

SPRING MEETING

Director of Missions Report

April 27, 2007

Bobby Gilstrap, Director of Missions

This year's Associational Emphasis and challenge is to be *Living ACTS 1:8*. This yearlong mission and evangelism emphasis is intended to challenge each of our churches and their members to "raise the bar" on being healthy, growing congregations that are balanced in fulfilling our world reaching commission.



We want to encourage our churches to be intentional in giving and going to reach our lost world. *How?*

1. **GIVING** – As our churches give consistently to associational missions and the Cooperative Program, they partner to reach beyond themselves. This is a healthy partnership for local churches to have a global view of reaching our world. We are appreciative that most of our cooperating churches consistently and systematically give every month to the expanded cooperative work of the Kingdom.

Even in these difficult economic times, so many of our churches have remained financially faithful to our cooperative mission efforts. Every time we assist a pastor or church leader, or resource a congregation, every participating church is a cooperative partner in that effort.

2. **GOING** – Many of our congregations are praying and working toward mission partnerships in all four areas of the Great Commission. I want to challenge each of us to be sensitive to opportunities for participation in what God is doing in our community, state, country and world.

ACTS 1:8 MINISTRY

As an association, we are here to assist and resource our churches to be effective in fulfilling their visions to be **Acts 1:8 Churches**. *What has God called your church to be and do to fulfill the Great Commission?* We are here to assist your church in doing what you feel the Lord has led you to be and do in your Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

As strange as it may sound to some, we realize that the *association is not the church*. What that means is that our role is not to try to do the things that the local church is called to do. Our role is to work together in helping our cooperating Southern Baptist churches of Southeastern Michigan carry out the Great Commission.



In brief . . . it's not about the association; it's about the local church. If no one in our community knows anything about the association, but they know our local churches, we are accomplishing our primary task. ***The churches must increase while the association must decrease.*** Our local churches are the life force of Jesus' ministry in our neighborhoods (our Jerusalem).

Living Acts 1:8 - HELPING CHURCHES REACH JERUSELUM (*Our Community*)



Several times annually, we are able to provide specialized training for our churches to help them be more effective in evangelism. This month we partnered with the North American Mission Board to provide an **Intentional Community Evangelism (ICE)** training event. Teams of our people went prayer walking and witnessing in the Willow Green Manufactured Home Park in Monroe. An outreach Bible Study was started this past Wednesday to begin ministry to residents. Pray that the Bible Study grows and that God may expand that work in partnership with the host church, Monroe Missionary Baptist Church.



Other resources are available through your association for special activities and special event evangelism.



1. This year's Vacation Bible School theme is **GAME DAY CENTRAL**. The association has 10 evangelistic soccer balls that can be checked out for use during your recreation time. Every day of your Vacation Bible School, recreation leaders can use the balls to play games with the children.

Then, before closing their recreation time, the children can circle around and hear the Good News of Jesus presented using the colors of these special balls. These balls could also be used for a church wanting to do a sports clinic in their neighborhood. What a creative way to present the Gospel to the children that would come to such an outreach event.



2. Canning Hunger Outreach resources are still available for our churches to use. A church can go door-to-door and collect food for the hungry while meeting their neighbors and having numerous opportunities to share Christ with them, and inviting them to church.
3. Several churches have already reserved our Evangelistic Block Party Trailer. This great resource can be used for a stand-alone event or in partnership with a Vacation Bible School or other evangelistic church activity. Call our office for availability.

Living Acts 1:8 – HELPING CHURCHES REACH JUDEA (*The State of Michigan*)



Many of our churches are actively involved in partnerships within the state of Michigan. Several of them regularly assist at Detroit's Baptist Hope Center. Others have assisted church planters, churches or missionaries across our state.

Next month, we have an associational partnership mission trip that will reach out in our Judea. Individuals from associational churches can join our mission team and go to Bambi Lake Conference Center for three days of work. The cost is only \$20.00 per person because each participant

receives a scholarship from the association's Partnership Missions Fund, provided from church gifts to the annual Associational Missions Week of Prayer Offering each May.



Let me encourage each of us to join God in what He is doing throughout our state. I want to encourage us as individual Christians and as churches to be seeking opportunities to be **ON MISSION in MICHIGAN**.

Living Acts 1:8 – HELPING CHURCHES REACH SAMARIA *(The United States)*



Just within the last week, we have confirmed our second associational partnership mission trip for 2007. We will be partnering with the North American Mission Board and the Strategic Focus Cities emphasis in Cleveland, OH. Our team will be helping a church plant that is a part of the Cleveland Hope emphasis. Again, scholarships will be provided for church member participants from our Partnership Missions Account. More details are coming soon.

Living Acts 1:8 – HELPING CHURCHES REACH THE ENDS OF THE EARTH *(Our World)*



Several of our associational churches are doing international missions. They are working on projects to assist missionaries on the other side of the planet (i.e.: sending money for water purifiers, collecting fabric for orphanages, etc.) while other congregations are sending mission teams to work in Israel, Nicaragua, and possibly other countries.

Through our state convention, we have opportunities to go on mission trips to Niger. Plans have been made for several trips in 2007 and 2008. Through our new state-to-state partnership with Alabama, there are more opportunities to partner with them on international mission trips. Further, if our association approves the association-to-association partnership with Madison Baptist Association in Huntsville, AL, we may have opportunity join them on partnership mission trips to Korea and the Ukraine. We have few excuses for not being involved directly in “hands-on” mission opportunities internationally.

Living Acts 1:8 – CHURCH HEALTH



For our churches to be balanced and effective in **Living Acts 1:8**, they need additional support resources. Several of the resources we are providing this year include leadership development CDs of our Audio Conferences for Pastors and stewardship support through the Biblical Stewardship Seminar. We continue to make available the DYNAMIC CHURCH conference for churches who are interested in a weekend consultation that will help their church determine what the next level is for their congregation.

CONCLUSION

My prayer is that you look to your association as your **first choice** when you have a need. We seek to be ready and able to provide assistance and resources for you in a timely fashion. Again, our promise remains, *if we can't help you, we'll find someone who can.*