

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**NATIONAL OFFICE**460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
Telephone (615) 244-2355  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Jim Newton, Assistant Director**BUREAUS**

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203,  
Telephone (615) 254-5461

RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

September 6, 1973

**N. Y. Times Says Baptists  
in Texas Socially Active**

DALLAS (BP)--The social activism of the Southern Baptists in Texas during the recent session of that state's Legislature prompted former Presidential aide Bill O. Moyers to call it "the most effective voice in Texas on concerns of the Christian faith," a New York Times story reported.

The Times reported that Moyers, once a Baptist minister in Texas, said he overheard an oil executive in Austin, Tex., remark, "I'd rather have been Jacob wrestling with the angel than to see James Dunn walk in the door of my office."

The Times article continues, as follows:

Dunn is the secretary for the Christian Life Commission, the social action arm of the Baptist General Convention of Texas that works to insure passage of legislation it supports.

This year, for the first time in its 10-year history, the commission registered in Austin as an official legislative lobbyist.

Backed by an army of 1.9 million letter-writing Texas Baptists, the commission teamed up with unlikely forces to apply pressure for what Dunn calls "people-helping legislation."

After losing its bid to strike a drinking clause from the rights bill for 18-year-olds, the commission joined the brewers' lobby to successfully press for passage of traffic safety laws and family code revisions.

With Common Cause, it battled for legislative reform. While the bill was battered before passage, Dunn's associate, Phil Strickland, a lawyer, conceded that it was "basically sound and better than we had."

The Baptists were joined by Methodists and the Texas Bar Association in successfully pressing for juvenile court reform and revision of adoption processes. And they teamed up with Roman Catholics to persuade legislators to pass bilingual education bills.

They opposed aid to parochial schools and a bill to pave the way for lotteries and race track gambling. Both measures were killed in committee.

When bills concerned with drunken driving, abortion reform and school financing were dodged by the Legislature, Dunn and Strickland vowed to apply pressure to have them introduced again during the new session.

For several years, the Baptist advocacy for social and moral reform in Texas has kept tabs on all legislators and pending bills.

"We can tell a lot about a person," Dunn said, "by finding out who serves as his campaign manager, how he feels about minorities, who is his brother-in-law, if he is a swinger..."

With this information, commission members appraise legislative proposals to match them with potential voting power.

"In a three-man subcommittee," Dunn said, "one vote can make the difference. If we are one vote shy on an important bill, we consult a legislator who appears to be on the fence and attempt to influence his position."

-more-

Legislative briefings are a vital link to the commission's effectiveness. Key laymen, lawyers and judges are drawn into these meetings held throughout the state.

"We give them a rundown on personalities, issues and processes," Dunn said, "and then trust them to be good contact persons for shared interests."

The Baptists are the only denomination in the state known to support an official lobby, and their diligence in speaking to moral and social issues is praised by other churchmen and legislators.

"This is one of the few groups in America that speaks to major moral and social issues that affect people," said Zan Holmes, Methodist superintendent and former legislator.

Joe Gordesky of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith cited the commission for "maintaining a careful, watchful eye as it promotes legislation for the people of Texas in a responsible way."

Praising its progressive approach to social issues, Representative Jim Mattox of Dallas said the commission "is extremely effective as a lobby, sometimes swaying just enough votes. It operates on a one-to-one basis by knowing a Representative and his supporters."

-30-

#### Contributions by Southern Baptists Still Climbing

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)--Showing a \$2.1 million increase over the first 11 months of the 1971-72 fiscal year, gifts to world missions through the Cooperative Program unified budget of the Southern Baptist Convention continued to increase through August.

When the fiscal year closes at the end of September, SBC officials feel the convention will not only reach the 1972-73 operating goal of \$31,826,184 for 19 SBC national agencies, but also may surpass all capital funds needs through 1973.

Gifts of Baptist church members through the SBC Cooperative Program through August totaled \$30,903,115 according to figures released by John H. Williams, SBC finance planning director. That's an increase of \$2,165,628--or 7.54 percent--over 11 month totals last year.

"Southern Baptists' generous contributions should make it possible not only to reach the operating budget but also to pay the \$211,698 due on the 1971-72 capital funds and the \$1,050,000 in 1972-73 capital funds," said Porter Routh, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee.

"This may make it possible for the first time in many years to catch up on capital funds due and have some advance funds to help meet the erosion of inflation," Routh said. "This increase in Cooperative Program funds will be especially helpful in face of the devaluation of the U. S. dollar overseas."

Southern Baptists gave an additional \$28,629,824 in designated gifts, including contributions to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions.

Designated giving for the first 11 months was up \$3,042,317 over the same period last year. That's an increase of 11.89 percent.

Combined world missions contributions, including both designations and Cooperative Program gifts for the first 11 months, totaled \$59,532,993--a 9.59 percent increase of \$5,207,946 over the same period last year through August.

For the month of August alone, both Cooperative Program receipts and designated giving showed large increase over August, 1972. August's Cooperative Program receipts, inflated by checks from several state conventions which failed to arrive in time for the July tabulation, totaled \$2,834,045. That's an increase of \$452,913--or 19.02 percent--over last August.

Meanwhile designations for this August jumped 34.05 percent over last August, rising from \$305,883 to \$410,038. Designations and Cooperative Program gifts were up 20.73 percent in August, rising \$557,068 from \$2,687,015 last August to \$3,244,083 this August.

-30-

Church Buildings Damaged  
By Disasters in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (BP)--Several Baptist church buildings and homes of many church members were damaged in the earthquake that struck South Central Mexico Aug. 27 and in a flood a week earlier in Irapuato in Central Mexico, according to David Daniell, Southern Baptist representative in Mexico.

Reports indicated no harm to property of Southern Baptist representatives--just local Mexican Baptists.

Although worship services were held Sunday, Sept. 2, at the Baptist church in Calipan, the building was so damaged structurally by the earthquake the government condemned it.

"It will take at least \$40,000 to rebuild and repair these church buildings and homes," said Agustin Acosta, promoter of missions for the National Baptist Convention of Mexico.

Eduardo De La Flor, president of the Central Baptist Association, Acosta and Daniell toured the earthquake area, observing Baptist families living in the open air until they could secure some free building materials from the government.

A Baptist church in San Gabriel, Chilac, suffered extensive damage and, according to Daniell, will probably need to be rebuilt. The church's pastor, Lazaro Gonzales, said, "Things were falling all over the place and pure instinct told us to get under the bed for protection.

We recalled the recent earthquake in Nicaragua and the extensive damage and suffering there and wanted to visit all the church members immediately," he continued. "All were in Sunday School this morning, praising God and content to be alive."

A doctor whose husband is pastor of the church in Tehuacan said the most urgent need among earthquake victims is not food and clothing but architects, contractors and bricklayers to help reconstruct homes and churches.

Carlos Medellin, pastor of First Baptist Church, Puebla, having returned from a medical mission trip to the stricken area, said the tragedy had opened doors to witness about the love of God.

"People who don't normally seek God are doing so in this time of great need, presenting a tremendous evangelistic opportunity for the church," reported Medellin.

Baptists in Irapuato were also thankful to God for saving their lives during the recent flood. Evangelical churches of all faiths rushed aid to the people of Irapuato, Daniell said.

One week before the earthquake, a ruptured dam forced water from the Lerma River down on Irapuato, a city of 150,000 people, leaving 45 persons dead and 300 missing. Residents had only a few moments to evacuate after being told of the break in the dam.

Eight of the 40 families at Irapuato's First Baptist Church lost all of their possessions and all church families suffered some loss.

Some people took refuge in First Baptist Church during the ordeal. Drinking water was scarce and police distributed chlorine tablets for the available water and plastic garbage sacks for the debris.

CONASUPO, the government's basic commodities bureau, distributed beans and rice to the hundreds of people who stood in line for food, but there was not enough to feed everyone.

One elderly woman said during a thanksgiving service at the church, "We haven't eaten in two days, but thanks be to God for saving our lives and leading us through the difficulty."

Josue Gonzales, pastor of the Irapuato church, has named a committee to give aid to stricken refugees, including some church members.

The most pressing needs in Irapuato are for mattresses, blankets, clothing, food and medicine, Gonzales said.

Charles Bryan, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean, said, "As relief funds are received by the board, money will be made available to Mexican Baptists to purchase these needed items."

In addition, Bryan said, the board is in contact with the Southern Baptist representatives in Mexico, and is ready to provide other relief money upon receipt of specific requests from the Mexican mission.

From Washington, D. C., Carl Tiller of the Baptist World Alliance said the BWA also "stands ready to lend additional assistance as we receive reports of needs." The BWA has already sent \$1,000 to the National Baptist Convention of Mexico.

Tiller said no reports have yet come in from three other BWA affiliated bodies who have "fraternal ties" with Baptist work in Mexico. They are the American Baptist Churches, the Baptist General Conference and the Seventh Day Baptist General Conference.

-30-

NOTE TO EDITORS: The story above is an update of the BP story mailed 8-30-73, the Mexican earthquake.