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75-45

Church That Should Be Dying
Shows How to Live, Grow

By Larry Jerden

TYLER, Tex. (BP)--John Beard, the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church here says he never really "promotes" the Cooperative Program, unified budget of Southern Baptists. Yet his church is always near the top in giving among Texas Baptists.

The Tyler church should actually be a dead or dying church, per its location.

It is located in a transitional neighborhood in the edge of downtown Tyler, population 60,000. The downtown area is to the south in a black neighborhood separated by a freeway to the north.

There are 10 other Baptist churches within a two-mile radius, and the new suburbs, where the greatest potential for growth would appear to lie are far to the south, beyond "downtown."

The "heyday" of the church of more than 2,000 members, was seemingly long ago. Sunday School attendance was down to 350 seven years ago when Beard came as the pastor.

"We had a choice," Beard recalled, "We could either go the 'outreach' route, with buses and promotion to get high attendance at Calvary, or we could think about moving to the suburbs and incur a large debt, or we could just be the church and do missions.

"We chose to be the church."

The result of "being the church" seven years later is that Sunday School attendance is back above 600. But more impressive and important is what Calvary is accomplishing.

From a \$250,000 budget, Calvary helps support three missions in Pennsylvania, New York, and Canada, budgets \$5,200 for youth mission trips, \$4,460 for state and local missions, \$2,756 for mission education organizations in the church, and \$7,503 for associational missions.

Outside the budget, in December, 1974, the church gave more than \$6,500 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, \$400 for an orphanage the church helped build in Mexico, \$745 to missionary families and \$150 to a needy family.

Topping the budget, the church gave \$65,000 or 25 per cent to the Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists.

But giving dollars is not the total measure for Calvary. In the past year, four couples from the church's members have been appointed missionaries by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Two couples, Jerry and Arlis Milligan and Fred and Janey Debenport--were completing schooling. The other two couples, Tom and Libby Robuck and David and Jeannette Haney, were enroute to Brazil and Indonesia, respectively.

Robuck and Haney attest to the role Beard and the missions trips played in their decisions to become missionaries.

"You can't separate the ministry from the man," Robuck said. "For the past seven years this has been a place where people could come and seek the Lord's leadership. The fellowship has a sweet spirit that allows the Spirit to move.

"Brother Johnny (Beard) is real mission-oriented," Haney noted, "so the church has become mission-oriented.

Beard admits to being "mission-oriented" but plays down his role in the church's enthusiastic response.

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"The members are just faithful," he declared. "They are giving money; they are giving themselves. I'm just going along for the ride.

Laymen in the Tyler church say mission trips have been the sparks lighting Calvary's mission fires.

"My being saved is the result of a mission trip to Brownsville, Tex., said Al Wyatt, a church member five years.

"About 40 young people and sponsors came back from Brownsville and really stirred things up. That trip made young people out of old people and older people out of young people.

"That was the beginning, in 1969. On trips that followed it just grew. I've seen a lot of people go full time in five years. I've been to Brownsville four times and once to Canada, and the lives that have been changed as a result... there just is no explaining it."

Wyatt's wife, Molly, said "I've seen 12 young people in one year volunteer for full time Christian service."

Not everyone in the church was totally for the mission trip expenditures at first, especially some of the older members, Wyatt recalled. But after a mission trip, those who doubted the wisdom of the trips came back changed. They could not do or give enough, he said.

One man had "always questioned everything," Wyatt added, "when it came to church money, but he went down to Brownsville and had 14 Latin boys saved in his class. He didn't touch the ground the rest of the week."

Most of the Tyler laymen and the church staff agree that the mission trips laid the groundwork for the mission volunteers and were their stepping stones to the church's missions commitment. For others, the mission tours ushered in a new depth of commitment.

Laymen Charles Swann, a Calvary member 26 years, noted, "Security, a good job and all that used to be the most important things to me next to my family -- now they mean less than anything."

"Now giving is important," Wyatt said. "Now everything financial goes over the top--the budget, Lottie Moon (offering) and the Cooperative Program."

Southern Baptists are observing the 50th Anniversary of the Cooperative Program in 1975.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

Adapted from April, 1975, issue of World Mission Journal.

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Cooperative Program Works
For Spanish Baptists Too

3/20/75
Baptist Press

MADRID, Spain (BP)--When the Spanish Baptist Cooperative Program (unified budget plan) began 18 years ago only three or four churches of the Spanish Baptist Union were self-supporting. Now 40 of the 57 affiliated churches are indigenous.

Jose Borrás, President of the Spanish Baptist Union and dean of the Spanish Baptist Seminary reported that the 1974 Spanish Cooperative Program goal had been exceeded by 198,000 pesetas (about \$3,000). A total of 1,448,000 pesetas was collected.

About 10 years ago, the Spanish Baptist Union began a 10 per cent yearly reduction in aid to dependent churches. Through this gradual decrease in outside funds received by the local church, many churches have been able to become self-supporting.

Borrás pointed out that 25 years ago the Spanish work was supported almost totally by funds supplied by the Southern Baptist Convention. He credited missionaries with continuance of Baptist work in Spain.

"Our missionary brethren came to Spain to help us and to stand by us as we learned to begin to walk alone financially," he said.

The goal for the 1975 Spanish Cooperative Program has been set at 1,500,000 pesetas or about \$25,850.

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**Hogue Challenges SBC To Do
Better In Winning Converts**

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptists could increase their baptism totals by 25 to 50 percent if they could just equal the baptism ratio they achieved 20 years ago, Home Mission Board evangelism leader, C. B. Hogue, observed here.

"We're busy patting ourselves on the back for achieving our fourth straight year of more than 400,000 baptisms," Hogue said, "when by just living up to our own best showing in the recent past, the total could easily surpass 500,000."

Eight times in the past 20 years baptism totals in Southern Baptist churches have topped 400,000. In 1955, the first year more than 400,000 were registered, the total was 416,867. The other years were 1958--407,892; 1959--429,063; 1961--403,315; 1971--409,659; 1972--445,725; 1973--413,990; and 1974--410,482.

"In 1955 there were 30,377 churches with a total membership of 8,474,741," Hogue observed. "The baptism rate that year was 13.6 per church and one for every 20.3 members."

Now, he continued, Southern Baptists have 12,515,842 members in 34,734 churches, across 50 states. Averaging 13.6 baptisms per church in 1974 would have yielded 472,392 baptisms, and a 1:20.3 ratio of baptisms to members would have meant 616,000."

Pressing the point, Hogue added that if the churches in 1974 had equalled their best record of baptisms per 100 members in the last 20 years the total would have surpassed 650,000.

"I don't want to get caught up in the old numbers game," Hogue said, "but Southern Baptists can do better in leading other persons to Christ."

"For instance, if only the minister or some other staff member from each of our more than 34,000 churches would get actively engaged in witnessing and lead one person per week to Christ that would amount to almost 1.8 million baptisms a year."

Probably more than 100 million "lost" persons live in the United States, he said. If births and deaths ceased and the population remained constant, it would take more than 300 years to win everyone in the nation to Christ, and more than 4,000 years to win the world.

Hogue said he was pleased that the baptism totals for 1974 showed that the number of adults jumped from 149,582 to 161,265, but added he was alarmed that baptisms of children in the 6-11 age category had dropped from 143,099 to 132,192.

"I don't know what our baptism reports will be in the future," he said, "but we need to be aware that current projections indicate the U. S. population under age 15 will decrease by 3.4 percent or 2 million during this decade."

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**Brazilian Baptists Send
Missionaries to Uruguay**

Baptist Press
3/20/75

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay (BP)--Uruguay has become the seventh country to receive missionaries appointed by the Brazilian Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The Brazilian Baptist Foreign Mission is an agency of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, which grew out of Southern Baptist mission work in Brazil.

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The first couple appointed to Uruguay, Mr. and Mrs. Geraldo Rangel, will have a period of orientation in which they will assist a young national couple in Treinta Y Tres, in the eastern part of Uruguay.

According to the Rangels, two single women missionaries will arrive in the country soon and another couple may come next year.

The new missionaries will work closely with Southern Baptist Missionary James W. Bartley, Jr., president of the Uruguayan Baptist Missions and Evangelism Board, who saw the arrival of the first missionaries as "a historical day for Baptist work in Uruguay."

The arrival of the Rangels was preceded by a visit by Alcides Telles de Almeida, executive secretary of the Brazilian Foreign Mission Board. He came to Montevideo to confer with Baptist leaders.

"We were especially impressed with the close consultation of the Brazilian Baptists with us before sending this splendid couple," noted Juan C. Figoni, president of the Uruguayan Baptist Convention.

Brazilian Baptists now have a total of 35 missionaries in Bolivia, Paraguay, Portugal, Mozambique, Angola, Azores and Uruguay. Uruguay borders Brazil on the south and is about the size of Oklahoma.

Southern Baptists entered Uruguay in 1911 and now 22 Southern Baptist missionaries are appointed to the country. Southern Baptists, who entered Brazil in 1881, now have 280 missionaries there.

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Southern Seminary Names
Bill Leonard to Faculty

Baptist Press
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LOUISVILLE (BP)--Bill J. Leonard has been appointed assistant professor of church history at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here, effective July 1.

He holds the bachelor of arts degree magna cum laude from Texas Wesleyan College, Ft. Worth, Tex.; the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, also in Ft. Worth; and will receive the doctor of philosophy degree in American church history from Boston University, Boston, Mass., this summer.

Leonard, a native of Decatur, Tex., was minister of music and youth at Northridge Baptist Church in Mesquite, Tex., 1965-71; and since 1971 has been pastor of First Community Church in Southboro, Mass. He has also been a teaching fellow at Boston University and is a member of the American Society of Church History.

In 1968 and 1969, he was coordinator of a federally-sponsored summer recreational program in Dallas, Tex. In 1972 he was named an Outstanding Young Man of America.

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