

Open letter to Southern Baptists from the  
Alabama Baptist Conference of Directors of Associational Missions

As Directors of Missions of Alabama, we stand at the forefront of missional engagement of our churches on fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord. We recognize all efforts to fulfill this mandate at all levels of Baptist life.

But due to the recent changes in direction of Southern Baptist Convention leadership, specifically the adoption of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force report in Orlando, Fla., June 2010, we wish to voice our concerns and offer some suggestion as to how to respond to what many perceive are serious changes that impact mission support.

The North American Mission Board (formerly Home Mission Board) has historically partnered with state conventions in cooperative mission work. This partnership has expressed itself as a two-way street of mission support and cooperation, resulting in many different tasks. The local Southern Baptist church is the source of funding for all the cooperative mission enterprises of the conventions from church planting to disaster relief at the various levels of Baptist life: associations, state conventions, mission boards and other fostered entities of the convention.

In recent days there is a movement within the Southern Baptist Convention that not only alarms many committed to Southern Baptist mission work, but also causes division among all entities of the Southern Baptist Convention. In our understanding, the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force and documents proceeding from the task force have essentially:

1. Superseded the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' main funding for working together.
2. Programmed the coming withdrawal of cooperative agreements with home missionaries in established state conventions and new work areas.
3. Set the stage to dismantle the Southern Baptist family's systematic, cooperative and comprehensive approach to missions (which we the directors of missions of Baptist Associations in Alabama support) — the cherished plan known as the Cooperative Program, and,
4. Greatly damaged already fragile "new work" associations and state conventions of North America.

Since Alabama Baptists are leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention in Cooperative Program giving, we, the Alabama Baptist Conference of Directors of Associational Missions, first-line promoters in Cooperative Program giving, desire to express grave concern over the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force's recommendations and pledge to:

1. Encourage all Southern Baptist churches/associations to support the Cooperative Program within the parameters of traditional, faithful administration by the Southern Baptist family.
2. Encourage all churches, associations and established state conventions to institute and continue to develop direct SBC missions partnerships within the infrastructure of existing pioneer associations and state conventions by providing financial, prayer and manpower support for Vacation Bible School, revivals, evangelistic outreach, church construction and other ministries deemed necessary to aid in reaching rural and small town America and other areas outside the focus of the GCR paradigm.