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September 24, 1970

**Baptist Leaders Urge "Bold,  
Daring Breakthrough" In Giving**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptist state convention executives and their stewardship associates proposed here "that major attention be given to calling Baptists to a bold, aggressive and daring breakthrough in Cooperative Program giving."

The proposal came at the end of a day-long meeting of the state Baptist leaders and a committee appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee to study aspects of the Cooperative Program, the denomination's system of unified giving to support SBC causes.

Four proposals were made by an ad hoc committee of the group after four small groups discussed the philosophy, biblical base, purpose, basic understandings and relationships, promotion, and organizational alternatives of the Cooperative Program.

The smaller committee proposed that in reaching this "breakthrough," their approach "not be content with simply keeping up with inflation, but one that calls for a commitment that is bigger than circumstances."

The group also asked that the necessary meetings be planned that would initiate such a breakthrough, and that the approach "be offered in the full sense of dependence of the Holy Spirit, with full attention to the spiritual preparation required for such a victory."

Cecil Ray, Stewardship Division director for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, presented the ad hoc committee's recommendations, and gave a report on "what we heard you say" during the day-long discussions.

James Monroe, pastor of First Baptist Church, Fort Walton Beach, Fla., and chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, told the group that "something very significant has happened in this room tonight."

The chairman of the Executive Committee's Cooperative Program study committee which sponsored the meeting, Stewart B. Simms, said that something must be done to prevent Baptists from taking the Cooperative Program for granted.

"If churches give out of habit, the day may come when they kick the habit," said Simms, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greer, S.C.

Simms expressed concern because so many churches in the denomination over a long period of time have decreased the percentage of their local church budget going to SBC world missions through the Cooperative Program.

In 1925 when the Cooperative Program was started, the churches in the SBC gave an average of 20.2 per cent of their local church budget through the Cooperative Program, but in 1969 this average had dropped to 10.2 per cent, Simms said. He added that \$90 out of every \$100 given in a local church stays in that church.

Sims said his own church had in years past decreased the percentage of its budget going to the Cooperative Program, but that recently the members realized the significance of this and voted to increase their percentage by 1½ per cent of the total this year as part of a five year plan.

Simms said the same problem faces state conventions, which are tempted to keep a larger percentage of the Cooperative Program dollar to meet critical state needs.

He added that the denomination needs to see that every agency receiving Cooperative Program funds is worthy of increasing support, for otherwise, one cause may hurt the whole.

Both Sims and Ray urged churches, state conventions, all Baptist boards and agencies receiving Cooperative Program funds to "see themselves as a part of the whole and in turn give less thought to separateness...and more concern to the good of the whole."

Ray listed 10 points that the ad hoc committee heard the state executive secretaries and their stewardship associates saying during the meeting. Among the points were such items as:

--"That we see nothing better now or on the horizon that offers Baptists a more effective method to use in their mission task of propagating the redemptive message of Christ to a lost world than the Cooperative Program....

--"That any adjustments in the organizational alignment of the (SBC) Stewardship Commission be designed to strengthen the commission's efforts to promote Cooperative Program giving and stewardship development.

--"That careful evaluation be given to the relationship of Cooperative Program promotion and special mission offerings promotion, with consideration being given to assigning the role of correlating these to the Stewardship (Commission) staff....

--"That there must be more sharing between the states and the Southern Baptist Convention in the Cooperative Program budgeting process, and that this is a two-way street involving the process in the state as well as in the SBC...

--"That a workable system must be established that will give to our people and churches a way to be heard, and that the appeal to respond be stated---'We need to hear from you and we will listen.'"

The meeting opened with a statement of purpose from Sims, and a prepared paper from Porter Routh, executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, on the philosophy, purpose, basic understandings and promotional procedures for the Cooperative Program.

Routh explained that the "Cooperative Program is not a plan of the Southern Baptist Convention and the state conventions to raise money from the churches, but rather is a plan for the orderly transfer of resources from the churches to the states and the Southern Baptist Convention for work which cannot effectively be done in the churches, but which is essential for their full response to the Great Commission."

Both Routh and Ray told of inspirational experiences of seeing the Cooperative Program in action on foreign mission fields.

Robert Lee, executive secretary of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, urged dependence on God's Holy Spirit as they seek to lead Southern Baptists into the "bold, aggressive and daring breakthrough in Cooperative Program giving."

"We are not simply talking about wishful dreams here tonight, but something that will transform Southern Baptists and the world if we are really serious about it," Lee said.

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Mrs. Robert R. Parker Jr.,  
Missionary To Rhodesia, Dies

9/24/70

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (BP)--Mrs. Robert R. Parker Jr., of Rock Hill, S.C., Southern Baptist missionary to Rhodesia, died at North Carolina Baptist Hospital here Sept. 24.

Funeral services were held at Oakland Baptist Church, Rock Hill, S.C., on Sept. 25, her birthday. She would have been 38.

Appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in April of 1968, the Parkers went to Rhodesia early the next year. They returned in June because of her illness.

Mrs. Parker is the former Mary Stroup of Clover, S.C. She was graduated from Erskine College, Due West, S.C., and attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. She taught high school in Salisbury, N.C., Rineyville, Ky., and Temasee, S.C. In 1959 she and her husband settled in Rock Hill, where he was principal of an elementary school for eight years before their missionary appointment.

Besides her husband, Mrs. Parker is survived by their four children, Fran, 12, Bill, 10, Beth, 9 and Ben, 8; a sister, Mrs. Carl E. Mauney of Clover; and a brother, W. O. Stroup of Fort Mill, S.C.

The family has requested that, in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to a memorial fund for the educational assistance of needy students in Rhodesia called the Mary Parker Memorial fund, c/o Oakland Baptist Church, Rock Hill, S.C.

During their brief stay in Rhodesia, the Parkers were instrumental in helping a number of young Africans find jobs and obtain education, including one young man who felt called of God to enter the seminary, but lacked the necessary funds.

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Last December, Mrs. Parker wrote to friends about the young man, saying: "sometime ago we prayed fervently about work for him to do, and the Lord opened a door. He was employed by our church and is working hard. Our church now has lovely flowers, a clean yard, and shiny clean windows; and a young Christian preparing to answer God's call to the ministry has food to eat."

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Marjorie Saunders Installed  
As Hospital PR Association Head

9/24/70

DALLAS (BP)--Marjorie Saunders, director of public relations at Baylor University Medical Center here, has become the first woman President of the American Society for Public Relations Directors of the American Hospital Association.

The organization is the official professional society for public relations directors in hospitals in the United States and Canada.

Miss Saunders, a charter member of the society, has served on the board of directors for three years and was membership chairman this year.

She had been elected president-elect of the Baptist Public Relations Association but withdrew recently because of the press of other duties.

Miss Saunders won the Silver Anvil Award of the Public Relations Society of America in 1959, for her work in connection with the opening of the Women and Children's Hospital at Baylor University Medical Center, and again in 1963, for Baylor Medical Center's program to recruit, orient and train volunteers.

Miss Saunders was born and educated in Dallas and practiced civil law before becoming associated with Baylor.

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W. Marshall Craig, 81,  
Baptist Pastor, Dies

9/24/70

ANDERSON, S.C. (BP)--W. Marshall Craig, retired pastor of Gaston Avenue Baptist Church in Dallas and well-known Baptist evangelist, died here at the age of 81.

Craig was pastor of the Dallas church for 26 years when he retired in 1953 and began evangelistic work. Funeral services were conducted at the Dallas church, with burial at Craig's birthplace here.

Among many denominational responsibilities, he had been chairman of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board's executive committee, and a trustee of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

He was former pastor of churches in Wilmington, N.C., and Petersburg, Va., and a graduate of the Theology School of Furman University, Greenville, S.C.

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Southeastern Seminary Names  
Niswonger Development Director

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Jerry L. Niswonger, pastor of the Zebulon Baptist Church in Zebulon, N.C., has been elected director of development at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary here, effective Nov. 1.

Niswonger will direct a program of development concerned with enlistment of students, increased financial resources, public relations and alumni affairs. The program has been approved by the administration, faculty and trustees.

A native of Missouri, Niswonger, 39, is a graduate of Baylor University and Southeastern Seminary where he earned both the bachelor of divinity and master of theology degrees.

He is former president of the seminary's alumni association, and a member of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

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