



**BAPTIST PRESS**  
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November 5, 1970

Appalachian Baptists Form  
New 11-State Fellowship

By Mary Burns

MONTREAT, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptist mission leaders from 11 of the 13 Appalachian states have agreed to organize a Fellowship of Appalachian Baptists to coordinate Southern Baptist mission work in Appalachia.

The group meeting here formed a loose-knit organization which will seek to keep the needs of Appalachia before Southern Baptists.

John McBride, assistant secretary of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's department of rural-urban missions, was chosen as coordinator for the project.

The meeting was sponsored by the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), a body of 17 religious denominations seeking to cooperate in missions in this area.

The state leaders from most of the 17 denominations heard presentations by a rural sociologist from Atlanta's Emory University and a representative of the Ford Foundation which is helping fund the commission. There were also talk-back sessions between participants and residents of Appalachia.

"This was the second of a three-phased development of strategy," explained McBride, who is also vice-chairman of CORA. "At the first meeting we decided our directions. At this meeting we sought to expose state religious leaders to CORA and enlist their support." The next step will be a meeting to which national denominational agency heads will be invited.

CORA began about 14 years ago as a result of associations made, and information learned, through the Southern Appalachia Studies, a survey sponsored by the Ford Foundation and 15 religious bodies with work in the mountains. The organization took formal shape in 1968.

McBride calls CORA "The brightest star on the horizon as far as what the church is doing in Appalachia." CORA'S two fold goal is the alleviation of poverty and the creation of community," McBride said.

"The church in Appalachia has been a fragmenting influence with every denomination going its own way. Churches have competed fiercely for membership to survive; they have been so consumed by this struggle that they have had little time for anything else," McBride observed.

"We have finally accepted the fact that the problems are too big for any one denomination," he stated.

CORA is seeking to get churches working together through study and research, task forces and "collegiate staffs" composed of people on loan from various denominations who are experts in their field.

These forces do research and create plans for action in the region. They report their findings to the commission body and often confront agencies who are sometimes part of the problem.

One such task force is concerned with Appalachia's social, economic and political issues. It set about to uncover the causes of the problems in the social service and school lunch programs in one area, and sponsored a confrontation between local residents

and agency officials.

"They really got down to the brass tacks of why the people could not get services," McBride said. The people came in mass to speak. "Social agency officials had never had this kind of confrontation. They had been working from the concept that if you're not a paying member of society, you're a leech," McBride said.

The result of the confrontation was an improved lunch program and renovation of the welfare system. "The other agencies have begun carrying their services to the people," McBride said.

Feeling that prodding social agencies into action is one of the church's responsibilities, those involved in CORA are seeking to "inspire these people to do what they're hired to do," said McBride.

He added that CORA is also seeking to educate the "haves" and the power structures of the historical background and plight of these "have nots," and to change the notion that "poor people are poor because they want to be."

McBride has a ready answer for critics who charge CORA with ecumenism and too much emphasis on social action: "We're not saying that churches should minimize their spiritual thrust in Appalachia, but share their resources with CORA so that the church in Appalachia will have a well-rounded ministry."

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Seminary False Alarms "Bug"  
Firemen; Culprits Get Brushoff

11/5/70

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--A couple of false alarm artists were caught in the act at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary here by local firemen--but no arrests were made.

Jail cells in Marin County weren't designed to confine ants.

"Bugged" by a series of false alarms at the seminary campus, the Alto-Richardson Fire Department here answered an alarm at 9:00 p.m. one night at Truett Hall, the men's dormitory.

Three trucks and the fire chief responded, but there was no fire.

Fire Chief Carl O. Heynen checked the alarm box in front of the dormitory after he "suspected something when I noticed the glass wasn't broken."

He opened the fire box and caught the vandals--two common black household ants--hanging across two electrical contact points.

The ants were lucky. All they got from the fire chief was a "brushoff." Besides, who ever heard of arresting an ant?

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