

1961 Southern Baptist Convention
Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis, Mo.
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News Summary, Stewardship Commission Report
Nashville, Tenn.

The Stewardship Commission made its first report as an agency of the Convention at St. Louis. Created by the Convention by votes at the 1959 and 1960 sessions, it became fully operative as a separate agency Jan. 1, 1961.

Merrill D. Moore of Nashville, executive director, said the new agency works in three areas--(1) Cooperative Program promotion, (2) stewardship development and (3) endowment and capital giving promotion.

It recommended that the 1961 convention reaffirm its conviction that the Cooperative Program "is the fundamental, effective, and indispensable channel of providing for the needs of all our work; and that we urge all Baptists to join in giving the Cooperative Program their loyal and undivided support."

Moore said the Stewardship Commission had been asked to develop plans for a special week of prayer and study of the Cooperative Program to be observed annually in Southern Baptist churches. (The Executive Committee was expected to have a recommendation in its report to the St. Louis Convention concerning this. Reporters should check Executive Committee summary for crossreference.)

The year 1961 in the Baptist Jubilee Advance centers on the theme "stewardship and enlistment." (See separate information sheet in reporter's packet giving more details on Baptist Jubilee Advance generally.)

"In this year, each Convention agency, each of the educational ministries in the churches, and each of the state conventions is focusing on the Bible doctrine of stewardship and its application in the lives of Baptist people," Moore said. "The primary concern is not with money, but with spiritual commitment." The motto for the year is: "I Will Be Faithful."

The Stewardship Commission has the task of leadership of Southern Baptists in their Convention's observance of the year's emphasis.

The Sunday School Board of the Convention (through "SBC Stewardship Services") acts as agent of the commission in manufacturing and distributing stewardship service material including stewardship tracts, Forward Program of Church Finance literature, and other promotional materials.

The Forward Program aids churches in developing and pledging their yearly budgets. Literature and other aids are available from the SBC Stewardship Services office in Nashville to use during budget campaigns. The Commission, while still a part of the Convention's Executive Committee, developed the Forward Program of Church Finance. During 1961 Beginner Stage and Intermediate Stage have been introduced and offered to churches when it seem impossible at the present time to use the full Forward Program. The Forward Program has now also been adapted for use by churches on mission fields overseas and the materials published in Spanish and Portuguese.

The Commission plans to elect a director for its program of endowment and capital giving promotion. Part of the 1961 stewardship emphasis gives attention to will-making by Baptist church members. A goal is 1200 new Christian wills during 1961 which benefit some Baptist cause.

The Stewardship Commission conducts a Stewardship Promotion Conference each February prior to the semi-annual meeting of the SBC Executive Committee.

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When the Stewardship Commission became an operating agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, its members called on Merrill D. Moore of Nashville to be executive director. Previously, stewardship promotion had been an arm of the SBC Executive Committee with Moore as secretary of this work. He has been in stewardship promotion with the Convention since 1948. Born Nov. 14, 1904 at Senatobia, Miss., Moore graduated from Mississippi College (Baptist), Clinton, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

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