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July 3, 1973

Mission Offering Up 5.5 Percent at Mid-year

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist annual offering for national mission work at mid-year reached the \$5,728,586 figure, 5.5 percent ahead of this time last year.

Arthur B. Rutledge, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here, said the offering had been running only slightly ahead or behind last year until returns in June. That month more than \$2.1 million came to the mission agency.

The offering promoted by Woman's Missionary Union and the Brotherhood Commission, is named the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and receives a heavy March emphasis in the churches.

"We are very encouraged by this healthy increase," Rutledge added, "and it is possible that the goal of \$6.6 million may be reached. If so this will allow the board to make advances in several areas where missionary personnel and resources are needed urgently."

Last year's goal of \$6 million was reached in November, and by December 31 a total of \$6,059,703 was given.

All funds above \$6 million will be divided between starting new churches, television evangelism, Christian social ministries, and the support of special short-term volunteers.

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2,500 Unwed Mothers
Aided By Sellers Home

7/3/73

NEW ORLEANS, LA. (BP)--An overflow crowd of more than 140 guests helped Sellers Baptist Home celebrate the silver anniversary of its adoption program--and the coming of its director, Mrs. Allegra Laprairie--in ceremonies here July 1.

Sellers Home and Adoption Center is a Southern Baptist sponsored residence for unwed mothers, as well as an adoption agency for their children.

In its 25 years as an adoption center residence, Sellers Home has arranged for the adoption of more than 1,800 babies to Southern Baptist families, as well as providing for 2,500 young women during their pregnancies. Hundreds of others have been counseled.

Highlight of the ceremonies was the presentation of a portrait of Mrs. Laprairie to the home. The oil portrait, painted by New Orleans' artist Pedro Casanave, honored the woman who came in 1948 to Sellers to begin the adoption program, and has been the home's director since 1951.

Featured speaker was Clovis Brantley, associate in the Home Mission Board's Department of Christian Social Ministries, and the director of Seller's Home at the time Mrs. Laprairie was hired.

The combination home-adoption center had its beginnings in 1933, when it was founded by J. W. Newbrough, as a home for unwed mothers and female prison transients. At that time it was called Women's Emergency Home.

Services of the home began to change in 1940, when prison transients were no longer accepted; in 1948, with the coming of Mrs. Laprairie, it became a licensed adoption agency

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and its name was changed to Baptist Baby Home. Later the name was changed to Sellers Baptist Home and Adoption Center, to honor T. B. Sellers, a doctor who for many years volunteered his medical services to the home.

"She was the best Baptist social worker I knew," Brantley told the crowd of adoptive parents, friends and workers at the home, "in fact, she was the only Baptist social worker I knew--and I knew we had to have Mrs. Laprairie to get the program rolling."

During Mrs. Laprairie's years, the home has averaged 100 residents a year, but that number was declined slightly in the past few years, primarily because of relaxed moral codes that allow unwed mothers to keep their children, and the relative ease of abortions.

The home, with new facilities built in 1959, still has more than 90 residents a year. It is capable of handling 36 women and 25 babies at one time.

Sellers' primary concern, says Mrs. Laprairie, is still the young women, and the counseling load has increased over the years.

For the girls who stay at the home, activities--such as arts and crafts, religious programs, trips sponsored by the Sellers Guild and other women's auxiliaries, and continuing education opportunities--are provided.

The Sellers Baptist Home and Adoption Center is operated by the Home Mission Board.

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(BP photo will be mailed to Baptist state editors.)

Jerden Named Brotherhood
Communications Associate

7/3/73

MEMPHIS (BP)--Larry R. Jerden of Dallas, assistant editor of the Baptist Standard of Texas for the past five years, has been named associate director, department of communications for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's Men's Division.

Jerden, 29, will also be associate editor of the Baptist Men's Journal, monthly missions magazine published by the Brotherhood Commission, effective Aug. 1, according to Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Brotherhood Commission.

Jerden will work with Jim Newton, director of the communications department and editor of the Journal, and with Steve Wall, associate for audio visuals and associate editor of the magazine.

Jerden will return to the Brotherhood Commission staff to the same position he held in 1968.

Previously, he had been a staff writer for the office of public relations, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville; and was a reporter for United Press International in Little Rock, Ark.

He is a 1967 graduate of Texas A&M University, College Station, Tex. He also has done graduate work at East Texas State College, Commerce, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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