**Executive Director’s Report**

18 May 2021

We all know about the year 2020, and most of us have a long list of things we are trying to forget. We pray there will not be another one like it for a long, long time. However, despite the pandemic’s year-long effect on our family, social, work, and church life, God was good to us and we persevered through, looking for a brighter 2021.

As we reflect on the past year, there are a number of positives to be thankful for. Cooperative giving was strong in 2020, which reflects consistent financial support within our local churches. We even exceeded our state budget goal. Our support of our National departments was solid as well. In light of the circumstances our one-day State Meeting was well attended. Many of our churches were not able to hold in-person services much of the year, but they utilized the social media platform to minister to their folks, and more than a few who were not a part of their congregation. Last year we helped one more Arkansan get to the mission field—Keren Delgado (Bulgaria).

In hopes that construction material costs will fall back to a more reasonable level we have placed the new office building project on a six-month hold. Though the minister’s retreat had to be cancelled, their wives’ retreat was able to get in before the state mandates took effect. Camps, as you will hear, were much different this past year, but still offered a camping outlet for our state youth.

With church services on social media platforms and districts not meeting, my travel was minimal in 2020. That has already made a 180 degree turn around in 2021. I represented Arkansas as a member of the National General Board and Executive Committee. I also attended the Promotional Director’s Conference in February (Tampa, FL), the General Board “National” in Nashville (July), and the Leadership Conference in December (Nashville).

As we move forward in the third decade of the third millennium, several matters need our utmost attention and prayer. First is the lack of pastors. Our current pastoral fraternity is not getting any younger, and their replacements are not answering the call to ministry in sufficient numbers to fill the vacancies that retirement and death will bring in the not-too-distant future. Second, the cultural climate in America is becoming increasingly anti-Christian; and doing so at an alarming rate. Radical unbiblical demands loom on the horizon that will threaten and test our resolve to stand firm for Christ Jesus. Religious life that we have enjoyed for a couple of centuries may take on a vastly different look.

Through all the uncertainty of life, one thing stands absolute: the church that Christ is building will not be defeated or destroyed. The cross and empty tomb give us an everlasting hope and assurance of victory.

In closing I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the members of the Executive Board for their prayers, counsel, leadership, and support this past year. I also want to thank my administrative assistant Diana Caswell, ASM Director Brian Kesterson, and Hispanic Director Rolando Delgado for their diligent work and help. Finally, thank you to each one of you throughout the state for your words of encouragement, your support, and your prayers. Your work in the local church is the life-blood of our state ministries.

David Taylor

Executive Director