

### Associational Missions and Church Planting

It has been said in many settings that the Associational Missionary is the front-line missionary on the battlefield. This missionary usually has a closer relationship with the pastor and staff of their churches than any state missionary could ever have because of their proximity and availability. Associational Missionaries have the challenge of working with churches in crisis, negotiating best outcomes sometimes while challenges are taking place, and working with churches as they journey through their calling to serve and reach their community. Alabama Baptists support your Associational Missionary in his work so that your church can have success in your work. This last year church planting/replanting out of COVID has grown rapidly. Our website [www.plantalabama.org](http://www.plantalabama.org) has been upgraded with social media support. Presently, our Hispanic church plants have grown to 14+ new works. With the growth an additional support coordinator has joined in on contract (Heydi Rodriguez) and 2 new Hispanic trainers have been equipped to run our cohort training and/or a residency program. 5 new residency centers have been established and presently, 5 residents are being assisted in preparing to plant in Alabama. Residency gives us an opportunity to assess, mentor, and effectively launch a new work. In our network, 5 replanters have joined in and have been trained and resourced to replant a new church in an old structure. Total today there are more than 55 church planters who have been either assessed, trained, resourced, supported, gathered, coached or investing back into the network. We praise the Lord for the opportunity to have a growing team that is invested in intercultural ministries. This year for the first time, seven members of our Alabama Baptist Hispanic churches traveled to Africa in obedience to Acts 1:8. We hope that next year we continue to mobilize Hispanic and Asians to actively participate in local, regional, and international mission opportunities. Also, this year, we had our first Intercultural youth camp among the Alabama Baptists where 80 youth from Hispanic, Asian, and African-American background gathered at WorldSong Retreat Center to learn about their Identity, their Purpose, and their Calling. To the glory of God, 10 youth received Christ as Lord and Savior! Finally, this coming fall we will have different opportunities where churches of different backgrounds will unite in worship as well as Great Commission Initiatives.

What an awesome year it has been. Most of our ministries are up and running again now that Covid has settled down somewhat. We have seen growth in our Deaf ministries across the state. We have two Deaf ministry leaders who are discipling and training the next generation to be Christian Deaf leaders in their communities. ESL is still the main way that we are sharing the gospel with our international community. With 101 different languages represented in our state now, the opportunities are endless. Our church and community ministries are feeding many people through our food pantries. The need has grown immensely with all the challenges in our world but God continues to meet those needs as He always has. To God be the glory!