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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We all have a lot to be thankful for in spite of the challenges we face in life on a daily basis. God provides all that we need to meet each challenge that comes our way. I consider it a challenge and a blessing to serve as President of the Southeast Alabama State Baptist Convention. A solid foundation was laid prior to my election; therefore, all I need to do is continue to build on that foundation. I Corinthians 3:11 says, *"For other foundations can no man lay that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* For our work to succeed, it must be founded and grounded in Jesus Christ.

The Church of Jesus Christ must be willing to prepare herself for the work that God has called her to carry out until He returns. That means studying to be equipped to rightly divide the Word of truth. Christian Education is a must if the Church wants to rightly represent our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I encourage each church in the Southeast as well as the State, to have a renewed emphasis on training our congregations this year. We must begin when our children are young and continue to teach in our old age.

Let each of us work extra hard to establish and sustain lasting relationships with one another. Our theme for the Southeast is *"Building Strong, Christian Relationships in the Body of Christ."* It takes effort and hard work to achieve this goal. But it is possible to do when we see each other as someone special in the eyes of God. In Ephesians 2:14, we read *"For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and broken down the middle wall of partition between us."* In order for us to Build Strong Christian Relations, the walls that keep us divided must be taken down.

My prayer for each of us, as members of the Alabama State Missionary Baptist Convention, is to not focus on ourselves, but to focus to on Jesus Christ. As long as we keep our eyes on Him, we will never go astray.

In His Service,

Reverend Clifford E. Jones
President, SEDSC