

June 10, 1961

Cooperative Program
Data Teams Dispatched

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--As a result of a new emphasis on the Cooperative Program, three-man teams will visit every Baptist association in Mississippi the week of Oct. 2-6 to tell the Cooperative Program story.

Chester L. Quarles, Jackson, executive secretary, Mississippi Baptist Convention, termed it "a gigantic new emphasis upon the Cooperative Program as a program of world missions."

L. Gordon Sansing, Jackson, the convention's associate executive secretary, will direct the teams.

Sansing, in pointing to the need for an increased emphasis upon the Cooperative Program, released figures that revealed in 1960 only 45 (or 2.4 per cent) of the churches in the state each gave 20 per cent or more of their total offerings through the Cooperative Program.

Only 346 (or 19.1 per cent) of the churches each gave 10 per cent or more of their total offerings through the Cooperative Program, while 1465 or 80.8 per cent of the churches each gave less than 10 per cent of their total offerings through the Cooperative Program.

Eight hundred fifty-seven churches (or 47.3 per cent of the total number in the state) each gave less than 5 per cent of their total offerings through the Cooperative Program. This group includes the churches that gave nothing.

Summarizing the above figures, it was found that the average church in the state gave 11.1 per cent of its total offerings through the Cooperative Program.

This figure compares with 10.5 per cent given in 1957.

The Cooperative Program is a financial plan used by Southern Baptists to support their education, benevolent, and mission agencies in state conventions and nationally and worldwide through the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Mississippi Children
Attend Public School

(6-10-61)

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Mississippi Baptist Children's Village here has closed and abandoned the school it has operated on the campus for many years, serving the first eight grades.

Beginning July 1, children were to attend city public schools in Jackson. Supt. Paul N. Nunnery of Jackson said sending children to public schools instead of to their own private one is "a very progressive step in the highest and best interest of the children."

Similar moves have been taken by Baptist children's homes in other states in recent years.

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Baptist Deacon Gets
Top Salesman's Award

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--A Fresno Baptist layman has won the equivalent of an Oscar in selling. At a meeting of the National Sales Executives Association, Raymond H. Jensen was named one of the five "Distinguished Salesmen of the Year."

This is an annual competition between 250 participating companies. Jensen was chosen by the McCormick-Schilling Co. He is their headquarters account salesman in the Fresno Area.

Paul Brooks Leath, Jensen's pastor, says: "Jensen is a deacon in the First Southern Baptist Church. He and his wife lead Nursery IV in the Sunday school, and he is director of Junior I Training Union. A Christian only three years, Jensen plunged into his local church work immediately after conversion. He is that natural salesman who can carry over his week-day selling abilities into his church."

What is unusual about this? Many salesmen cannot conceive of success without drinking, gambling and questionable entertainment for their clients. This Baptist deacon did it without any of these.

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Baptist City Voted
15 Miles From Tucson

(6-10-61)

PRESCOTT, Ariz. (BP)--The board of Baptist General Convention of Arizona has voted to back a second "Baptist city" for elderly people in the state.

Located 15 miles from Tucson, it would cover 1000 acres. It would be developed without liability to the convention, state Baptist leaders said. It will be larger than the present development, Apache Ho Homes, 34 miles from Phoenix. The Apache Ho project has homes priced from \$8970 to \$11,500.

The Tucson property would be sold exclusively to Baptists for homes. It would be a golden-age years community.

The board also voted to accept an offer from Texas Baptists to establish student union work at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Texas Baptists will provide a graduate student who will take courses at the university and at the same time manage the Baptist student program on campus.

Most of his expenses will come from Texas Baptists.

Action on the two projects came at the board's meeting at Paradise Valley Baptist Ranch, an assembly grounds here. Members of other Baptist agencies in the state met simultaneously at the ranch for the first time in a leadership conference. Attendance reached about 150.

The state board approved changes affecting two convention staff members. E. W. Hunke, Phoenix, associate secretary in charge of missions, became missions assistant to the executive secretary.

Roy Sutton, serving in the area of stewardship and church bonds, remained in that field but assumed the title of administrative assistant to the executive secretary at the convention's Phoenix office.

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BAPTIST FEATURES

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Editor's Note: A downtown pastor returned home from New York and other Eastern cities distressed at the withdrawal of churches from downtown areas. It led Luther Joe Thompson, First Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tenn., to write the following article.

Heart (Of The Big City)
Disease Hits Baptists

June 10, 1961

By Luther Joe Thompson

The downtown church is the show-window of the denomination in metropolitan area--a catch-all for Baptist stragglers, a reception center for visitors and a bureau of Baptist information.

Often it is a symbol of moral and civic righteousness. By and large, it sets the tone and pattern for the denomination in the whole area.

Yet, while denominations have grown rapidly in numbers, it comes as a surprise to many that downtown churches have been receding.

Truman B. Douglas, writing in Harper's Magazine on "The Job Protestants Shirk," says "If Protestantism gives up the city, it virtually gives up America. Yet that is precisely what it has been doing."

Ralph Sockman in his recent article in Look Magazine points out that in 1917 when he became minister at Christ Church (Methodist) in New York City, Methodists were closing or merging churches in that area at the rate of one every two years. He further states, "Our city churches have been ailing for at least 40 years."

The array of problems staggers the downtown church. It must compete against the flight to the suburbs. Other churches fail to recognize the importance of a downtown witness. The downtown church ministers to transient people. Many of its members see each other only at church. It has no boundaries to follow in visiting and locating prospects and in taking a religious census.

Then too it battles the present-day emphasis which says, "Join the church nearest you." It encounters the tendency to make unfavorable comparisons between it and the neighborhood churches.

Perhaps a part of the recent decline in Cooperative Program gifts is due to the Southern Baptist Convention's failure to define a ministry for the downtown church in connection with emphasis upon new suburban churches.

James L. Sullivan, executive secretary of the Baptist Sunday School Board, recently wrote the larger churches of the Convention "voluntarily carry (a) tremendous financial burden...for the mission program of Southern Baptists." He stated "four and one-tenth per cent of the largest churches in the Convention gave forty-seven and three-tenths per cent of all the money contributed for the support of benevolent, education and mission causes of the denomination. That figure is significant because those same churches contain only twenty-six per cent of the church membership of our denomination."

The minister of a downtown church in a single month ran into these sincere and serious comments:

"I don't believe in big churches. Wouldn't it be better to divide this church and start four or five new ones in the suburbs?"

"Why do we need a downtown church? Don't Baptists believe in joining the church where you live?"

"I feel obligated to attend the community church and frankly the pastor has convinced me that they need me worse."

What must be done if we are to keep our downtown churches?

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1. The denomination must become aware of the importance of the downtown church. Her future ministry must be defined and clarified. Consideration must be given to the future source of her financial and evangelistic resources.

If downtown-minded people who live in the suburbs are to be discouraged from attending the downtown church then the matter of endowment or mission support must be considered. It is not enough merely to expect her mission contributions; some consideration must be given to her future life.

2. The suburban church must become conscious that she is just as responsible for the downtown witness as the downtown church is responsible for the suburban witness.

3. Competition between churches must be eliminated. Every New Testament church is important in our Lord's sight and we are "laborers together with God." There can be no competition between lighthouses.

4. Finally, there must be a "plus" in the ministry and program of the downtown church if she is to survive. She must be dynamic and evangelistic, person-centered and marked by warm fellowship, doctrinally sound and prophetic in her ministry, adequately equipped and staffed, and constantly involved in the heart of the human situation. She must be flexible and alert to changing patterns of human need.

Roman Catholics do not abandon the heart of the cities. In their strategy of mission conquest they inevitably build their great cathedrals at the very center of the city. It is here that they construct their hospitals, their churches, their schools. Is this the secret of their success in our great northern and eastern cities? Surely it is not God's will that we abandon the heart of our cities.

Shall we keep our downtown churches? If we are to win America to Christ, we must!