



Perspective

*by Dr. Jerry Seabaugh
Associate Executive Minister*

*I bring greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ. I pray that God has richly blessed your
Advent season and the start of your new year — 2012.*

As I think of the challenges we all face in this New Year, many come to mind. This is an election year. We will face many decisions that are vital to our state and our nation. We need to pray for our government officials that they will listen to their constituents, but even more important, listen to and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Just as our nation and much of the world are at transition points in history, so is the church. What the church does over the next several years will be vital for mission outreach. International, national and local mission outreach is suffering from a lack of financial resources but also from a lack of vision.

The question is not what we have done in the past. Nor is it what we are doing now. The question is what vision do we have for the future. How can we reach our ever growing population of unbelievers all around us? Look at your community, at society. What are the issues that are impacting people all around you? How can the church help? What are some ministries that we can do that will make a difference?

I heard recently of a couple, new to their community, that visited a church. The woman had just found out that she would need medical treatment every day for the next several weeks in another town. The pastor discovered this need and contacted some godly women in the church to see if there was some help for these new visitors to their church. In a few days, the couple was contacted and learned that a different woman from the church each day had volunteered to drive the woman to her medical treatments. A need was discovered and Christian people found a way to minister to that need. Where do you think that couple is now going to church?

Health care is one need in our country, but there are many others. Proper use of finances by families, churches, institutions and government is another. The crisis of homeless people and foreclosures, hungry people, unemployment and people looking for work who need new skills — how do you look for work in this new society? Couples living together and the decline in the institution of marriage are growing problems. How can we help? Be creative and use the special gifts of your people in the church. You say, "How can we discover what people are willing to do?" **ASK**. Don't be afraid to let people know of a need. **ASK**. The people who are willing will step forward and often bring others they know with them.

One president once called this "a thousand points of light," referring to people helping other people. The Bible tells us that we are able to be the "light of the world." You cannot hide light in the midst of darkness. The light will overpower it.

"So let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) What can we do? We can be lights pointing the way to God.

***Let's not let the trials we face in 2012 dampen our resolve.
As Central Region churches, let's make a difference and give God the glory.***

I thank my God each day for being able to serve you on the ABC/CR staff. If I can be of any assistance to your church or pastor don't hesitate to let me know. As you communicate with your people and ask them to serve in the name of the Lord, contact your region staff and let us help as well. Together, let's make a difference as we move forward with a visionary, active ministry that impacts the lives of people in today's world.