**2021 Suggested Report**

**Associational Missions and Church Planting**

Prayer is a key component in the success of any ministry. We must consistently ask ourselves whether we are being faithful to pray or just doing lip service by saying “I will pray for you.” Your associational leadership covets your prayers. Praying for your Associational Missionary, praying for any other leaders working with Disaster Relief, WMU, resort ministries, church and community ministries, or any other ministries tied to your association needs your prayers. Some associations send an email asking for prayer for a church of the week. You can connect with Alabama WMU for weekly prayer concerns, or you could initiate a prayer ministry in your association for concerted prayer. It has been said that prayer changes the one who is praying, and prayer solicits a response from God. We must be growing and maturing in Christ (changing), and we must be intimate with the Lord as well (soliciting a response.)

Alabama Baptists have a great and growing passion to see new churches planted /replanted / gathered (new non-SBC into our SBC family) into our family.  Our church planters come from all areas, walks of life and regions in our state.  Over this last year we have hosted 3 Time to Plant mobilization and connection events, run 4 church planting cohorts (English/Spanish) and now have moved to fund 28 church planters and replanters.  With our new planters we have seen a coaching network built and established so that every church planter has a coach on his side.

With the growth that God has brought on through your Cooperative Program giving and support we have brought on 2 more church planting catalysts.  One will be planting and building a network of Hispanic planters from Mobile area (Ramon Vielza) and the other will be working on a network of plants in the western area of our state from Fayette south (Theron Hawkins).

This year we had our first church plant that reproduced and planted in Altoona.  Multiplication and a move toward focused church planting residencies will be a priority in the coming year.  There is a great need for new planters and replanters in state today.

It is a confirmed fact that Alabama is ethnically diverse. This diversity brings Great Commission opportunities. Some of the ethnic groups that have Baptist churches are Hispanics, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Laotian and Haitian. The Intercultural ministry exists to partner with the existing Baptist ethnic congregations to preach the gospel from Jerusalem and unto the uttermost parts of the earth, to identify ethnic groups that need to be reached with the gospel, and to work with our Baptist Association in the development of strategies to mobilize Baptist churches to survey their communities and intentionally reach their communities for Christ.

What a year it has been with the ups and downs of Covid. Some of our ministries are up and running again while others are still meeting by zoom or have stopped altogether. We had a wonderful time of fellowship and refreshing in March at our Ministry Evangelism Retreat where we heard wonderful testimonies of God’s love and faithfulness to those grieving the loss of a spouse due to Covid and other extreme life heartaches. Also there has been an increase in interest in Deaf ministry as more people are starting to learn sign language in hopes of ministering to the Deaf. Our ESL ministries continue to grow, and new ministries are being started. Some of our students are coming to know Christ through our ESL ministries. Glory to God! In spite of a pandemic God is still mightily at work!