



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

FEATURES

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QUEST: "We'll Make Lemonade
Out Of A Lemon," Harris Says

The Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans turned thumbs down on the proposed new name, "Quest" for Training Union, the Sunday evening church training program of Southern Baptist churches. In this interview, Philip B. Harris, secretary of the church training department of the SBC Sunday School Board which spent months in redesigning the church training program, tells Illinois Baptist Editor Robert Hastings some of his initial reactions to the convention action.

HASTINGS: How did you feel at New Orleans when the convention voted its dislike of the name "Quest"?

HARRIS: Naturally, we were surprised and disappointed, but not bitter. We've accepted the New Orleans decision in good grace. We have no intent of fighting back.

Q. In other words, "Quest" is a dead issue?

A. As far as the name itself, yes. We will continue to see it in print for a while, since it was too late to stop publication of all materials. But it will be phased out completely as quickly as possible.

Q. Isn't this a tremendous waste, to dump a complete program?

A. Not as much as it might seem. The only thing we lost at New Orleans was the name. We still have the "baby," i.e., improve techniques and materials for church training and new member orientation. Our program is intact, and will move on schedule as planned, starting October 1, 1970.

Q. You mean New Training Union publications?

A. That's part of it. For instance, new adult publications such as Now, Skill, and Source.

Q. Much has been said about the "secrecy" of the new name.

A. Yes, and I think it has been overdone. There was no secrecy in the sense we were attempting to pull something over the convention. We had no thought of victory by surprise. You will remember that we did not even anticipate need for convention approval, since the Sunday School Board had changed other names on its own initiative, such as from BYPU to BTU, (Baptist Young People's Union to Baptist Training Union.)

Q. Then why did you hold up formal announcement until the New Orleans Convention?

A. For one thing, to develop supporting material so we could copyright the name. We did not want other groups to infringe on the use of our name, such as has happened with Training Union. For example, some publishers have pirated our Training Union terminology.

We also need time to prepare a promotion campaign that would help Southern Baptists to establish a positive visual image with the name; plus time to give more information about materials and quarterlies that would go with the new name.

Q. Do you feel you had a real chance to make a fair presentation of "Quest"?

A. Not at all. We did have seven minutes at New Orleans, but we had planned to follow this with intensive interpretation from now until October, 1970, a total of about 16 months to get used to the name and new terminology. After the convention presentation, we opened the floor for discussion. But there wasn't a single question from the messengers.

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Q. Was "Quest" jumped up overnight?

A. Hardly. We spent 18 months surveying Southern Baptists about Training Union, and 84% of the respondents said, "Chance the name." There is no doubt the time is ripe for a change, if we can agree on a name.

Q. Are you going to drop the matter?

A. No. Our people still want a change. So we're going to launch an extensive poll, touching thousands of Southern Baptists, to test their thinking. It will be one of the most intensive surveys ever launched among Southern Baptists.

Q. If you had it to do over, then what?

A. I don't know. No one can say he would have done differently, for we did what we thought was best. We tried to do what our advisors said, such as state Training Union secretaries, our elected board, etc. As I said, we are offering no excuses. It just happened that way. We did the best we knew.

All that remains is to pick up and go on. Evidently, we snagged a lemon along the way. Now we're going to make a lemonade!

July 3, 1969

SBC Mission Gifts Reach
One-Half Budget In June

NASHVILLE (BP)--A record month of mission giving during the month of June pushed Southern Baptist world missions contributions for the first half of 1969 to almost the half-way mark in reaching the 1969 convention budget.

Gifts to world missions through the Cooperative Program unified budget plan totalled \$13,971,590 for the first six months of the year, an increase of \$893,551 or 6.83 per cent over mission gifts for the same period in 1968.

Officials of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee here were optimistic that the convention would reach its \$28 million budget by the end of the year.

In addition to the \$13.9 million in Cooperative Program gifts, Southern Baptists also gave \$20.4 million in designated contributions to specific mission causes, mostly home and foreign missions.

The grant total mission contributions for the first half of the year was \$24,439,476, an increase of \$1,782,692 over similar gifts for 1968. It was a 5.46 per cent increase.

During the month of June, Cooperative Program contributions topped \$2.2 million, an increase of 9.77 per cent over similar gifts during June of 1968; and designated gifts for June were \$1.2 million.

"It was the best June we've ever had in Cooperative Program gifts," said John H. Williams, financial planning secretary for the SBC Executive Committee which prepares the monthly financial report. Williams added that it was not the best month of the year, pointing out that June usually is a rather low month.

Of the \$32.6 million in total contributions, the biggest share has gone to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, to support Baptist mission efforts abroad.

Foreign missions has received \$23 million during the first six months of the year, and home missions has received \$7.2 million.

The gifts also went to support six Southern Baptist seminaries, and 11 other nation-wide Southern Baptist agencies.

The total does not include amounts given to support local and state Baptist mission efforts, only reflecting contributions to nation and world-wide Southern Baptist mission causes.

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C O R R E C T I O N

On BP Story mailed June 30, 1969, please change first word of graph 8, line 2, to read: "Florida, 776;" instead of "Georgia, 766" as sent. Georgia was listed twice in graph 8. The second listing was wrong. It should have been Florida instead. Sorry.

--Baptist Press