



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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76-18

'Cooperative Program': Not
A Rock Group, But It Sings

SHERIDAN, Ark. (BP)--"Cooperative Program" is not the name of a rock music group.

Absolutely not!

It's the name of the youth choir at First Baptist Church, Sheridan, Ark. And that's a fact.

"Cooperative Program," which got its name from the Southern Baptist Convention's multi-million-dollar Cooperative Program unified budget in a unique way, will sing at the SBC annual meeting in June in Norfolk, Va.

The invitation came from William J. Reynolds of Nashville, convention music director, after Mrs. Delbert Taylor, who directs the choir for the 550-member church in the small Arkansas community, phoned him to ask for the opportunity.

Reynolds, director of the church music department for the denomination's Sunday School Board, in seeking to have broad representation on the SBC program, decided to invite the choir.

In fact, "Cooperative Program" is currently the only Arkansas Baptist representative on the official program of the nation's largest Protestant denomination, June 15-17, at the Norfolk Scope Convention Center. It will perform during the 8:45 a.m. time slot, Wednesday, June 16.

The chance to sing at the SBC has created celebrity status for the choir in the 2,480-population community of Sheridan. "This town can't believe it," exclaimed Mrs. Taylor. "I know we have a good group. But I just still can't believe we were invited."

About three years ago, before Mrs. Taylor became director, she said the group was trying to decide on a name. "The church was studying the Cooperative Program and what it accomplishes for missions around the world," she said.

"A cartoon in the GA (Girls in Action) magazine (Discovery, published for girls by the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union) showed a leader talking to a young person," Mrs. Taylor explained. "The leader was saying, 'No, Cooperative Program is not the name of a rock group.'"

"After seeing that, one of our girls suggested that it wouldn't be a bad name for a singing group, especially one from a Southern Baptist Church," she said.

So, that's how "Cooperative Program" got its name, and while it may not be a rock group, it sure does sing!

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Gordon Thomas, Pioneer
Missionary, Dies In Maine

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LEWISTON, Maine (BP)--Gordon Thomas, 49, who pioneered Southern Baptist Convention ministries in Maine, died here January 23, 1976, of a heart attack.

He moved to Maine in 1962 and led in establishing Emanuel Baptist Church, Bangor. He later served Main Street Baptist Church, Brunswick, and had been in Lewiston since 1967, beginning the work in a mobile chapel on a shopping center parking lot. A church was constituted last spring. He also constituted a church at Caribou, Maine.

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Thomas, pastor-director of Baptist ministries in Lewiston when he died, was a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

He was formerly pastor of Park Springs (Tex.) Baptist Church, and was pastor, 1952-60, of two churches in Springfield, Ohio, during the early development of Southern Baptist work in Ohio.

Memorial services for Thomas were held in Lewiston and in Quanah, Tex. He is survived by his wife and three children.

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1000th Baptist Student Campus Program Launched

KOKOMO, Ind. (BP)--Southern Baptist student work passed a milestone here with the beginning of the 1000th Baptist student ministry program on a college campus.

The program at the University of Indiana at Kokomo represents the 389th student program begun on a college campus since 1969, when there were 611 such programs, according to Charles Roselle, secretary of National Student Ministries of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

Roselle said it took 49 years, from 1920 when the first Baptist student ministries were organized in Texas, to organize the first 611. The increase in the seven years since 1969 represents a 63.66 percent increase.

National Student Ministries has set a goal of reaching 1,400 campuses with a student ministry by June 1, 1984.

Many of the new ministries since 1969 have been launched by volunteer or part-time workers, such as Mrs. Mary Jefferson, who serves as the volunteer director of the new program at the University of Indiana at Kokomo while enrolled in nurses training. Many of the part-time or volunteer situations will develop into positions for full-time directors as the programs grow, a National Student Ministries spokesman said.

Roselle said Southern Baptist student ministries operate in all 50 states and Canada, with 328 full-time directors, 94 part-time directors and 374 volunteers.

About 700 of the student ministries are in state Baptist conventions in the South and Southwest, with the remainder in the "pioneer" or new-work areas of the Southern Baptist Convention, which has 12.6 million members in 34,734 churches in all 50 states.

Several activities have been planned to honor the 1,000th Baptist student ministry, including a banquet in Kokomo this spring with the presentation of a plaque to Mrs. Jefferson from Roselle.

Special recognition will be made at Student Conferences at Ridgecrest (N.C.) and Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Centers this summer, and the achievement also will be recognized at the 1976 Southern Baptist Convention in Norfolk, Va.

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Father of Mississippi Baptist Leader Dies

Baptist Press
1/28/76

NEW ALBANY, Miss. (BP)--Ernest Earl Kelly, Sr., 84, of Ecu, Miss. died at Union County Hospital here January 27 after an extended illness. He was the father of Earl Kelly, executive secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Funeral services were to be at the Cherry Creek Baptist Church, Ecu. He was a member of the Cherry Creek Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife, Lillian, one son and five grandchildren.

The family has requested no flowers. Memorials may be sent to the Cherry Creek Church, the Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Jackson, or to Baptist institutions, such as Children's Village or Gulf Shore Baptist Assembly, both in Mississippi.

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Pulpits Need Preachers,
Not Administrative Giants

By Nancy Carter

LOUISVILLE (BP)--Don't put administrative giants in Southern Baptist pulpits--put dynamic preachers there instead, a Scottish Baptist leader urged here.

"If the church is so big that it needs a business manager, it should appoint one, but it should not be the pastor," stressed Andrew MacRae, secretary of the Baptist Union of Scotland, in an interview at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

MacRae has just completed teaching a one-month course in "Preaching and Teaching" at Southern Seminary and a January Bible Study at Walnut Street and Green Acres Baptist Churches, Louisville.

He noted some may not agree with his belief in divorcing administrative duties from the pastor as much as possible.

"Immediately I can hear arguments against this: 'But won't the pastor lose his position as leader of the church?' I don't think he will. Anyway, in the New Testament, the concept of ministry is first a concept of service and second one of leadership."

MacRae feels the over-emphasis on administration is a particular danger of Southern Baptist churches, especially in ones with larger staffs.

When too much time is given to "house keeping" duties, the intensive study time necessary for dynamic preaching suffers, MacRae said, adding that delegation of authority is the key to seeing that administrative duties don't whittle away at essential time.

"Of course, delegation still requires supervision. You've got to show an interest in the work of the person to whom it's been delegated so that he simply doesn't flounder and get lost with it," he said.

Once delegation has been accomplished, then the pastor can devote himself to researching the Scriptures and reading other supporting books and articles. To indicate the amount of time he believes necessary, MacRae noted in his own ministry he tried to devote the entire morning to study, adding that pastoral emergencies and other needed interruptions are to be expected.

"The real danger is when the pastor's morning becomes an hour," he said.

What happens when a minister does not devote himself to adequate preparation? MacRae believes many "dangers" will follow him into the pulpit--such as superficiality, brought about because the pastor "cannot handle the word of God so that people can be fed."

Another danger is that of diversion--the pastor diverts to an area of his own interest, since that is all with which he is familiar.

"In three months he has covered the same ground four or five times," MacRae said.

"There is also the danger of dullness--when the preacher's own experience has become blunted. But if you've really met God in the Scriptures, you won't be dull."

MacRae stressed a preacher must have a "fire" within him--a certainty of the message he preaches as well as his call--which compels him to preach with excitement.

"If your preaching doesn't excite you, it sure doesn't excite anyone else."

Bicentennial Feature

South Carolina Baptists
Aid New England Brethren

CHARLESTON, S. C., 1775 (BP)--South Carolina Baptists, indebted to the Baptists of New England for much of their heritage, are making the most of an opportunity to repay that debt by answering an urgent call for help.

New England Baptists, particularly those in Massachusetts, are suffering from religious persecution by the state and the established church. South Carolina Baptists are responding to appeals for financial aid for the New Englanders.

The Carolinians have had a close kinship with their northern brethren for almost a century, as a congregation from Maine 90 years ago--in 1685--established the first Baptist church in South Carolina. Even then the New England Baptists were suffering from oppression.

Baptists made a brave attempt to establish a church in Kittery, Maine, nearly 10 years ago but faced relentless persecution at the hands of the established church and civil authorities.

William Screven was pastor of the Kittery congregation. He was arrested repeatedly for preaching Baptist doctrines in Maine, and members of his congregation were fined and otherwise persecuted for attending Baptist services.

Screven and the First Baptist Church of Kittery finally left Maine as a body and settled in South Carolina in the 1680's. The Baptist minister was threatened with banishment before he left New England.

Although the New Englanders found life harsh in the South Carolina wilderness, religious freedom was worth the sacrifice. The church flourished and in 1751 the Charleston Association was formed by four Baptist churches.

The association pioneered in evangelism and education. John Gano served the association well as a missionary and the Carolinians have generously supported Rhode Island College, Baptists' first institution of higher learning.

While Baptists here and in other colonies are aiding New England Baptists in fighting for religious freedom, persecution has not been limited to that section by any means. Baptists from Maine to Georgia have suffered abuse and oppression.

Baptists have been whipped and driven out of New England, jailed in Virginia, and mistreated in Georgia. Rhode Island, founded by Baptist Roger Williams, is one of the few places where they have escaped persecution.

The ordeal of oppression has only strengthened Baptists, however, and united them in a firmer resolve to fight for a free church in a free state.