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**Talk Back Results in
Changes, Improvements**

By Baptist Press

Editors of 78 Southern Baptist publications got the advice they sought and began to make changes as a result of "Operation Talk Back," a survey launched two years ago to determine viewpoints and reactions of Southern Baptists.

Questionnaires were placed in the April-May-June (1971) issues of the periodicals, published by the Sunday School Board, Brotherhood Commission and Woman's Missionary Union.

The Sunday School Board reported that readers returned more than 61,000 questionnaires. A majority of the responses indicated Southern Baptists wanted changes in format, an increase in biblical content, more helps for small churches and more emphasis on witnessing to non-believers.

Operation Talk Back recommended that the board explore ways of making leaders more aware of curriculum options a quarter in advance. Readers also wanted identification of the age group on periodical covers and improvement of the arrangement of content. They also expressed overwhelming appeal for more use of color.

The Woman's Missionary Union said that while the findings did "help shape up its programs and materials they did not reflect the need for major changes."

"We are trying to do little things all along in all our materials to make them more acceptable," said June Whitlow, director of WMU's education division. "Several extensive adjustments were made in the teaching materials in some magazines. Other than this, Talk Back assured us that we are on the right track in our programs and materials."

A Brotherhood Commission spokesman in Memphis said the questionnaire results "validated improvements the Brotherhood Commission made in its periodicals for Baptist Men and Royal Ambassador boys when it entered the 1970s."

In Nashville, a Sunday School Board spokesman said, "We have always been responsive to suggestions of users of our materials. Operation Talk Back has given us the most specific guidance yet in making improvements."

"Since findings of the survey were compiled two years ago, the Sunday School Board has made noticeable improvements in periodicals for Sunday School, church training, church administration, church library, church recreation, national student ministries and church music," the spokesman said.

Content and layout of Sunday School Board curriculum materials have received the most significant changes. All publications have been restructured to speak more clearly to the age group for which they are intended, and periodicals contain improved layout and design, seeking especially to make them more legible for senior adults and children, according to board spokesmen.

Also, they report, illustrations will be more appropriate and realistic. A larger type-face for easier readability is being used in certain publications.

As recommended by respondents to Talk Back, Sunday School Board magazines such as The Deacon, Church Recreation, Proclaim and Media: Library Services Journal contain more "how-to-do-it" articles. These magazines will also run shorter articles.

In accordance with returned questionnaires, children's curriculum materials feature different stories for Sunday School and church training. Sunday School Board editors more carefully select Bible stories with less repetition and stories about biblical events have been shortened and pupil activities added. Other innovations include printed pronunciations of biblical names and difficult words.

As for ministering to non-believers, Sunday School board publications now give more pre-eminence to biblical context and more aid to teachers in guiding older children to Christ. Strong emphasis has in the past and will continue to be given to promotion of daily Bible readings.

Questionnaires returned to Birmingham indicated that WMU directors tend to be older women. Now, through Woman's Missionary Union publications, younger women are being encouraged to become directors.

Organizational manuals will be revised to a more simplified, conversational, illustrated style to encourage more wide-spread use by officers and leaders, WMU leaders report.

WMU magazines, such as Royal Service, for Baptist Women, Contempo, for Baptist Young Women, and Dimension, the overall magazine for WMU officers, are giving more attention to the small WMU organizations as a result of Operation Talk Back.

Changes in Royal Service include more use of the Bible in study sessions, simplified writing, more human interest and addition of learning activities suited for only a few categories of people.

Accent, the WMU's publication for girls in grades 7-12, includes a new format and more color and illustrations. Reading material has been adjusted to accommodate younger girls in that group, as well as the older ones.

Start, the WMU's magazine for preschool leaders, has become more missions-oriented.

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Broadman Releases Revised
Volume I of Commentary

11/7/73

NASHVILLE (BP)--The final volume of the 12-volume set of the Broadman Bible Commentary, a revision of Volume I, has been released by Broadman Press through Baptist and general book stores throughout the country.

This revision was published in response to actions of the 1970 and 1971 Southern Baptist Convention messengers as these actions were interpreted by the elected trustees of the Sunday School Board and implemented by the administrative officers of the board.

The 1970 action called for rewriting of Volume I "with due consideration of the conservative viewpoint." The following year, convention messengers asked the board to "obtain another writer" to rewrite the volume.

Clyde T. Francisco, professor of Old Testament interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, was enlisted to replace British Baptist scholar G. Henton Davies as writer of a new commentary on the book of Genesis for Volume I.

Barclay M. Newman Jr., a translator for the American Bible Society, was invited to write a new article on "The Scriptures in Translation." The first writer of that article, Robert G. Bratcher, translator of the Today's English Version (Good News) of the New Testament for the American Bible Society, requested that his work not be used in the revised volume.

The commentary on the book of Exodus by Roy L. Honeycutt Jr., academic dean and professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo., and all other general articles are identical with those in the volume published in 1969.

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"We have made an earnest effort to publish the volume as directed by Convention action, recognizing that no book can be written that will be satisfactory to everyone," said James W. Clark, director of the board's Broadman division.

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Kansas Recalls Bonds,
Ends Financial Crisis

11/7/73

BELLEVUE, Neb. (BP)--The Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists voted here to recall all outstanding bonds of the convention's Church Loan Association (CLA), assume all the CLA's liabilities and assets and to dissolve the CLA at midnight, December 31, 1973.

The action, approved by a standing unanimous vote of "messengers" to the 28th annual convention session, ends the convention's five-year financial crisis that threatened to bankrupt it, a convention spokesman said.

Pat McDaniel, the convention's executive director, a layman who joined the convention in 1969 to try to salvage its financial integrity, was given a standing ovation, a plaque of appreciation and a love offering of more than \$2,000 by cheering messengers.

Summarizing the impact of the bond calling on the state convention, McDaniel said, "It means all bondholders will receive 100 cents on every dollar they invested with the CLA. It means a recovery of our good name. It means \$78,000 per year that was going into the CLA sinking fund will be freed for mission causes. Our morale should soar."

The convention took the action upon recommendation of its executive board and the CLA's board of directors. The recommendation was made after the convention received a joint letter of commitment for a loan of up to \$500,000 from The Southwest National Bank and Trust Company, Wichita, Kan., and the Farmers and Merchants State Bank of Derby, Kan. The loan was necessary to make the bond call possible.

The messengers authorized the convention officers to enter the agreement with the banks whereby up to \$500,000 could be borrowed to pay off outstanding bonds.

Five years ago, in November, 1968, the Kansas convention assumed the liabilities of its Church Loan Association to keep from losing some 77 church buildings because of the CLA's insolvency.

In 1969 the CLA had liabilities of \$3,387,905 and assets of only \$1,749,691, leaving a deficit of \$1,638,214.

The financial advisors felt the deficit arose because of generally poor and unacceptable business practices by the CLA's officers and directors and the original bond issuing agent-trustee, a convention spokesman said.

In order to salvage the situation, the Kansas convention in 1969 entered a management agreement with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, which sent McDaniel, later elected the state convention's executive director, to manage the CLA.

The Securities Commissioner of Kansas then placed the CLA under a five-man board of managers. He appointed the management committee to "(1) manage the affairs of the Church Loan Association and (2) manage all affairs within the Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists which would relate to the Church Loan Association, including but not limited to budget controls, income, organization of the convention, etc."

The Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission assisted the convention in a campaign, called The Strengthening Our Witness Campaign, to raise money and pledges to offset the CLA deficit which the state convention had assumed.

Within four months the people and churches of the Kansas Convention of Southern Baptists pledged \$672,108 through the campaign. In addition, other state conventions pledged \$489,675 to be paid in a five year period.

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When these pledges were committed, the five-man committee recommended McDaniel be elected executive director of the convention and the CLA. The executive board of the convention unanimously elected McDaniel and the five-man committee dissolved.

In the following five years, \$602,712 of the pledges from the Kansas-Nebraska Southern Baptist churches and \$300,000 (either in cash or commitments to be funded by 1974) of the pledges from other state conventions were placed into the CLA fund.

The fund total was aided by a settlement in favor of the CLA from A. B. Culbertson Co., Ft. Worth, Tex., original trustee and selling agent of the CLA, that netted \$130,807.33 after legal fees and other expenses, a convention spokesman said.

"Several factors, other than sacrificial contributions, made this victory possible," said one of the convention's financial advisors, "In the past five years prudent management, wise investments of assets and refinancing of some churches through other agencies, that enabled them to pay off their CLA indebtedness, helped greatly."

McDaniel said, "We are now five years ahead of our regular program schedule. To think that five years ago we could have lost 77 church buildings. In these five years, churches using some of these 77 church buildings led our state convention in baptisms."

In the next 20 years, McDaniel estimates that about \$1.2 million will come in from churches indebted formerly to the CLA and now indebted to the Kansas convention.

The convention had already decided to place those funds into the Kansas Southern Baptist Foundation for a revolving loan fund to assist churches, a spokesman said.

The money will be carefully handled and available only for well-secured loans, McDaniel said.

"Southern Baptists' history shows that they are people of faith who take crises and turn them into victories in the Lord," McDaniel said. "We feel so much gratitude to so many, even though difficult times have kept some other state conventions from meeting their pledges."

"A great part of this victory belongs to the Southern Baptists of Kansas and Nebraska. These people individually could have done very little to save this convention," McDaniel continued, "But they were good stewards of what God gave them. They gave one, two, three and five dollars a week over and above what they gave to their churches."

"Their individual dollars flowed together and totaled over \$602,712. And that is in addition to what has been record-breaking Cooperative Program giving across our convention during these five years."

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Penn-Jersey Convention
Reorganizes, Sets Goals

11/7/73

CARLISLE, Pa. (BP)--The Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey voted here to formalize an organizational chart for the first time in its three-year history and set a goal of doubling the number of churches and chapels in the convention.

"Messengers" to the convention also elected Kenneth A. Estep, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, Pa., as president and adopted a \$557,000 budget--an increase of \$300,000 over last year because a cooperative agreement with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board which helps support areas where Southern Baptist work is new.

The reorganization of the state offices of the 100-congregation, 11,500-member convention will set up three divisions--communication and promotion, missions, and religious education, according to G. W. Bullard, convention executive secretary-treasurer.

Bullard said the convention will hire a new staff member to direct the communication and promotion division, which includes editorship of the convention's news journal, the Penn-Jersey Baptist, and responsibility for evangelism, stewardship and Brotherhood work with Baptist Men and the Royal Ambassador boys organization.

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Bullard, who has also been serving as editor of the Penn-Jersey Baptist, will direct the missions division as well as retain duties as the top administrator of the convention which covers Southern Baptist work in Pennsylvania and the southern half of New Jersey.

Larry Lewis, who currently directs the convention's religious education efforts, will head the new religious education division. His responsibilities will include Sunday School, church training and all other church program organizations except Woman's Missionary Union, which will be a department under the missions division, and Brotherhood, Bullard said.

The long-range goal calls for doubling congregations in the convention to 200 by 1979 and increasing the total membership to 20,000.

Convention churches were also challenged to baptize 8,000 persons in the next six years, a ratio of one baptism to every 10 church members. With 1,232 baptized last year, Bullard said, the current ratio is one to eight.

Bullard said the long range goals also call for doubling the number of Pennsylvania and New Jersey radio and television stations (30) now carrying programs produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission and upgrading annuity programs for pastors.

The Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey expects to raise \$135,000 of its budget from contributions from the Cooperative Program unified budgets of its churches. Twenty three per cent of that amount, a one per cent increase over last year, will go to Southern Baptist Convention-wide causes, Bullard said.

The treasurer's report showed Cooperative Program receipts from the two-state convention are up about 23 per cent over last year's receipts, Bullard reported. He said \$107,000 was received during the first 10 months of 1973, some \$2,000 more than the entire amount received during the 12 months of 1972.

Resolutions passed during the two-day convention included statements reaffirming support of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, D. C., for its "continuing efforts to preserve religious liberty in our country," Bullard said, and expressing appreciation for the leadership of James L. Sullivan, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, who will retire in early 1975.

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N. C. Defeats Liquor-by-the-Drink by 370,000 Votes

11/7/73

RALEIGH, N. C. (BP)--North Carolina voters, spearheaded by "Get Out the Vote" efforts in churches throughout the state, overwhelmingly defeated a liquor-by-the-drink referendum by a more than two to one margin.

The state-wide referendum, which would have provided for local option drink sales if approved, was defeated by more than 370,000 votes. With only a few precincts unreported, the tally was about 670,000 against the referendum and about 300,000 for it.

Anti liquor-by-the-drink forces carried more than 95 of the state's 100 counties in one of the most lopsided contests in North Carolina history.

The vote climaxed a six-month campaign against the referendum lead by the North Carolina Christian Action League (CAL), dominated by Southern Baptist leadership.

Coy Privette, pastor of North Kannapolis Baptist Church and president of the CAL, hailed the vote as a "great victory for the church."

"Many people have been saying the church has lost its influence," Privette said after the election. "But this shows it does have influence."

"People were willing to get involved in a highly controversial issue and showed that they were concerned about the increase in alcoholism, the deterioration of our homes and many related problems caused by America's number one drug."

Privette and two other Baptist laymen, Marse Grant, editor of the Biblical Recorder, the North Carolina state Baptist paper, and Charlotte attorney Allen Bailey, a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, stumped the state for the CAL in opposing the referendum.

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