



FIRST AND SECOND ROW: ROMAR BEACH BAPTIST CHURCH AFTER HURRICANE IVAN.

THIRD ROW: SAND SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH AFTER FIRE DESTROYED THEIR BUILDING.

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Mobilized For Helping Churches

When the members of Sand Springs Baptist Church in Fayette Association went home after evening worship on March 21, 2004, they had no idea that when they returned the church building would be gone. That evening, fire destroyed the building and all its contents.

But God was able to plant seeds of hope out of the ashes.

Pastor Ed Birmingham recalls, “Within a very short time — a day or two at the most — I was contacted by State Missionary Ron Parnell. He had heard about the devastation and told me about a mobile chapel that was available free of charge because of the Cooperative Program.”

Birmingham remembers, “It was exactly one month to the day from the time the church burned that we held our first service in the mobile chapel.” Since then, the chapel has provided ample worship and educational space for Sand Springs, and the church is making plans to worship in a brand new building on the fourth Sunday in May, which is appropriately, Homecoming Sunday.

Says Birmingham, “The mobile chapel was a lifesaver, and we appreciate the State Board of Missions responding to us the way they did. And God has blessed us even further with four additions to the church since the fire.”

Meanwhile, Romar Beach Baptist Church found itself in a similar situation after Hurricane Ivan last fall. Already rebuilt once after Hurricane Georges in 1998, the church building — which sits literally on the beach — was totally destroyed by Hurricane Ivan.

Within days after the storm, the church’s pastor, Paul Smith, received word from the State Board of Missions that they too would have use of a mobile chapel — a brand new one, built to Orange Beach standards.

Smith says, “We’re grateful to be on the receiving end of the Cooperative Program in this way.”

With the question of where to worship answered, Smith says the church is moving ahead with their plans “to build a wonderful new building where we can be a lighthouse on the beach and praise the Lord.”

Thirty more mobile chapels are in use around Alabama, giving space to churches which have experienced a disaster, or in some cases, providing a new work with a temporary structure. The mobile chapels are tangible examples of the Cooperative Program at work, making a difference for churches in challenging situations.

For more information about the mobile chapel ministry, contact State Missionary Ron Parnell, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 234, rparnell@alsbom.org 