

**-- FEATURES**

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**Missions Top Priority
For 'Giving' Church**

By Larry Jerden

AMARILLO, Tex. (BP)--First Baptist Church here long ago settled any question of priorities and missions.

The 9,000 member Amarillo church gives the largest amount to the Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists--\$260,000 per year--of any of the 34,734 churches in the 12.5 million member denomination.

The church's pastor is Winfred Moore, who insists that he never really "promotes" the Cooperative Program, of which Southern Baptists are observing the 50th Anniversary in 1975.

Giving of selves and money are apparently vital keys in the life of First Church. The church's total budget approaches \$1.3 million. The Cooperative Program unified budget tops \$260,000, and total missions giving runs some 42 per cent of the budget.

Missions giving by First Baptist members includes support of the Texas Baptist River Ministry, several Texas Baptist colleges, \$21,000 direct support to 11 Southern Baptist foreign missionaries' salaries, \$21,000 to Hawaii Baptist Academy and others for a list of 29 missions.

The church has additionally given \$1 million to High Plains Baptist Hospital in Amarillo over the last 10 years. Mission education organizations in the church are budgeted nearly \$10,000, and three mission offerings total another \$10,000.

It isn't dollars alone, however, that are the measure in Amarillo, but the people's involvement in missions.

"There are some people who have said we should win all the ones at home first," one layman admits. "But here there are churches on every corner. The gospel is on radio and television.

"Wherever we go, we meet people who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ."

Where the members of First Church go is abroad on "witnessing" trips to Korea and Japan.

The church also works in mission efforts along the Rio Grande River. Laymen have mixed construction with witnessing in places like York, Pa.; Pueblo, Colo.; Eagle Nest, N.M.; Colorado Springs, Colo.; Omaha, Neb.; and Orange County, Calif.

The Amarillo church has a close tie to Korean Baptists, beginning in the 1960s when Amarillo Air Force Base was the site for training Korean pilots.

In ministering to the student pilots, 45 were converted and joined the church. Since that time, about half of the 45 Korean converts have either entered full time Christian vocations or are deacons.

The Amarillo members followed up by going to Korea on witnessing trips.

Last year, 55 of the church's members went to Malaysia, and in previous years, 54 went to Japan and 27 to Korea.

The continuing follow-up and personal interest of the church in the Korean military led the commander-in-chief of the ROK Air Force to call the church the "father and mother of the ROK Air Force."

The Korean involvement inspired one layman, Leonard Nunn, a retired assistant auditor for the Santa Fe Railroad, to volunteer for a 13-month tour as assistant administrator for the Wallace Memorial Hospital in Pusan, Korea, when missionary Charles Wiggs goes on furlough.

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Moore believes strongly in the role of the mission trips and those who go pay their own way. The trips are for missions and not sightseeing, and it is important that a sizable group go, he said.

"If a large group goes," Moore noted, "it can 'raise the temperature' enough to warm up the whole congregation."

Moore confessed that before the church started the mission trips, it was having trouble getting people "turned on" to missions.

"We tried bringing in missionaries to speak, but the people just wouldn't come. So we started the trips. But I started them for what they could do for my church.

"And the trips we take are for missions. We had a group in Japan and Korea during the World Fair in Osaka. Not one person cared enough to go to it (the fair). They were there to witness."

It is gratifying, Moore noted, that not only those church members with money go and/or support the trips.

"We have members who, of course, have the money to go every year. But we also have folks who save their money and vacations for two or three years to get to go just once."

Then there are supportive members like the woman who lives alone in a small apartment and "can't go, but always gives me \$1 for Kool-Aid every trip," said Mrs. C.L. Sutton, who has taken several mission trips. The Amarillo congregation's mission efforts closer to home include ministry along the Rio Grande River, with high school and college-age youths going twice a year and planning to launch a series of monthly trips there.

Mrs. Eileen Fomby, wife of Dr. P.C. Fomby, a dentist who heads the church's medical efforts along the river, said more than 200 members had taken part in the river ministry.

As with many other churches, the mission tours began with the young people but worked to involve adults of all ages.

"The spirit generated on those trips has permeated the church," One layman said.

"When our young people came back from one trip, they had committed themselves to do the same thing at home."

The Amarillo experience has generated not only a giving spirit within the church for the Cooperative Program and other mission causes, but it has sparked mission interest from other countries.

In fact, this summer a group of about 40 Japanese Baptists are coming to Amarillo on their first overseas mission trip.

"They committed themselves to coming five years ago," Moore said.

"They will be in Amarillo August 3-10 to witness to Americans about Christ."



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Educators; Foreign Mission
Leaders Plan Joint Efforts

RICHMOND (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention educators and representatives of the denomination's Foreign Mission Board are working on ways the SBC Education Commission and Baptist colleges can become more involved in the SBC's world mission program.

The conversations built upon earlier resolutions passed by the SBC Education Commission and the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, made up of 71 educational institutions, to implement the "remarriage" of missions and Baptist higher education.

"We feel this conference with Baptist educators is both timely and highly significant because of the vital relationship of the work of Baptist colleges to the worldwide Christian mission," said Winston Crawley, director of the board's overseas division.

A high priority, the conferees agreed, is the training of vocational Christian workers, already a primary emphasis of Southern Baptist educators.

"Basically, we believe the Christian college has four responsibilities," said Ben C. Fisher, executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission. "They are recruiting, training and retaining vocational workers and encouraging them to attend a Southern Baptist seminary."

A natural outgrowth of that concern, he said, would be development of future missions volunteers.

The discussions further brought out that much more study is needed concerning college involvement in the programs of summer missions and Missionary Journeyman conducted by the Foreign Mission Board and in missionary deputation on Baptist college campuses during missionary furloughs.

The Education Commission agreed to continue to study ways its placement service could more effectively help recruit career missionaries for overseas teaching assignments, Baptist faculty members for overseas assignments while on sabbatical and, from time to time, teachers and administrative personnel for short term special assignments.

Representatives of the mission board and the Baptist educators, which included several college presidents, touched on a number of areas of possible mutual assistance, some new and some already existing. They include:

--Finding appropriate ways to express concern for world hunger and encouraging Baptist students to contribute to the Foreign Mission Board world relief programs, as well as through the SBC's special mission offerings and Cooperative Program unified budget to support all phases of SBC work.

--Strengthening and encouraging wider participation in the missionary-in-residence program on Baptist college campuses.

--Exploring ways of assisting wives of the missionaries to complete their degree programs and restudying the program for missionary children.

--Providing on-campus opportunities for furloughing missionaries to upgrade their skills.

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--Making more use of in-residence missionaries for teaching special courses or leading seminars.

--Providing, through the Education Commission, a coordinating service for missionary development by keeping up-to-date information of special programs on Baptist college campuses.

--Presenting the challenge of missions to students in Baptist schools in the United States.

--Providing expertise in research and development of mission strategy, working under Foreign Mission Board guidance,

--Developing models for Baptist campuses for the preparation and training of missionaries.

--Giving serious study to relating foreign study programs of Baptist colleges to foreign mission endeavors.

--Giving serious study to the seeking out and training of international students in Baptist schools in this country for future leadership in the missionary enterprise.

--Assisting educational institutions abroad through faculty and student exchanges and through advisement and upgrading of standards.

Already, Fisher has led teams of educators to study the educational programs at Hong Kong Baptist College and Seinan Gakuin University, Fukuoka, Japan, at the request of the Foreign Mission Board and national Baptist leaders, to help document their academic excellence and facilitate further study by their students in Baptist colleges in the states.

"In seeking to rekindle the fires of missionary interest on Baptist college campuses," Fisher said, "we believe we are being true to the spirit of (missionary) Luther Rice and to a great tradition of missionary service and involvement."

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Second "Joggers Jubilee"
Set for Miami Convention

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MIAMI BEACH (BP)--The second annual Southern Baptist "Joggers Jubilee" is scheduled for June 10, 6:30 a.m. to 8 a.m., at Flamingo Park here, just prior to the opening session of the 1975 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

"More than 300 persons are expected to jog in Miami Beach, and many of our missionaries will be running at the same time in all parts of the world," said Ray Conner of Nashville, secretary of the church recreation department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. "Several missionaries around the world participated in this event in their adopted land last year."

The Joggers Jubilee, jointly sponsored by the board's church recreation department and the Florida Baptist Convention, will be coordinated locally by Jack Naish, minister of education at Central Baptist Church in Miami.

Eugene Greer of the Baptist General Convention of Texas initiated the event at the SBC in Dallas last year.

The church recreation department will present an award certificate to each participant. Participation rather than competition is the important thing, according to Conner.

Interested persons must pre-register for the Joggers Jubilee by sending their names and addresses to Naish at the Central Baptist Church, 500 N. E. First St., Miami, Fla. 33132.

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W. H. Ethington Named
To Georgia Baptist Post

ATLANTA (BP)--W. Howard Ethington of Columbus, Ga., has been named as secretary of church-minister relations service of the Georgia Baptist Convention's state mission program.

Ethington was named by the Georgia convention's executive committee at their March meeting. He succeeds Roy Hinchey who is retiring.

Ethington has served as an area missionary in Columbus since 1970 and previously held pastorates in Georgia and in Chattanooga, Tenn. He has served on the Georgia convention executive committee and as a trustee of Tift College in Forsyth, Ga.

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\$60-Million Mile Stone
Passed By Bond Plan

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SPRINGFIELD, ILL. (BP)--The "Denomination-backed Bond Plan," launched 19 years ago by Southern Baptists in Illinois, has surpassed the \$60 million milestone, according to the Illinois Baptist.

Since its inception, the plan has financed 568 building programs for 288 churches in the Illinois Baptist State Association alone, not including nine other state Southern Baptist groups and five bodies of other denominations.

Other state Southern Baptist conventions in the plan are Alaska, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, New Mexico, Northwest and Ohio. Non-Southern Baptist members are Texas Methodists, General Baptists, Southwestern Christian and Missionary Alliance, Open Bible and Church of God in Michigan.

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FMB Answers Urgent Request;
Sends \$250,000 to Vietnam

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RICHMOND (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has responded to an urgent request from its missionaries in Vietnam by sending \$250,000 for emergency relief and resettlement of refugees there.

The money, sent the fourth week of March, was the second large sum sent for world relief during the month bringing the March total to almost a half million dollars. An earlier appropriation of \$225,194 was for relief and rehabilitation needs in Bangladesh.

"Over a million people have become refugees in the recent upheavals in Vietnam," said R. Keith Parks, the board's secretary for Southeast Asia.

"As the multitudes struggle toward safety, some are dying for lack of food and water. The mission's most urgent priority will be to join other volunteer agencies and the South Vietnamese government in trying to feed these starving people."

In a telephone call, Parks learned from missionaries H. Earl Bengs Jr. and S. F. Longbottom Jr., that most missionary wives and children are moving to Saigon while the men stay to assist in feeding and care of refugees. They said that food supplies are available on the local market but are expensive.

The missionaries are trying to lease boats to help evacuate refugees from the northern coastal areas to the more secure areas of the south, according to Parks.

When the request for \$600,000 was received from the Vietnam Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries), board officials phoned The Southern Baptist Executive Committee in Nashville and several state Baptist conventions advising them of the request.

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The resulting one-quarter million dollars, includes relief monies received earlier from churches and individuals by the Foreign Mission Board and funds in the process of being transmitted to the board by the states.

"The missionaries are deeply appreciative of the money immediately made available from the Foreign Mission Board," Parks said.

The large sums for Vietnam and Bangladesh were made possible in part by world relief efforts by state Baptist conventions in Alabama, Florida, North Carolina and Texas. Other state conventions are also collecting money for world relief.

Southern Baptist missionary William T. Roberson reported that the South Vietnam government estimates about 500,000 refugees will infiltrate the coastal towns of Nhatrang, Phantheit and Phanrang, with about the same number, expected to arrive in Danang.

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Court Agrees to Hear Two
Higher Education Cases

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By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U. S. Supreme Court agreed to rule on the constitutionality of Tennessee's tuition grant program for college students attending both public and private colleges and universities.

The high court will hear oral arguments in the case later this spring when arguments are presented in a similar Maryland case accepted by the court last month.

The Tennessee case, Blanton v. Americans United for Separation of Church and State, was brought to the court by high state officials including the governor, attorney general, treasurer, comptroller, and several figures in the state's higher education agency.

Last fall the U. S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee ruled unanimously that the state's program violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment, which states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution makes that principle applicable to the states.

The Tennessee Tuition Grant Program was initially authorized by the state's general assembly in 1971. The law states its purposes as including the removal of "financial barriers to college attendance," the provision of "greater opportunity to all citizens of Tennessee to achieve post-secondary school education," and the provision to the state's youth of "the opportunity to attend any Tennessee college or university of their choice."

In addition, the 1971 statute created an agency to administer the program and to authorize rules and regulations for its administration.

During the General Assembly's 1974 session, amendments to the 1971 law were passed prohibiting the awarding of tuition grants to any student "who is enrolled in a course of study leading to a degree in religion, theology, or religious education."

Another amendment to the law sought to insure that if federal courts prohibited the tuition grants to students attending sectarian colleges, students attending public colleges would not be affected.

The district court, nevertheless, declared the entire program unconstitutional. Last month, the Supreme Court declared that the program may continue to operate until it issues a final ruling.

Americans United, a group which often is involved in church-state litigation, brought the original suit at the district court level charging that the Tennessee program violates the establishment clause because it authorizes "governmental financing and subsidizing of religious colleges."

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The suit charges further that the sectarian colleges involved are "operated for the purpose of providing specific religious training" and that they "make specific religious requirements of students and/or faculty."

The state, in turn, argues that the program aids college students themselves and not colleges and universities, although the funds involved are sent not directly to students but to the schools. "The payments of funds to colleges and universities," the state brief argues, "is provided only by regulation and solely as a matter of administrative convenience."

The high court agreed to hear the Tennessee case when it hears oral arguments in another case involving Maryland's program of assisting both public and private colleges.

That case, *Roemer V. Board of Public Works of Maryland*, involves payment by the state of public funds to colleges and universities to be used at the discretion of the schools themselves.

Unlike the district court in Tennessee, a three-judge panel in Maryland ruled 2-1 to uphold that state's plan, even though it is openly designed to aid the schools themselves.

Those challenging the plan argue that the state legislature has made no effort to confine the aid to non-religious uses, thereby fostering excessive government entanglement with religion.

Opponents of the plan further argue that the state has failed to restrict use of the aid from such questionable practices as paying teachers' salaries, maintaining and repairing buildings, and keeping up facilities used for sectarian as well as secular purposes.

"Maryland's virtually unlimited form of aid," the complainants' legal brief states, "(is) totally inconsistent" with guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in other similar cases.

Maryland argues that its plan excludes institutions awarding only seminarian or theological degrees and that none of the public funds "shall be utilized by the institutions for sectarian purposes."

During the past four years, the Supreme Court has applied a three-part test to determine the constitutionality of state laws such as those in Tennessee and Maryland.

First, the statute "must have a secular legislative purpose."

Second, "its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion." And third, the law "must not foster 'an excessive governmental entanglement with religion.'"

Decisions in the two cases are expected before the end of the court's current term in late June.



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