

## Director of Missions Report



The **vision** of our association is “partnering together to advance the Kingdom of God locally and throughout the world.” This is fulfilled by our **mission**, “to make disciples who gather with other believers as they cooperatively begin new churches or new groups within existing churches.” Our **strategy** is centered on focusing our collective resources for the equipping and empowering of our churches to make disciples of all peoples.

This strategy is grounded in our strong Baptist conviction of the autonomy of the local church. The practical working out of our strategy leads to a decentralized approach to the ministries of our association. The primary function of the associational leadership is connecting churches with common interests, goals, and objectives, specifically as related to evangelism, church planting, and missions. Historically this has included ministries like church planting, summer camp, collegiate ministry, community evangelistic events, and disaster relief efforts.

In reading the Sesquicentennial History of Cape Girardeau Baptist Association, I discovered that the primary reason the association was formed was for the purpose of starting new churches. The churches worked together and contributed financially to begin churches where there were none. The association did this for 139 years, partnering together without acquiring properties or other real assets, resulting in numerous church plants and the formation of the Charleston Baptist Association, Black River Baptist Association, and Clear Creek Baptist Association in Illinois. The identity of the Cape Girardeau Baptist Association was created and sustained through the churches’ common labor for the Lord and they succeeded in their mission so long as they maintained unity in the Spirit with a love for one another and the lost world around them.

I believe God has led us to renew our commitment to proclaim His glory among the people of Southeast Missouri and see new churches established as our existing churches continue to develop and grow. This was the motivating factor in the establishment of the Church Planting Center of Southeast Missouri by our association in 2014. We have seen this new entity grow in the past year as it has called a church planting catalyst for the international community in our region. This has led us to the proposed four fold increase in funding in this year’s budget as we also appeal to churches throughout Southeast Missouri to partner with us in this great work. It is my hope that we will see another church planting catalyst called to the black population of our region over the next 12-24 months. We recognize that the gospel is the only hope for ethnic unity in our region and the world. Therefore, we must do all that is possible and more in order to make the gospel known to every ethnicity in our area and beyond.

As we consider how this is to be accomplished we must recognize that we must do things differently in order to reach those not like us. From a church development perspective, it may mean we need to refocus the teaching ministry of our churches to

equip our members to make disciples of different ethnicities. In the coming year I will begin teaching on the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement. This study looks at the biblical, historical, cultural, and strategic perspective of missions, whether we are speaking of local, North American, or international. In addition, the Transformational Church Assessment Tool also continues to be a resource for churches to utilize in discovering how they can be more effective in transforming the communities around them.

There are two new ministries in our area that facilitate outreach to the unreached in our area. The first is LifeCare Ministries. It was begun this year as a partnership of the Southern Baptist Associations of Southeast Missouri. LifeCare Ministries has a mobile medical clinic that can be used by the churches to do medical outreach in Southeast Missouri. You can go to their website, [www.lifecareministries.net](http://www.lifecareministries.net), to learn more, reserve the unit for your outreach event, or sign up to volunteer to serve through this medical outreach ministry. The other ministry is CarePortal. Their website contains a wealth of information: [www.careportal.org](http://www.careportal.org). CarePortal is a partnership between churches and Child Welfare workers. As "Child Welfare workers uncover the needs in families, CarePortal makes local Churches aware, giving them a real-time opportunity to respond." This allows churches to get into the homes and lives of people in their community with opportunities to demonstrate love in a practical way while also opening the door for sharing the love of God through Christ in a verbal witness. Both of these ministries provide us with new opportunities for planting, or replanting, churches in needy, unreached segments of the population in Southeast Missouri.

In conclusion, we voted to begin a Northeast Italy mission partnership at our April 2016 Executive Board Meeting. First Baptist Scott City will be leading out on this partnership. There will be two trips in 2017, March and October. We are fulfilling our partnership with El Salvador as we complete the BTCP leadership training in November 2017. We have trained 5 El Salvadoran leaders to be ongoing trainers and they have already successfully ordered their own training materials for new groups directly from the BTCP offices in Atlanta. Fruitland Community Church will continue to work with churches in the eastern part of El Salvador and we are hopeful some of the trained leaders there will come serve alongside of us in Northeast Italy. To this end, we have already extended an invitation to them for up to two of their leaders to join us on the October trip.

It is a great privilege to serve as your Director of Missions. Thank you for your continued support and partnership!

For the Glory of God,  
John Vernon  
Director of Missions