

These are exciting days for the churches of the Mid-South Baptist Association...new churches are being birthed; new ministries are being established; new facilities are being dedicated; renewed vision is being discovered; and, new life in Jesus is being found by many through the grace of God and the faithful ministry of our churches. We praise God for the movement of His Spirit and the work of the churches of the Mid-South! There are also many new things happening with the ministry staff of your Mid-South Baptist Association. I thought I should take opportunity to share some of those things with you. If you take a look at the staff of the Mid-South Baptist Association, you will see:

A New Assignment...Dr. Greg Spears has faithfully served the Mid-South Baptist Association for more than 10 years in a full-time capacity as Missions Strategist and as Leadership Development Strategist. On June 1, 2008, Greg assumes a new role and a new schedule as he begins his part-time work as MSBA Church Planting Coordinator. Many of you have fervently prayed for Greg and his girls as they have walked through the challenges and the victories of the last two years. I've heard Greg say often, "Please keep praying!" Greg's new part-time role will enable him to focus on his family priorities while providing the Association with excellence and expertise in assessing church planters, developing our church planter network, and working with churches interested in starting new works. I believe Greg has been and will continue to be a vital part of our associational staff. Please pray for him as he assumes this new role!

A New Missionary...In July, Reverend Willie Jacobs will move to Memphis and begin his new work as a *North American Mission Board National Missionary* assigned to the *Delta Urban Center Church Planting Pilot Project*. You may be asking, "What does all that really mean?" Well, it means that God is blessing us with a new partner in the very important work of evangelism through starting new churches in the large urban centers of the Mid-South. Reverend Jacobs comes to Memphis as a result of a new partnership between the North American Mission Board, the Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Mid-South Baptist Association. His previous service as a church planter and a church planting strategist have uniquely prepared him for a journey toward discovering people groups in major urban centers, developing strategies for evangelism among those groups, developing the spiritual leadership within those groups, and eventually starting new churches. Reverend Jacobs is not an employee of our Association, in the technical sense, but he is a talented and committed partner who is coming to work alongside our churches and our leaders to share the gospel in our city and throughout this region. I believe Willie's spirit, attitude, and expertise will be a gift and a blessing to our Association. He will be a tremendous resource for churches, pastors, and staff leaders who are seeking and striving to expand the Kingdom of God in our part of the world. Please pray for Willie and his wife, Ozzie, as they prepare to move to Memphis!

A New Co-worker...On June 16 our Executive Board will be considering a recommendation to elect Dr. Mitch Martin of Nashville, Tennessee as our Church Leadership Development Strategist. I hope you will take a moment to read Dr. Martin's biographical profile (inside this issue) and pray for the Executive Board as they act on this recommendation. I believe Dr. Martin is uniquely gifted, called and qualified to help us assist churches in the development of leaders. His previous service as a Pastor, Director of Missions, state Baptist convention leader, and SBC agency editor and consultant...*but especially his passion for the Lord and His church*...make him a great fit for and a great gift to our Association. Please keep Mitch and Myra Martin, our Executive Board, and our Associational leadership in your prayers as we seek God's will and God's way in this important matter.

A New Possibility...Dale Gravatt's service to our association as Operations Manager of the Mid-South Baptist Conference Center will come to a close on June 30. Dale was well-respected in our association prior to assuming this position in April of 2007 and has shown himself worthy of such high regard by the manner in which he has led our Retreat Center work during a time of very significant transition. He has been a hard working, dependable, and cooperative co-worker who has supported the associational priority of assisting churches to fulfill the vision God has given to them. His passion for "the Camp" has only been surpassed by his professional handling of the challenges that have come with managing the closure of the camping ministry and preparation of the property for sale. He has faithfully supported the decisions of the association in regard to the camping ministry and willingly done the work which flows out of those decisions. I am very grateful for his contribution and urge all of you to pray for Dale and Marcia as they prepare for and move toward new possibilities in their lives and ministry.

Bro Mike

