

"AS YOU GO.....REACH OUT"

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John 15:12-14.

The mission work which is sponsored by our church is divided into four parts -- Associational, State, Home and Foreign.

Associational Missions is the term that is used to denote the activities within the bounds of the Blood River Baptist Association.

State Missions is the term which is used to denote the activities of Kentucky Baptists in their effort to win the lost to Christ and to build active and strong churches within our Commonwealth. The program which State Missions fosters includes evangelism, indoctrination, enlistment, stewardship and the promotion of missions.

Home Missions is the phase of our denominational program which includes the mission work which is done within the bounds of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Home Mission Board interprets "Missions" to mean primarily "the making and baptizing of disciples" and is, therefore, majoring on preaching the gospel of Christ to the foreign-speaking groups, the Indians, the Negroes in the congested centers of our Homeland, Cuba, Panama and Central America, and on establishing and strengthening churches in more than thirty of the western and northern states.

Foreign Missions is that phase of our denominational work which is carried on through various institutions and agencies, such as churches, schools, hospitals, publication plants and good will centers, in approximately sixty other nations in various parts of the world. All of these institutions and agencies are interactive and the goal of each is evangelization.

Since this is the week during which the ladies of our church are having prayer meetings for Home Missions, and are making their offerings for this phase of Southern Baptist work, we shall join them in thinking and learning more about our responsibilities and our opportunities in this area of service.

Never has there been a more urgent need to witness for Christ in our homeland than at present. Church membership is not keeping pace with the growth in population in the United States. The birth rate is outstripping church membership in all age groups by approximately a million per year. The spiritual needs of our people are increasing daily. Our mission work is influenced by the tremendous changes occurring in the urbanization and industrialization of the nation, the population growth, the search for civil justice, and the increase of other social forces such as apathy, affluence, and immorality. Every resource in Southern Baptist home missions is being marshaled for a creative approach to meet these changes, and to discover the individual's, the church's, and the denomination's mission in a changing society. As evidence of the fact that we are living in an era of many changes, I want to point out some of them:

In the last two years alone almost six million young people celebrated their twenty-first birthday.

Over the next ten years the number of families under age thirty-five will increase by forty percent, while the number of families thirty-five to fifty-five will not increase at all.

Growth of the age sixty-five and over population in the next twenty years is less than seven million. Growth of the thirty-five to sixty-four population in the next twenty years is less than eleven million, but growth of the twenty to thirty-four population in the next twenty years is over twenty-five million; and growth of the under twenty population in the next twenty years is over thirty-five million.

The highly publicized baby boom between 1945 and 1955 added twenty-five million to our population. During the 1975 to 1985 decade there will be an increase of forty-six million.

Today over five million Americans live in the suburbs, a gain of almost fifty percent in the last census decade. This compares to an eleven percent rise in the central cities and a drop in rural areas and small towns.

If present trends continue, Negroes will equal or outnumber whites in eight of the ten biggest cities in the United States within the next generation.

Half of the population in the United States will be under twenty-five years in 1980.

By 1970 there will be more teachers than farmers in the United States.

It is estimated that the average family income will be \$12,000 by 1980 with a gross national production of \$750,000,000,000.

The truth of God revealed through Jesus Christ is just as relevant for the decade ahead as it was in the days of the Apostles; however, the ability to communicate this truth grows more complex and the challenge more demanding.

The increase in crime, which is receiving encouragement from many influential sources, the higher rate of drinking and divorce, racial tensions, and strife between management and labor multiply the needs, the difficulties, and opportunities for service for our Lord.

This past year was characterized by strong support for home missions by Southern Baptists through prayer, participation, and most visibly in finances. The Cooperative Program provided \$4,365,353 and the Annie Armstrong Offering provided \$3,573,146, for a total of slightly over eight million dollars.

The missionary force, operating in Cuba, Panama, Puerto Rico, and the fifty states, grew by 148 to a new high of 2,520, with most of the personnel employed under the co-operative agreements with the state Baptist conventions. Last year there were 630 additional summer workers.

The program of the Home Mission Board at present includes evangelism, church extension, associational work, pioneer missions, rural-urban missions, metropolitan missions, mission

centers, Jewish work, language groups, National Baptists, chaplaincy, and special ministries. We now have 761 full-time chaplains, 528 of whom are in the Armed Forces, and 233 are serving in hospitals or other institutions. We also have forty-one part-time chaplains.

The Board faces the future with better defined programs, a more comprehensive organization, more adequate staff, and with stronger resources. We look expectantly to greater accomplishments in winning more people to a saving knowledge of Christ.

The US-2 Board plan is for enlisting young people under twenty-seven years of age, who are college graduates, to invest two years of their lives in helping to meet urgent spiritual and social needs of people in our land. Their travel and living expenses are paid plus further pay when they have completed two years; also a special scholarship bonus is provided for those planning to continue study in seminary or graduate school.

Various mission opportunities are afforded every Baptist in the community where he or she lives.