

**Director of Missions and Ministries Report**  
for the  
**Quarterly Executive Committee Meeting**  
January 27, 2020

Ken Blackwood  
Director of Missions and Ministries

What a great finish we have had to 2019 and what a great start we have had to this new year and new decade! Thank you to all who helped us celebrate **100 years of ministry** through the Morgan Baptist Association at our 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in October! It was a great success on all accounts. There are literally too many people to thank, but we showed that partnership is still alive and strong after 100 years in Morgan County. Now, as we begin 2020 and enter our second century as an association of churches, I hope that you are as excited as I am about the opportunities that are before us.

You have already heard about the great ministries under the direction of **Virginia Alexander** and our Service Team Leader, Pastor **Ben Bates**, as well as for the great **volunteers** who serve in those ministries. I am grateful that our association is a model of caring for the real, tangible physical and spiritual needs of the people who are clients at the Caring Place and Sycamore Bargain Center.

You are also aware of our association's efforts to provide opportunities for member churches and individuals to be actively on mission locally and around the world. To that end, we have sent teams to serve in Wyoming, Peru, and Mexico. Our Mission Team Leader, Pastor **Stephen Cannon**, continues to lead us in those efforts. Our Equipping Team Leader, **Ann Kellett** has provided and promoted training opportunities this past year. We are looking forward to continuing those ministries, and many others like Raceway and VBS this year as well.

As our Moderator **Chris Martin** and I have been praying and seeking a vision together for our association going forward into a new decade, we both feel that a great need in our association is a greater focus upon **prayer**. We hope to begin planning for some kind of **emphasis on prayer** that will involve your church and all our MBA churches. Please go before the Lord ask for wisdom and guidance in these plans.

As we "dream" about what the Lord would like to do through our partnership of churches, I have been praying, discussing, researching and seeking God's face about what He would have us do as an association of churches. I feel that all of the above ministries have been, and are, bringing glory to Him and building His kingdom. I am convinced that He would have us continue these efforts to the extent that our member churches' united vision, financial support, and active participation allow.

But I feel that there is one need we have not adequately addressed as an association. I am told that our area is one of the State's greatest opportunities for Hispanic Ministry. We do have Hispanic ministry happening in our association. But I feel that the need far exceeds our efforts as an association. Therefore, I plan, in partnership with our **Moderator, Leadership Team, and Executive Board**, to begin an investigation of the **need**, the **feasibility**, the various **options**, and the necessary **resources** for planting a **Hispanic Church** somewhere in our county. Our **State Board of Missions** has already offered to help us if we feel led to go forward.

As we begin the earliest stages of investigation into this, I would remind us of four things: 1) Associations do not plant churches; **churches plant churches**. Our Association and State Board of Missions are here to guide and help; but this will be a church-led effort. 2) As such, this effort will succeed only if the **churches and their pastors** are not only behind the plans, but **in front** of the plans. Therefore, I am calling upon **every church** and **every pastor** to pray and participate as **led to do so**. 3) This will require funding that our association simply does not currently have. If we decide together to go forward, it will mean a **commitment of time, effort, and money**. 4) We will accomplish no more or less than our **vision** and our **prayers** allow. This will be a **long-term project**. We will need Prayer Warriors and Long-term Partnership for this to happen.

At the moment, this is only a "dream". But I am asking you, our **Executive Board**, all our **MBA Leaders**, all of our member **churches**, and each and every **pastor** to dream with us and go before the Lord together in **partnership and faith**.

Currently, **Cave Spring, Cedar Ridge, Flint, Mt. View, New Friendship, Oak Forest, and Sixteenth Avenue** are seeking pastors.

Since July, your Director of Missions and Ministries has been privileged to preach or visit several of our member churches for various events including **Oak Park, Falkville First Baptist, Decatur Baptist, West Hartselle, Fellowship, GraceLife, Pine Ridge, Bellview, New Friendship, East Highland, Lebanon, Shoal Creek, Liberty, Sixteenth Avenue, and Hartselle First Baptist**.

**Thank you** for your prayerful and financial support of our association as we continue to work to foster partnership among our member churches. I am grateful to serve alongside you! As always, we need your support and I am grateful that you and your church continue to value cooperative partnership that has been one of the distinguishing values and hallmarks of Southern Baptist life for more than a century.

Remember, **partnership begins here**.

Blessings,

*Ken*

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