

2020 MISSIONS STUDY

Statewide Goal: \$1,200,000
Myers-Mallory.org

by Candace McIntosh, Alabama WMU Executive Director

NO ONE COULD'VE PREDICTED

On that fateful day in mid-March when officials in Alabama announced the first diagnosed case of the COVID-19 coronavirus in our state, our lives changed. In a matter of minutes, things began to shift. Over the next days, weeks, and even months, we stayed dependent on the Lord to show us—one step at a time—how we would do life and ministry in a new “now,” ... even as the “now” continued shifting almost daily.

Alabama Baptists have always been resilient, perhaps never before evidenced so beautifully as by how you rose to the challenge of finding creative ways to get the Gospel out during a time when so many needed hope. Ministering to your neighbors and communities during a COVID-19 reality was priority, and that message of the hope of Christ was truly on display like no other time in recent history. The church was sent out!

RESPONDING IN CRISIS

During that first week, state missionaries and Alabama WMU staff huddled together online, socially distant but close in heart.

continued



Alabama Baptist
STATE BOARD OF MISSIONS

Week of
Prayer
FOR STATE MISSIONS



continued

Through countless prayers and discussions, we worked to determine how we could best serve Alabama Baptists. Within days, dedicated state missionaries and Alabama WMU staff were on the phones calling pastors and associational WMU leaders to check on them and pray with them.

New resources were developed on the run to help our pastors to navigate the constant change they were facing in those early hours. Even now, during the writing of this study material, pastors are being called weekly, and new resources are being developed and shared to assist our churches as our realities continue to change.

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Meeting virtually became the norm for churches of all sizes, even those who hadn't engaged in online services before. Prayer gatherings among ministry leaders and the greater body of Alabama Baptists happened weekly. Online leadership gatherings were begun to guide in various ministry areas including the five Great Commission Ministries that benefit from the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering – Alabama WMU, Disaster Relief, Church Planting, Partnership Missions and Church Revitalization.

UNENDING FAITHFULNESS

In the midst of an unsettling and difficult time, God has been ever faithful to provide direction and comfort. There is a renewed strength among church planters and church revitalization. Alabama WMU made it possible for Alabama Baptists to engage personally with missionaries who have found themselves stateside due to COVID-19 by engaging the youngest of our church members to the oldest through encounters with missions virtually.

Our Disaster Relief "Yellow Shirt Army," even with the threat of COVID-19, was deployed throughout the state as multiple tornadoes ravaged areas from west to east and north to south during the spring. They remain ready as we anticipate an active hurricane season.

Constant change seems to have been the norm in 2020; however, Alabama Baptists have remained laser-focused on the unchanging Gospel and living out the Great Commission in new and creative ways. Your prayers during this Week of Prayer for State Missions are crucial to the support of our Great Commission Ministries. Your gifts to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering will continue to assist these ministries in meeting needs in whatever new "now" arrives next.



Myers-Mallory
State Missions Offering

YOUR GIFTS HELP SUPPORT THESE

GREAT COMMISSION MINISTRIES:

Week of
Prayer
FOR STATE MISSIONS

ALABAMA WMU

DISASTER RELIEF

CHURCH PLANTING

PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS

CHURCH REVITALIZATION

Myers-Mallory.org

MATERIALS ORDER FORM

If possible, please place one order for your entire church.

Church:

Association:

Name:

Phone:

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Street Address:

City/State/Zip:

QUANTITY	ITEM
_____	Poster
_____	Daily Prayer Guide/Bulletin Insert
_____	DVD <i>(All DVD content also available at Myers-Mallory.org)</i>

QUANTITY	ITEM
_____	Pew Envelope
_____	Remittance Envelope
_____	Bookmark

Choose one of four ways to order free materials:

1. Order online at
Myers-Mallory.org
2. Mail this form to:
Alabama WMU
P.O. Box 681970
Montgomery, AL
36068-1970
3. Call 334.613.2223 or
800.264.1225 ext. 223
4. Email your order to
aarmstrong@alsbom.org



Preparation for PASTORS & CHURCH MISSIONS LEADERS

PLEASE NOTE - At the time we are preparing this missions study for publication, circumstances surrounding the global COVID-19 pandemic are rapidly changing. We realize there is a possibility that missions discipleship groups may not be gathering in a traditional church setting when the Week of Prayer for State Missions is observed. If that is the case in September, we will gladly adapt the activities in this missions study to be utilized at home and will post those changes at Myers-Mallory.org/missionsstudy and on our social media outlets.

GATHER (if possible) the missions leadership team in your church (pastor, missions pastor, WMU director, etc.) for a time of dedicated prayer for state missions and for planning your churchwide week of prayer. Pray with gratitude for all God has done through these missions efforts and with expectancy for how He will continue to work through them.

PLAN

1. Set a date for your observance. Suggested dates are September 13-20, 2020. If that week presents a conflict for your church, feel free to choose another. Set your church's offering goal. The statewide goal is \$1,200,000.
2. As a team, make a plan for promotion. Reserve space in church newsletters, on social media calendars, in worship service presentations and any other outlet you plan to use for promotion. Visit Myers-Mallory.org to explore the resources available for the week of prayer and offering. Some options for promotion include:
 - Displaying posters throughout the church, distributing prayer guides and placing envelopes in pews
 - Utilizing one or more of the videos available at Myers-Mallory.org during worship services
 - Enlisting a State Missionary or Alabama WMU consultant to speak to your congregation or group (Speakers list available at Myers-Mallory.org)
 - Promoting on social media and in the church newsletter using graphics from Myers-Mallory.org
 - Using the activities in this study guide during missions gatherings like Mission Friends, Children in Action, GA, RA, Acteens, Women on Mission, etc. or during other discipleship times.

ORDER materials for churchwide distribution and for use in missions discipleship groups. Consult your age-level leaders and other volunteers to determine their needs, and, if possible, submit one order for your church (see previous page). Visit Myers-Mallory.org/resources to see all available resources.

Activities for PRESCHOOLERS

1. **Print and prepare the "Match & Learn" game**

(available for download online at Myers-Mallory.org/missionsstudy). For durability, print game pieces on card stock or glue them to poster board and laminate. To play, place cards face down. Have each preschooler turn over two cards to see if they match. As each card is turned over, talk about the picture/description on the card. As matches are made, remove the cards from the game, continuing on until all the cards have been matched.

2. **Give each preschooler a business-size envelope.**

Help them write two big Ms on their envelopes. Explain that the Ms stand for Myers and Mallory, two women who loved God and helped people. Say: "The money that is given to the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering helps the people and ministries shown on the cards from the matching game we played." Show a one-dollar bill. Ask preschoolers to take their envelopes home and try to earn one dollar (or more!) to put in their envelopes for the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. Send a note home to parents about encouraging their children to earn money for the offering and to tell when they should bring their offering to church.

3. **Assign each preschooler a partner.**

Say: "We can do more when we work together." Give each pair some blocks, and ask them to build a church. As they build, talk about things that churches need – such as people, God, prayer, money, building, and Bibles.

4. **Cut strips of paper to use in making a paper chain.**

Assist preschoolers in thinking of ways we/they can help others. As each preschooler names a way, write that on a strip of paper and attach with tape. Tape or staple the strips to make a chain. Show preschoolers the chain, and say: "There are so many ways we can help others!"

5. Using masking tape, make an outline of the state of Alabama on the floor. Provide toy cars and trucks for preschoolers to drive around the state. As they play, tell them that state missionaries and Alabama WMU consultants travel around Alabama helping people and churches.

6. **Say thank you prayers with the preschoolers, showing the pictures from the Match & Learn game as you pray.**

"Thank you, God, for Mrs. Pat Ingram. Thank you that she helps women all across Alabama learn how to be good leaders."

"Thank you, God, for Mr. Brian Harper. Thank you that he helps get new churches started in Alabama."

"Thank you, God, for Mr. Scotty Goldman. Thank you that he helps churches in Alabama find partner churches around the world."

"Thank you, God, for Mr. Ken Allen. Thank you that he helps churches in Alabama that do not have enough people in their church."

"Thank you, God, for Mr. Mark Wakefield. Thank you that he, and his group of volunteers, help people after storms."

Before they leave, give each preschooler a pack of M&M's candy. Remind them of the Myers-Mallory offering, which helps so many people in Alabama and beyond.

Activities for CHILDREN

1. Host a college themed class. Encourage kids to wear colors from their favorite university teams, or you can have bandanas in various colors to differentiate collegiate teams. Divide the children into teams, and allow them to play short relay games, such as: sack race, dizzy bat, cup stack, balloon pop, etc. (For descriptions of these games, visit Myers-Mallory.org/missionsstudy.) Keep score or just play for fun! When the games are over, read about the International Friends Retreat (Prayer Guide Day 8). Explain that even though athletes from different colleges compete in sports, college students from all over Alabama come together for the International Friends Retreat with a common purpose - to share the love of Christ with students who have come to school from around the world. Some of these international students do not know who Jesus is or that He came to be the Savior of the world. Take time to pray for the International Friends Retreat and the eternal impact it can have in the lives of college students.

2. Pastors are working hard to plant church all over Alabama. The job of Brian Harper (Prayer Guide Day 4) is to teach and train these pastors to do the best job possible so that more people can hear about Jesus. Distribute large pieces of paper to each child or children may work together collectively on a mural. Explain that the kids have an opportunity to dream and create a brand new church. They may draw it any way they like. Instruct children to include as much detail as possible. As the children work, help them brainstorm by asking questions about the churches they are creating. What kind of events will be hosted? How can this church help the people who live in the community? How will the church make people feel welcome? Allow them an opportunity to explain their drawings when complete. Pray for Brian Harper and all the church planters in Alabama.

3. Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief workers always wear the color yellow. Incorporate as many yellow things into your meeting time as you can. You can have yellow snacks, display yellow posters, hand out yellow stickers to each child, etc. Give each child

a yellow sheet of paper divided into two columns. In one column, have them brainstorm different types of natural disasters that can occur. Kids can write or draw their thoughts. In the other column, ask the kids to think of help needed by people who go through this type of disaster. Share about the work disaster relief workers do (Prayer Guide Days 2 & 7). Pray that everyone Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief helps knows how much God loves them.

4. There are more than 300 missionaries from the state of Alabama all over the world telling people about Jesus! Scotty Goldman (Prayer Guide Day 5) helps connect people like you and me in Alabama churches with these missionaries so that we can assist them and pray for them. Have children spin a globe and randomly select a country. Pray for missionaries and national believers in that country. Pray also for church partnerships to help encourage and support these missionaries. If time allows, let each child take a turn.

5. Invite your church's WMU director to be a guest speaker for your class to explain what WMU is, what your church WMU groups do, and how those groups are connected. Or, if possible, make arrangements for your children's group and your church's adult WMU group to have a joint meeting. You can use the time to enjoy snacks and games together and better get to know each other. Read about Alabama WMU (Prayer Guide Day 3). Pray for Pat Ingram as she encourages women across Alabama to be involved in missions and ministry.

Give the kids an offering envelope to take home, or take a few minutes before you conclude to allow them to make banks of your choosing. Challenge the children to personally give. This may mean giving up a snack/treat, giving a portion of their allowance, or doing an extra chore to earn money. Remind them when to return their offering, and ask the children to pray for the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering throughout the coming week.

Activities for STUDENTS

1. Tell your students to form a line in order of youngest to oldest by birthdays. The catch is that they cannot speak, use gestures or write anything down to determine their ages. Once they think they're correct, ask each student their birthday and see how well they did. Explain that when working relief in a disaster area, sometimes the chaos makes communication difficult, but the systems Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief has in place serve each community efficiently and effectively. Our ever-ready, trained volunteers are what make Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief the effective ministry it is. Download the descriptions of the different avenues for ministry that are available for volunteers. Print enough copies for each student to have one. Encourage students to read the descriptions for all the disaster relief jobs and then rank the top three in which they would be interested in serving one day. Remind students that the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering enables these volunteers to be prepared and equipped any time disaster strikes.

2. Gather fun dress up costumes and random props from around your home or church (the sillier, the better). Divide students into teams, and give each team a bag of items. Have students draw the name of a familiar Bible story out of a hat (Daniel and the lion's den, Jonah and the whale, Noah and the flood, David and Goliath, etc.). Give the teams 10 minutes to prepare a skit acting out their Bible story. Then have the teams perform their skits for the group to see if the others can guess their Bible story. Explain that the "Skit-In-A-Bag" activity they just did is a favorite at Worldsong Missions Place, the camping ministry of Alabama WMU, and is often used by Acteens Activator groups in their mission trip training. If any of your students are interested in becoming a cabin leader at WorldSong, encourage them to visit WorldSongRetreat.org/summerstaff.

3. Visit Myers-Mallory.org/missionsstudy to download and print photos and facts for famous landmarks from major cities around the world. Have students work together to match the landmarks

to the cities/facts. You can divide them in teams if you have a larger group, or they can all work together for a smaller one. Have students share the facts from the cards about those cities. Then explain to the students how Partnership Missions works to support missionaries in those cities and all over the world through prayer, by sending missions teams to work with these missionaries, and by providing ongoing partnership opportunities between Alabama missionaries and Alabama Baptist churches.

4. Using glue, tape and popsicle sticks, have your students work in pairs or teams to build their best stick structure. Provide a small prize for the winner and use it as a discussion prompt to share how Church Revitalization builds up churches from the inside out. Give students paper, and have them brainstorm characteristics of a healthy church versus characteristics of an unhealthy church. Once they have made their lists, compare them to the list of "Is My Church a Candidate?" questions found at <https://alsbom.org/ministries/church-revitalization/>. Explain to students that the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering supports efforts to revitalize struggling Alabama Baptist congregations.

5. Video chat with a church planter in Alabama, and give your students the opportunity to ask questions about what they do, who they serve, and what their daily ministry looks like. A list of church planters is available at Myers-Mallory.org/missionsstudy. Take time at the end of the video chat to write letters of encouragement to the church planter for all he and his family are doing and let them know you're praying for them.

Before you conclude, give each student an offering envelope, and encourage them to pray about how much they should give. Remind them when to return their offering to church.

Activities for ADULTS

1. Prepare a prayer experience for your group. Each participant will be given five different colored beads, along with a pipe cleaner or cord to hold the beads. Each bead represents one of the five Great Commission Ministries supported through the Myers-Mallory State Missions Offering. Lead them to find a prayer partner in the group, and prompt them to pray for each of the ministries as you name them, associating a bead color with each ministry. You may use the prayer guide for the Week of Prayer to share ways each ministry could be prayed for. Close by encouraging them to keep the prayer reminder with them during the Week of Prayer to continue lifting up the ministries throughout the week.

2. The International Friends Retreat (IFR) is an annual event sponsored by Alabama WMU and Collegiate and Student Ministries at the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions. It is held at WorldSong Missions Place, the camping ministry of Alabama WMU. American college students invite international friends for a weekend of outdoor fun and learning about life in Alabama, providing many opportunities for sharing the Gospel. Visit <https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors> to find the most recent data on the number of international students studying at various colleges and universities in Alabama. Share these statistics about international students to illustrate the opportunities students in Alabama have to impact on international friends. Encourage them to pray for international students, and specifically for the International Friends Retreat. Each year, Alabama WMU, through her membership, provides each IFR attendee a helpful gift bag of toiletries and other personal items, along with a Bible (provided by Collegiate and Student Ministries). Consider having your group provide filled gift bags from your church for IFR attendees (more information available at AlabamaWMU.org/ifr).

3. Church planting has taken on a Latin flavor with the arrival of Annel Robayna at the State Board of Missions. Annel works with Hispanic congregations in Alabama and assists in planting new churches. He is helping Alabama church planting "break the mold" of traditional Southern Baptist churches. Consider providing a Latin dish, or a whole meal, to remind the group about the many Hispanic families in Alabama. If possible, invite a local Hispanic pastor or members of a Hispanic church to join the group to talk about the

challenges that they and other others in the Hispanic community face in their spiritual walks and daily lives. If that is not an option, ask the group to share ideas about how to minister to Hispanics in their communities. Pray for Annel as he ministers to Hispanics in Alabama and guides them as they form new churches and ministries.

4. Even as we quarantined at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, disasters continued to plague our state. Decorate the room in bright yellow, and display the Alabama Disaster Relief logo (Available at sbdr.org. Right click the logo on the homepage to download). There are many facets of disaster relief, including childcare, mass feeding, chainsaw, cleanup, laundry, shower, communications, chaplaincy, assessment, and administration. Information about the disaster relief ministries can be found at sbdr.org/connect/find-your-ministry/. Have someone describe each area of disaster relief. If there are disaster relief volunteers in the group, ask them to speak on their roles in the ministry. Ask each group member to choose one disaster relief ministry, and lead them to pray for their chosen ministry. Encourage them to continue to pray for disaster relief needs and recipients.

5. Church revitalization means many things. As we have weathered COVID-19, our churches have faced many challenges. We need to assess our churches and pray for the needs both now and in the future as our churches minister to our communities. Lead your group to think about the health of your church. They can use the following questions to do this: What did your church do better through the COVID-19 shutdown than it did prior? How could your church better demonstrate the visible presence of Christ to your community? What will your church do to show the love of Christ in your community as we come out of this shutdown? Will the community remember your church for anything significant when they look back on the COVID-19 shutdown? After your discussion, pray for your church, pray for those working to revitalize struggling Alabama Baptist churches, and pray that Alabama Baptist churches in decline will find new life as they seek to creatively impact their communities with the Gospel message.

Take time to pray for and collect the offering, or remind the group when the offering will be collected.