

STATE MISSIONS SERVICES FOR CHURCHES AND ASSOCIATIONS

EXECUTIVE TEAM

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What can you say about 2020 that hasn't already been said?

As you review the following reports, you'll discover some of what God did through our cooperative missions and ministries in what was, without question, one of the most challenging years in recent memory. Even in the midst of a pandemic and natural disasters, God's spirit was at work, God's people were at work, and lives were changed. So, I encourage you to take a few minutes and review these reports.

I've shared with you before that one of my favorite passages of scripture is found in 1 Samuel chapter 7 where Samuel called on the Israelites to put away their foreign Gods and serve the Lord. While the Israelites gathered, the Philistines decided it was an opportune time to attack. As Israel continued to repent and worship, God thundered against the Philistines throwing them into confusion while, at the same time, empowering His people to drive them back. Following that victory, Samuel set up a stone and called it Ebenezer, which means "the Stone of Help." As he stood before God's people Samuel declared, "thus far the Lord has helped us," (1 Sam. 7:12).

I believe 2020 was an Ebenezer year for Louisiana Baptists. God helped us adapt as the pandemic raged among us. He provided creativity, encouragement, technology and, in many cases, helped us thrive even when we could not meet in person. To add David's declaration to that of Samuel's, in 2020, we experienced again that God was "an ever-present help in times of trouble," (Psalm 46:1).

How do we move forward as we prayerfully begin to put the pandemic in the rearview mirror? I believe it begins by each one of us looking inside ourselves and pleading with God to let revival begin in us. In these days of 24-hour news cycles and social media, it's easy to focus on what's going on around us and overlook what needs to happen within us.

God has been burning Psalm 139:23-24 in my spirit over the last several months. It's there David says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Notice he says, "search me," "know my heart," "test me," "know my anxious thoughts," "see if there be ANY offensive way in me," and "lead me." This was all about David doing business with God. I believe God wants to do the same IN each one of us.

If revival begins within us, it can then spread among us. Over the next several months, please join me in praying this simple prayer, "Lord, change me."

Praying for your personal revival – and mine!