Associational Missions and Church Planting

The Association is the “front-line” of ministry for the local church and for the pastors and staff of the churches. We are here to resource you and to assist you in acquiring the resources available to you through the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, the North American Mission Board, and the International Board of Missions. These are challenging times for us as an association. We have more opportunities than we have ever had and fewer financial resources than has been available before. We are not alone as associations across the country are being strategic in how they move forward. We appreciate so very much your prayers, encouragement , and financial support as we strive to be faithful to you in every way possible.

Did you know that there are 101 different languages spoken in Alabama? For that reason, English as a Second Language is an ever-growing and ever-needed ministry. What a joy to attend the opening group time of ESL class at FBC Prattville and hear a Bible verse read out loud in ten different languages! Jesus truly is King of all the nations and one day His name will be proclaimed by all tongues, tribes and nations! And not only do we need ESL to help international adults, we need Tutoring Children and Youth ministries to help their children. We are seeing a rise in ESL classes for children which help them prepare for the school year or help them with their classes during the school year. One language group we work with is the Deaf. Out of the 54,000 Deaf people in Alabama only around 1000 have been exposed to the Good News. This is tragic! We have a larger group of children attending Deaf camp this year which is very exciting! This is one of the most important opportunities that we have to share the Gospel with the Deaf. And last, but not least our hunger ministries across the state are doing a very important job of feeding people physically as well as spiritually. And we are able to assist these ministries through our Alabama hunger offering. We see people come to know Christ every week through these ministries!

Why church planting in Alabama when we already have 3269 Alabama Baptist Churches? The short answer is that there are almost three million people in our state who do not attend any church. New churches are planted to reach into pockets of unreached people in our associations. Due to your gifts to missions through the Cooperative Program, our Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions has funded over 88 new churches since 2013 within our state, sent over 20 families to other states to plant new churches, and have coached over 263 people in planting/pastoring churches. Scores of people have been trained in the nuts and bolts of how to plant a new church. The assessment process has been enhanced for new planters to include a two-day retreat for the planting couple, and answers the “why”, the training the “what”, and the coaching the “how”. A certificate in church planting through the Ministry Training Institute (MTI) this fall which is available to bi-vocational planters and team members. An elective in church planting in North America has been added to the curriculum at the University of Mobile and is coming soon at Samford University.

Traveling to a Spanish-speaking country provides an opportunity to enjoy its natural beauty, rich history, beaches, mountains, cuisine and more. However, in the State of Alabama it is possible to get taste of the Spanish heritage and culture by just visiting with a neighbor next door or by driving just a few miles within any city/county limits in our State. Conservatively speaking there are at least 200,000 Hispanics in Alabama. They come from different educational, socioeconomical and cultural backgrounds. From a missiological standpoint, these demographics present many opportunities to reach the Hispanic communities with the gospel of Jesus Christ without having to travel far. We have about 30 Hispanic Baptist churches in Alabama, and while they work tirelessly to minister to the Spanish-speaking communities, they fall short in their attempts to minister to the overwhelming population of 200,000 Hispanics in our State. It is our prayer that our Anglo Churches and Associational Missionaries join efforts with the 30 existing Hispanic churches so that many more hear and respond to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Respectfully submitted,