



BAPTIST PRESS

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March 20, 1970

Decatur Churches Form
Cooperative Ministries

By Mary Burns

DECATUR, Ga. (BP)--Half of the churches in this small Georgia city adjacent to Atlanta have erupted into action ministries geared toward meeting the needs of 25,000 Decatur citizens through a new structure called the Decatur Cooperative Ministries.

Through the 11 churches participating the joint effort, Christians here are seeking to do something to meet the needs of people who face the problems of racially changing communities, generation gaps, slums and other problems typical of its larger neighbor, Atlanta.

Decatur Cooperative Ministries came about as a result of the frustration of an elementary school principal concerned about her students who were left unattended during after-school hours.

There was, at the same time, a growing rate of vandalism at the school which some attributed to working mothers, broken homes, and the number of pre-schoolers of working mothers.

A meeting was called of persons from local churches, schools, city government and community agencies of Decatur. This loose coalition began meeting monthly and planned and carried out a summer recreation project at the elementary school. By summer's end vandalism had ceased.

Recognizing that the problems were hardly restricted to one area, the Decatur Cooperative Ministries expanded and agreed to hire a resource person to coordinate its plans. In December, it acquired the services of William C. Jackson, a Southern Baptist minister.

Jackson had been involved in a program of community service with the Oakhurst Baptist Church in a residential section of Decatur for two years.

"The basic philosophy of the Decatur Cooperative Ministry is to call forth the resources of the church to do community ministry." Jackson said. He added that the church has not been as active in Christian social ministries as it could be.

Jackson acts as liason between local service agencies and Decatur churches.

"My responsibility is to become aware of the needs of the community and then to develop lines of communication with government agencies, so each can know what the other is doing. The church will not come in a competitive role, but a supplementary role," he said. "We're not creating another institution."

Jackson said he thought it significant that the local agencies turned to the church for help. "We didn't go out looking for work; they came to us."

He stressed that the work relates to all ethnic and economic groups. "Our efforts are not just a war on poverty but concern for the entire city of Decatur."

"Wealthy people have needs too," Jackson explained. In family relations, for example, he would like to start a seminar type program.

"It's a lot harder to see the needs that are not visible though," the young minister said, "because you have to admit that needs are there before you can work with them."

Right now Jackson is working on an appraisal of the city through the Atlanta Area Community Council. A survey to determine available community services soon will be taken and presented to Decatur citizens and church members.

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"One thing that has been most encouraging is that we've involved eight different denominations and two races," Jackson said. "I haven't heard anyone concerned with theology, or the involvement of black and white churches.

"We're more task-oriented and we're not concerned about our differences. We haven't used the word 'ecumenical' but we are ecumenical.

"We are asking the church to not only declare its love of God but to show this; however, I don't feel like we're going to get into the 'church versus the secular world' question," Jackson said.

Half of Decatur's 22 churches are now members of the Alliance; others are still considering whether to join.

No minimum contribution was set so that all churches could participate financially and have equal representation.

Final decisions about the group's ministries are made by the board of directors including two representatives from each church. The board is responsible for implementing plans. "But ultimately the churches have the voice, because we go to them for help," Jackson said.

At the present time the city manager, the chairman of the school board and a professor from Decatur's Agnes Scott College are on the board.

Jackson said he is pleased that churches have been willing to take a chance with the infant organization.

"I think it has been a real leap of faith for the churches to join in something as undefined as this," he said.

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Home Life Assistant
Editor Appointed

3/20/70

NASHVILLE (BP)--Linda Lawson has been named assistant editor of Home Life, a publication of the Sunday School department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, effective April 1.

Miss Lawson, a native of Alabama, is a graduate of William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo., and holds a master of arts degree from the University of Missouri, Columbia.

She formerly taught high school English in Kearney, Mo., and served as a teaching assistant at the University of Missouri in 1969.

She was a political reporter for the Columbia Missourian while attending the University of Missouri.

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Sunday School Board Names
Indianapolis Store Manager

3/20/70

NASHVILLE (BP)--Mrs. Ruth Giles Neal of Arlington, Tex., has been named manager of the Baptist Book Store in Indianapolis, Ind.

Previously, Mrs. Neal was floor sales supervisor for the Baptist Book Store in Arlington, Tex.

Her 15 years' experience in Baptist book stores includes service as an office clerk, visual aids clerk, and sales clerk in the Baptist Book Store, Little Rock, Ark.

A native of Benton, Ark., Mrs. Neal attended Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark.

The Indianapolis Baptist Book Store is one of 51 locations where book stores are owned and operated by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

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Crotts Elected Chairman
Of Foundation Executives

AUSTIN, Tex. (BP)--Glen E. Crotts, executive secretary of the Baptist Foundation of Arizona, was elected president of the Association of Baptist Foundation Executives at their annual meeting here.

Crotts, who succeeds Gus Johnson, executive secretary of the Baptist Foundation of Florida, had served as vice president in 1969.

Vernon Yearby, executive secretary of the Baptist Foundation of Alabama, was named vice president and Jim Cherry, executive secretary of the Baptist Foundation of South Carolina, was elected secretary-treasurer.

The two-day meeting covered a wide range of topics, including foundation operation, stewardship, development, tax structures, and promotion and communications techniques.

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Price Resigns St. Louis
Church For Business Career

3/20/70

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Sterling L. Price, minister of Third Baptist Church here, has resigned effective April 1 to seek a new career in business, probably in the field of public relations.

A widely-known minister, Price became pastor of the 3,000-member church in 1959, succeeding the late C. Oscar Johnson. He came to St. Louis from Abilene, Tex., where he was pastor of University Baptist Church.

He is a former pastor of Baptist churches in Newport News, Va., and Athens, Tex., and is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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Books On '70's Changes
Surpass Baptist Records

3/20/70

NASHVILLE (BP)--Books related to changes in Southern Baptist church programs in the 70's are on their way to churches and individuals in record numbers.

Since the first new book was released in May of 1969, a total of 686,084 books and 117,644 teachers' guides have left the warehouse here, according to Herman L. King, director, publishing division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Convention Press has released 28 books and 18 teachers' guides between May, 1969, and February, 1970, related to changes in the Southern Baptist curriculum and planning in the 70's.

A Dynamic Church: Spirit and Structure for the 70's tops the order list with 77,110 copies ordered to date. This book deals with basic concepts in building a church program, King said.

Administering the Bible Teaching Program is the second most ordered book with 47,544 copies leaving the warehouse since its release in July, 1969. This book serves as a program manual for the Sunday School in a Southern Baptist church.

The third most ordered book related to 70's planning is Adult Sunday School Work with 39,617 copies shipped.

"The books related to the 70's have not hit the mass market yet, but already they are selling at a record pace," King said.

The New Times by Albert McClellan, a Broadman Press book which attempts to describe the conditions of society which churchmen will face in the 70's, has reached total distribution of 25,275 copies. About 15,000 volumes of The New Times was sold through the Broadman Readers Plan, a monthly book selection plan developed by the Sunday School Board.

Broadman Press is the general books publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Convention Press is the publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention which prepares materials specifically for Southern Baptist use.

W. L. Howse, director of the board's education division, said the response to these books is the most encouraging thing in his 16 years at the board.

"This response to our training needs is most encouraging at this time in the life of our convention. If churches will set up an ongoing training program and stress training among their leadership, it will mean more in this decade than anything else we could do from a human standpoint," said Howse.

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Watchman-Examiner Folds
After 150 Years Production

3/20/70

SOMERSET, N.J. (BP)--A 150-year-old independent Baptist magazine, The Watchman-Examiner, ceased publication with the second issue in March, just off the press.

The publication's board of trustees made the decision to dissolve the paper, stating that changing times, inflation, and heavy production costs have used up all the available reserves used to subsidize the magazine, which annually had a \$20,000 deficit.

"The financial pressures which had been growing for years finally became overwhelming," said Lawrence T. Slaght, editor of the Watchman-Examiner who has accepted the call to become pastor of Community Baptist Church, Somerset, N.J.

Last year, The Watchman-Examiner observed its 150th anniversary. The present magazine came about as the result of a merger in 1912 of The Watchman, established in 1819, and The Examiner, founded in 1823. It was an independent publication not related officially to any Baptist convention or union.

Current circulation at the time the paper folded was about 5,000. It was published bi-weekly. Slaght said that Eternity magazine has assumed the responsibility for fulfillment of subscriptions.

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Anonymous Donor Gives \$15,000
In Food to Church in Ghetto

3/20/70

CHICAGO (BP)--What does a Baptist church do with an anonymous gift of 50,000 boxes of breakfast cereal, 2,500 pounds of instant potatoes, 70 cases of spaghetti, 50 cases of assorted canned goods, 24 cases of dry soup mixes, and 10,000 cases of instant pudding?

For Bosworth Street Baptist Church here, it is no problem. Pastor R. H. Thomas described the gift as a miracle, not a problem.

"It's like manna," he said. "It's a gift from heaven for the poor people of our neighborhood."

Bosworth Street Baptist Church is located in a racially mixed neighborhood on Chicago's northside that includes blacks, Polish, Spanish-speaking and migrants from the Appalachian states. Thomas said the church is right in the midst of a ghetto area.

The church has a long record of ministering to the needs of the area residents, but distributing the food to the people of the area has become its largest project, the pastor said.

Most of the \$15,000 gift of good has been distributed already. In one hour 10,000 boxes of cereal were given out to 900 neighborhood children.

Eight Chicago policemen assisted members of the church in distributing the food. Also helping were representatives of the Metropolitan Chicago Baptist Association.

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C O R R E C T I O N

On BP final wrapup headlined: "Baptists Examine Authentic Morality in Debate Crucible," please change lead graph to read: Nearly 400 Southern Baptists (instead of Nearly 500), and graph 10 to read: "The 377 conference participants" (Instead of 477). Incorrect information was supplied to Baptist Press. Thanks



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