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October 21, 1971

**Lay Leader Says Urgency
Of Missions Can Be Renewed**

RICHMOND (BP)--Several ways in which Southern Baptists can boost their outreach and effectiveness in missions were suggested here by the chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Owen Cooper, prominent Baptist layman of Yazoo City, Miss., made his suggestions in a speech to the 67-member SBC Foreign Mission Board in its semiannual session.

Cooper's remarks dealt primarily with getting out more information on missions to Southern Baptists and the enlistment of more men, young people and retired people in mission work.

Cooper declared that "the renewal of a sense of missions" is the greatest challenge before the Foreign Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Convention as a whole.

Addressing himself to how a renewed sense of missions is to be brought about, Cooper said that, first of all, a more effective system is needed for informing Southern Baptists about missions. Many, particularly laymen, are "abysmally ignorant" of mission programs, activities and accomplishments," he charged.

State Baptist papers and denominational publications reach only a fraction of the constituency, he said. Perhaps what is needed is a bimonthly mission journal with a circulation of more than 1.5 million, primarily aimed at the laity, Cooper suggested.

"One way this new journal could be published would be to cut back the publication of The Commission, Home Missions, Baptist Men's Journal and the Baptist Program to one-half of their current number of issues and use the money saved to publish 1.5 million copies of the new publication," said Cooper. The new journal could then be delivered free to churches who would distribute it to their members.

Baptist leaders have no right to expect positive response based on ignorance, misinformation or lack of information, said Cooper. "Let the people know and they will respond," he declared.

To renew the sense of missions, there also must be more "simple, undisguised, direct mission preaching from our pulpits" and "more mission giving," said the Mississippi Chemical Company executive.

Noting the responsibility of the laity in mission giving, Cooper said that "the money is in the pockets of Southern Baptists. "With renewed emphasis, Southern Baptist laymen need to be informed, led and challenged to provide the money to carry the word of God throughout the world,

"In this connection, there is a need for local churches to provide a larger portion of Cooperative Program gifts to outside causes," he added.

Cooper pointed out that "in the average Southern Baptist church," for each undesignated dollar put in the offering plate, 91 cents stays in the local church or association. Nine cents is sent to the state Baptist headquarters where six cents is retained, leaving three cents for the support of the convention's two mission boards, its six seminaries and 11 other organizations.

Put another way, Cooper said, a member of "the average church" who wants to give one dollar to foreign missions through the cooperative program must put \$66 in the offering plate.

Of this amount, \$60 stays at the local level, \$4 in the state convention, and \$2 goes for denominational causes, with foreign missions getting \$1.

Cooper praised Southern Baptist women for their promotion of special offerings, particularly the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, but he cautioned that "far too many men still think the special offerings are of the ladies, for the ladies and by the ladies."

"Somehow we must get Southern Baptists to recognize that the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is of the church, for the church and by the church," he said.

Southern Baptist laymen "are largely an untapped reservoir of ideas, resources, service and support," Cooper continued. "They need to be used, and many want to be used. Herein lies our greatest opportunity for mission support and advancement."

Cooper is president of the Pan American Union of Baptist Men, an organization involving Baptist laymen in North, Central and South America.

More person-to-person relationships will help renew a sense of missions, Cooper continued. He told the board members that he personally has established correspondence with five foreign missionaries whose birthdays are the same as his, a practice he finds to be "most rewarding."

Another successful avenue of personal involvement in missions by laymen is along vocational lines, Cooper pointed out. For example, physicians, dentists and farmers are directly assisting missionaries on the field.

The utilization of young and retired people for mission work is also largely an untried possibility for Southern Baptists, said Cooper.

About 88,000 Southern Baptists reach the age of 65 every year, Cooper continued, and "it would be reasonable to assume that one-half of one per cent of this number, or 440 persons each year, could be enlisted for mission work." These mature people may be available for the asking, he added.

Think of the great potential, should the retirement age in the United States be lowered to 60 or younger, said Cooper. This great reservoir of people, who in retirement could live as cheaply on some mission fields as at home, might be available for periods of two to five years.

"Perhaps we have not because we ask not," Cooper told the board members.

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Anonymous Donor Gives \$500,000
To SBC Radio-TV Commission

10/21/71

FORT WORTH (BP)--A \$500,000 gift has been promised to the Southern Baptist Radio-Television Commission by an anonymous donor, provided the agency can raise a matching \$500,000 within two years.

The gift was announced to the 36 members of the Radio-TV Commission during their annual meeting here by Paul M. Stevens, executive director of the commission.

The donor asked to remain anonymous, Stevens said.

Committees already are being formed to conduct the fund-raising campaign to raise the matching half-million dollars, Stevens told the commission members.

Permission to conduct the fund campaign, however, must be given to the commission by the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, which meets next in February, 1972. Current procedures limit the commission to soliciting funds only from persons who write in response to programs produced by the commission.

Stevens told the commission the \$500,000 goal is to be part of a larger two-year campaign, but that target amount and other particulars would not be announced until after the February meeting of the SBC Executive Committee.

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Other than the requirement of a matching amount of money, the contributor stipulated only that the gift should be used "for program production and maintenance," Stevens said.

The commission currently produces 28 weekly radio and television programs in a variety of formats aimed at different audiences. In addition, it produces several "special" programs each year in cooperation with three commercial networks--ABC, NBC, and CBS.

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Three Division Heads Named For Illinois Baptist Work

10/21/71

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--Three division managers have been named to supervise departments of the Illinois Baptist State Association, with offices here.

Appointment of the new division heads was announced by James H. Smith, executive secretary of the state Baptist organization. Under a new constitution approved in 1969, the division heads were selected by the executive secretary after screening by committees of the Board of Directors.

The three division heads are Arthur E. Farmer, manager of the Division of Special Ministries; Ronald S. Lewis, manager of the Church Development Division; and Charles L. Chaney, manager of the Church Extension Division.

Farmer, who has been assistant executive secretary of the association for 10 years, will head the division which includes the Baptist Children's Home in Carmi, Ill.; the Baptist Foundation (endowment and capital giving); the Baptist Student Center at Carbondale, Ill.; Lake Sallateeska Assembly, and a new assembly to be developed near Streator, Ill.

Lewis, pastor of the Vale Street Baptist Church in Bloomington, Ill., will head the division including the departments of Sunday School, evangelism, music, church training, Baptist Student Union, and program services.

Chaney, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Palatine, Ill., for the past nine years, will manage the division which includes the Brotherhood, Woman's Missionary Union, missions and stewardship departments.

A native of Texas, Chaney was pastor in Kentucky before coming to Illinois. He is a graduate of Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Tex., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and has completed most requirements for a doctor of philosophy degree at the University of Chicago.

A native of Oklahoma, Lewis was pastor of churches in Fanshawe and Howe, Okla., before coming to Illinois. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Farmer is a native of Illinois, attending Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, and Southern Seminary, Louisville. He has ten years of business experience, and served a number of Illinois churches before becoming assistant executive secretary for the state Baptist association.

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