

## “October Is The Time For...”

***The time for...Pastor Appreciation.*** I don't know who did it, but I am glad that someone has designated October as *Clergy Appreciation Month*. For several years, numerous Christian publishers and Christian organizations have been encouraging us to honor those who serve God as pastors in a special way during the month of October. I am grateful for those who serve faithfully as “preacher, pastor, shepherd, leader” of the churches of the Mid-South Baptist Association. We praise God for your faithful service! I hope that each non-pastor who is reading these words will find that “special way” to honor your pastor this month! We love our pastors!!

***The time for...Associational Fellowship.*** I am looking forward to the fellowship we will enjoy as Mid-South Baptists gather for our 104<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on Monday, October 15, 2007, at Whitehaven Baptist Church. I join with Moderator Don Marston in expressing our gratitude to Dr. Jim Meredith and the membership of Whitehaven Baptist for offering to host this annual event. I am looking forward to an evening that is focused on celebrating what God is doing in His churches. We will hear reports, testimonies and updates that will inspire us and give us good reason to celebrate. I hope each church will make every effort to have a full-slate of representatives present at the Annual Meeting. Additional information about the meeting is found on the front page of this edition of *The Mid-South Baptist*.

***The time for...Prayerful Deliberation.*** There has been much formal and informal discussion of our Executive Board's recommendation to close the operation of the Mid-South Baptist Conference Center and sell or divest the property in order to provide resources that will enable the Association to fully-focus on assisting churches to do the work and ministry that God has called and commissioned them to do. (*The full proposal, as amended and approved by the Executive Board in the September 17, 2007 meeting, is printed in this issue or may be viewed at msbac.org.*) To date, the recommendation has been developed and approved by the *Associational Resource Development Team*; approved by the *Administrative Leadership Council*; and, amended and approved by the *Executive Board*. There is no doubt that this is both a critical and sensitive subject for our Association. It is one that demands much prayerful deliberation and consideration.

As I attempt to pray through, think through and walk through this matter, I am struck by the truth that our decision is **not a choice between what is right or what is wrong**. It is **not a choice between what is good and what is bad**. If it were that kind of choice, it would be an easy decision. It is a hard decision because it is an attempt to determine the best way to use the resources that God owns and God provides to assist His church in fulfilling His Great Commission. Do we do that *best* by continuing to operate a camping and retreat facility on the 75-acres God has given us; or do we do that *best* by using the 75-acres God has given to provide additional resources that will help our churches in their work and ministry? It is a significant determination that demands prayerful deliberation. My personal attempts to pray through and think through this issue have led me to three conclusions. First, *as a representative* to the annual meeting, I will vote in favor of the recommendation because I believe it represents the best steps we can take toward focusing on the work of the churches and fulfilling the vision we have affirmed for this association. Second, *as your Director of Missions*, I will fully-support and enthusiastically-implement any decision our associational representatives make in regard to this matter. Finally, *as a fellow believer and follower of Christ*, I will pray that the decisions made at our meeting will reflect more than the “majority of those voting” and more than the “preferences of the people.” I am praying that our actions will represent a strong and clear “word from God” on this matter. Will you join me in that prayer?

***“To God be the Glory for great things He has done, is doing, and will do in and through the churches of the Mid-South Baptist Association!”***