

## Associational Missions and Church Planting

God is good and has blessed us in so many ways this past year. We have seen growth in our Deaf ministries across the state. The Jesus movie was done in all ASL (American Sign Language) and shown in 9 different locations across the state. The Deaf are coming to Christ as a result of this movie. In the fall the movie will be shown in homes and a curriculum designed specifically to go with the movie will be used. These are exciting days! The Deaf are considered the number 1 unreached people group in the world and we want to change that! English as a Second Language is allowing us to do international missions right here at home in Alabama. More and more internationals continue to move to Alabama from places like Myanmar and Haiti. God is using ESL to touch their hearts and bring them to Him. Our church and community ministries are feeding many people through our food pantries. We have 50 food ministries across the state who receive hunger funds through our hunger offering given by Alabama Baptists throughout the year. 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!

Over the past year God has continued to grow and multiply church planting throughout Alabama. We have approximately 70 church planters who have been either assessed, trained, resourced, supported, gathered, coached, or are investing back into the planting network. With the growth of replanters to more than 11, we have opened a cohort to continue learning and growing through the process. This summer we had 8 summer interns learning about planting and working in our church plants. Our prayer is that some will return to be planters or team members for the sake of the gospel. We had 2 new Hispanic residents that are now moving onto plant in Mobile and Albertville through our partnership several churches. We ran two assessments and two training cohorts in English. Our training for trainer workshop was held in Montgomery to equip planter trainers. In equipping, we have trained and begun to develop a Hispanic coaching network for new planters by equipping 8 leaders. Several times a year, and in some cases monthly, we are gathering planters and replanters throughout several regions to pray, grow and support each other. Under multiplication, we have 3 Hispanic plants that are opening up new plants as they look at kingdom impact and multiplication. Presently, 18 new planters (English/Spanish/Korean) are in our queue as we look at assessment and cohort training this fall.

Associations are at the forefront of ministering to the churches, and a healthy association is essential to have healthy churches. Serving our associations as your missionaries from the Alabama State Board of Missions is a privilege. We work with associational leaders to assist in meeting needs related to their overall work. For example, Calling Out the Called is a new resource to help with the pastor/staff shortage. Strategic Planning is an ongoing action that associations need to experience to stay effective in serving their churches. A new process developed for Alabama Baptist associations is ready to be used. SPARC, **S**trategic **P**lanning for **A**ssociations in **R**ural **C**ontexts, is the process title that takes a little less than a year from start to finish. If your association has not signed up for this opportunity, encourage your leadership team to discuss this possibility with your Associational Missionary Strategist.