FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

Well, here I am…on Page Two of this month's Mid-South Baptist! While I have grown accustomed to seeing my name, face, and words on Page One, I've decided that Page Two may be a better place to be, especially if it means that Page One can be used to tell the stories of the churches of the Mid-South Baptist Association. The real "Front Page News" of the MSBA is the news of what God is doing through His church. I hope you have had a moment to read about Trafalgar Village Baptist Church and the ways God is using this "mission minded, ministry driven" church to meet the needs of that community. I encourage you to take a moment to pray for Pastor Rick Panis, the staff, and membership of Trafalgar Village as they move forward in reaching their community with the message of Christ. I would also encourage you to find ways to express gratitude to Rick Panis for his excellent leadership as Moderator of our Association. His term of service will end in October of this year, but we will reap the benefit of his leadership for awhile to come. Thanks, Pastor Rick, for your help and encouragement in moving us toward becoming an association that focuses upon supporting and resourcing the ministries of the church.

Well, where are we…in the process of becoming the kind of association described above? I believe the best answer would be, "We're making progress and we have a ways to go." One very good sign of progress is the participation of local Pastors in the recent Church Assessment Process. Approximately 50 of our Pastors met individually with consultants enlisted by the North American Mission Board to discuss the vision, successes, challenges, and needs in our churches. The results of this process will be an awareness of the ministries and needs of our churches and the discovery of resources that can be applied to assist those churches in the ministry to which God has called them. We are looking forward to the "next phase" of this process. If your church wants to be part of this process, and you were unable to participate in the initial round of interviews, please call me at 373-6161 and we'll make sure you get "fully-engaged" in the process.

Well, where do we go next…in supporting and resourcing the ministries and needs of the churches? Another good sign of the progress God is giving us is found in a new service we are able to offer to our churches that are interested in involving their members in missions and ministry. We have asked Dr. Mark Morris of Mission Leader Inc., a locally-based missions consultation group, to work with us in assisting churches to develop strategies for mobilizing their members for local and global missions involvement. Dr. Morris has a tremendous "heart" and passion for reaching unreached people with the Gospel. He has served as an international missionary and a local church Missions Pastor, and is extraordinarily gifted and qualified to help churches discover opportunities and strategies for "taking the Good News into the world." If your church is interested in discovering how God might be leading you to have "worldwide mission impact," Dr. Morris will be happy to meet you and help you develop some very practical ways to fulfill that mission. You may contact Dr. Morris at 901-921-6118 or at info@missionleader.com. All costs related to Dr. Morris' service are covered by the MSBA. I hope many of our churches will take advantage of this opportunity.

I am encouraged by the progress we have made and enthused about the path ahead. Let's pray without ceasing that God will continue to bless us and guide us as we join Him in His mission!

Bro. Mike