their churches. And everyone benefits by that.

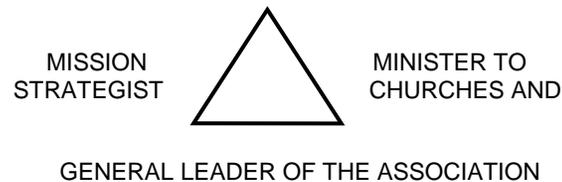
### THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL ROLE OF DIRECTORS OF MISSIONS

This section and those that follow seek to describe the role, responsibility and activities of directors of missions in a way that takes seriously the historical development of the role and its current expressions as revealed by dozens of job descriptions, an extensive survey research project and many conversations with thoughtful people throughout Southern Baptist life.

The director of missions provides general leadership and services to the total life and work of the association. The nature of the role is determined by the nature of the association (which is based on the nature of the church) and by the nature of the Christian ministry.

The associational director of missions has a single, three-dimensional role. This role is to lead the association to fulfill its mission more faithfully, effectively, and efficiently. The three dimensions

are mission strategists, minister to churches and church leaders, and general leader of the association. The mission strategist-minister-leader model of the director of missions’ role covers the association’s entire life.



**Missions strategist** emphasizes the missionary aspects of the total task of the director of missions. It emphasizes the association’s missionary nature which is based on the church’s missionary nature. The director of missions calls on churches and the association to join in what God is doing in their associational area. He serves as a leader, inspirer, catalyst, activator, challenger, proclaimer and prophet. He calls on the association to apply the unchanging Word of God to the needs and opportunities of its special part of the world.

This dimension of his role implies that the director of missions knows his context, has spiritual vision for what the association can do in addressing its various frontiers and can lead the association in making strategic decisions about basic directions and priorities that are faithful to what God is doing in the world.

**Minister churches and church leaders** describes a responsibility and relationship that a director of missions has to churches, pastors, and other church leaders he serves. This is not an organizational but an interpersonal relationship. In this role dimension, the director of missions expresses a pastoral or shepherd’s concern for the whole life of churches, pastors, and other church staff members, their families and others. The director deals with churches individually rather than as a group, directly rather than indirectly and personally rather than programmatically. The director also seeks to enhance fellowship and mutual care among churches and church leaders. He helps the association really become a family of churches.

**General leader of the association** refers to The director of missions’ leadership role in the association as a general body of Baptists. The director of missions is the leader of leaders of all programs and units of an association’s organized life. His concern includes the association’s organization for fellowship, governing, mission performance, administrative services and staff. The director is concerned with leading an association to fulfill its mission in regard to missions, ministries, religious education, church development, training, church growth, evangelism and other priorities. Just as a pastor’s leadership pervades the entire life of a church, the director of missions’ leadership pervades the entire life and work of the association.

### RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES OF DIRECTORS OF MISSIONS

Job descriptions of directors of missions may vary considerably in the way they are worded. However, nine areas of responsibility, along with activities in each of those areas, are commonly included in job descriptions.

**Work with pastors.** Be a pastor to pastors, relate to the associational pastors conference, assist in church/pastor conflicts, confer with pastors wanting to move or considering a move, orient new pastors in the association, develop pastoral support systems, provide growth opportunities for pastors.

**Work with churches.** Help churches to develop a commitment to being on mission; assist churches in fulfilling their mission; work with pastor search committees, visit churches for routine, crisis, ceremonial or functional visit; be a resource to churches; teach and preach in and for specific churches (e.g., revivals, supply or interim work, study courses, etc.).

**Strengthen relationships among churches.** Encourage the association to be a family of churches or a network through which churches mutually give and receive assistance, foster fellowship and mutual commitments among churches of the association, lead churches to develop a sufficient degree of unity in faith and practice to enhance their fellowship and working together; and create an environment in which churches want to be on mission together.

**Work with the association's organizational leaders.** Lead the association to organize appropriately to carry out objectives of the association; work with the executive board and various committees and officers of the association; and work with the associational council and program organizational leaders to develop a leadership team.

**Provide missionary leadership.** Lead the entire association of churches to develop and maintain a missions perspective; instigate or start new work; establish points of witness; involve all program organizations in missions work; interpret to the association the needs of people in the association's territory for evangelism, ministry, or missions attention; lead in enlisting, placing, training, and supervising volunteers in missions, and in developing missions strategy for the association.

**Maintain denominational and other external relationships.** Relate as appropriate to other associations, state conventions, Southern Baptist Conventions, other Baptist bodies and other denominations or religious bodies; business, social, educational and welfare agencies; and city, county, state and national governments. Interpret the denomination to churches and churches to the denomination.

**Provide general leadership and administration.** Give general leadership in all aspects of associational life; establish priorities for allocating time, money and other resources; administer processes such as planning, organizing, communicating, training, and evaluating.

**Manage the office, business affairs and supervise staff.** This includes office management, editing, publishing (e.g., associational newsletter), staff supervision, financial management, property management, legal affairs, purchasing and serving as a general resource person for denominational information.

**Fulfill other responsibilities appropriate to the particular situation.** This ninth area, "other", is the last item on every job description. Each association must identify activities that are applicable to their situation.

## INDIVIDUALIZING THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This particular, unique balance among the three role dimensions and the nine areas of responsibility must be determined by and for each association. Such determination should be a matter of negotiation in the initial process of call a director of missions, then updated annually. Even when negotiations are done regularly, a director of missions must be flexible enough to respond appropriately to changes in his situation whenever they occur.

The triangle showing the three dimension of the director of mission's role will not be the same shape in every association, but it probably will have those three sides — mission strategist, minister to churches and church leaders, and general leader of the association.

Also, the nine responsibilities are not equally important in every association, and no two associations would assign the same relative importance among those factors. What is important to your association is that there is a consider able amount of agreement on that role.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your local association:

Or you may contact your state missionaries:  
Alabama Baptist Convention  
**State Board of Missions**  
P.O. Box 11870  
Montgomery, AL 36111  
Telephone: (800) 264-1225 ext. 383  
Email: gswafford@alsbom.org

*This pamphlet is made possible by Cooperative Program gifts from Alabama Baptist churches.*

4/2007

# WHAT DOES AN ASSOCIATIONAL DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS DO?

J.C. BRADLEY

What does a director of missions do? One thing is certain: It is hard for a director of missions to do anything if there are many conflicting ideas about what he is supposed to do. This tract can help church and associational leaders — as a matter of fact, all Southern Baptists — develop common understandings about what associational directors of missions do.

To understand better what associational directors of missions do, we will look at the dimensions and responsibilities of the role and at a way of custom-fitting that role to your association. First, let's look at some values contributed by directors of missions.

## VALUES OF DIRECTORS OF MISSIONS

Many values could be mentioned, but the following stand out.

**The director of missions is the key to an association's reaching its potential.**

Just as a pastor is the key to whether a church reaches its potential, and a Sunday school teacher is the key to whether a class reaches its potential, so the director of missions is the key to an association's reaching its potential.

**The director of missions is concerned for the total life of specific churches over an extended period of time.** The director can provide a unique ministry to churches because of both his closeness to them and his ability to maintain a certain objectivity toward them. No one else in the entire denomination is in a position to care about a particular group of churches the way a director of missions is.