

What is Your Congregation's Future Story of Missional Ministry?

By

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During the past ten months, CMBA had engaged in two phases of the *Denominee* process. This is jointly funded by our association, our state convention, and the North American Mission Board. The purpose is to help associations close the value gap between how they function and how the best services and support can be provided to congregations.

Several dozen Baptist associations throughout the nation have also taken part in this process and supplied funding for it.

Phase three of this process will begin in August, and we expect a new executive director for CMBA will lead our team. This is an intentional succession plan to transition from George Bullard as executive director to the next executive director. Part of the intention is that the new executive director will be called to this role knowing the strategic framework on which the association is working, and can during phase three add his spiritual gifting and strategic flavoring to the plan.

The key question for the CMBA plan emerging out of the *Denominee* process is – “What is your congregation's *Future Story of Missional Ministry?*” Such stories come in various forms, with differing styles, and often with a focus which is unique to each congregation and its context. However, the essential ability for each congregation to answer that question is of the highest Kingdom importance.

Ray Rust, executive director-treasurer of the SC Baptist Convention from 1982-1992 carried in his pocket calendar the following quote from Lucius Annaeus Seneca – a Roman philosopher and statesman of the first century AD: “*If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favorable.*”

In a similar way, if a congregation does not understand the mission of God, how it applies to them in their context, and is not captured by God's empowering vision for its future, then no programmatic strategy, method, or focus will help them be vital and vibrant.

For CMBA, *Denominee* is not about helping the organization of the association be better, but about the mission of *Unleashing Future Missional Stories of Our Family of Congregations*. In short, we believe our one priority is *Unleashing Future Stories*.

Thus, the question that forms the title of this article and applies to every congregation – What is your congregation's *Future Story of Missional Ministry?*

We celebrate congregations who can already answer this question, and who regularly renew their understanding of their answer so they can stay on the cutting edge of congregational vitality and vibrancy. We rejoice with these congregations and tell their stories far and wide.

We celebrate congregations who know they cannot answer this question, but are passionate about wanting to answer it. We offer to come alongside them and join them in a spiritual and strategic journey to answer this question.

We mourn congregations who cannot answer this question and have no passion for discovering the answer. By continually asking them this question, sharing case studies of congregations who can answer it, and offering processes that might help them find God's answer for them we pray that a true breakthrough might take place.

What is your congregation's answer to this question?