



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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79-01

Cooperative Program
Keeping Budget Pace

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--December giving boosted contributions to the Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program to \$14,538,766, or 11.9 percent ahead of the first three months of 1977-78.

But December's rate of increase dropped drastically from November's 18.7 percent. December giving amounted to \$5,026,599, a 7.1 percent increase over the same month last year.

Monthly increases must average 11.5 percent to meet the \$64 million operating budget and capital needs goals of SBC agencies. The total 1978-79 budget of \$75 million reflects an additional \$11 million goal for Bold Mission Thrust challenge funds and requires a 30.6 percent increase over last year's receipts. (Bold Mission Thrust is the SBC plan to proclaim Christ to the world in this century.)

Designated contributions, running 30 percent ahead of the first three months last year, totaled \$469,965 in December, up 14.8 percent over December 1977.

Total contributions, including Cooperative Program funds and designated gifts, amount to \$16,159,997 for the year to date, a 13.47 percent increase over last year.

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Missionaries Continue
Work in Iranian Capital

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1/3/79

TEHERAN, Iran (BP)--One Southern Baptist missionary family and a missionary journeyman plan to remain in the Iranian capital city of Teheran, even though the United States government is evacuating all non-essential personnel.

Henry E. Turlington said by telephone that his family and journeyman Michael Joe Sowder would remain in Teheran and continue with scheduled youth and church activities.

Other missionary personnel are already out of the country for various reasons. The James F. Kirkendalls are currently in India on a regular business trip connected with his duties as the SBC Foreign Mission Board's field representative for South Asia.

The C. Kenneth Glens are in Georgia. Mrs. Glenn and the three children came to the U. S. in November because of violence in the city of Ahwaz where they were stationed. Glenn joined them for the holiday period as a Christmas gift from the Ahwaz church where he is pastor.

Volunteer Hubert Williams, formerly stationed in Shiraz, also returned to the U.S. because of conditions in that area. He is in Arkansas.

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Averett College
President Resigns

DANVILLE, Va. (BP)--Conwell A. Anderson, president of Averett College for 13 years, has resigned, effective in August, following doctors' advice.

Anderson's surprise resignation came just four weeks after he announced Averett will move to a new campus site. Doctors said Anderson, who suffered a heart attack in 1975 and had coronary bypass surgery in 1976, wasn't up to the monumental tasks of relocation and the resultant fund raising campaign.

During Anderson's tenure, Averett has grown from a woman's junior college with 300 students to a four-year coeducational institution with 1,100 students and a fledgling graduate school.

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Stewardship Commission
Efforts Reach New High

Baptist Press
1/3/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Bolstered by an all-time record at Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission's Together We Build program raised \$27.6 million at 96 churches in 1978.

Bellevue, with over 10,000 members, pledged \$4,038,300 over the next three years to construct an educational facility. The previous individual church record was the \$3.3 million raised at North Phoenix Baptist Church, also by a stewardship commission staff member.

Fred M. Chapman, director of the Capital Giving division of the Stewardship Commission, said the chief benefit of the Together We Build program, which has been copied widely by secular fund raising groups, is that churches pay no interest on the money given by their members.

That's especially significant in light of the fact that Southern Baptists last year paid more money in interest on loans for buildings than they contributed to worldwide missions causes through the national Cooperative Program.

"Other benefits are the stewardship advantages and an increase in the level of spiritual commitment on the part of church members," said Chapman. He said in the average church, the Together We Build commitment represents a 50 percent gain in annual income that is usually sustained after the pledge period has ended. Bellevue, with income last year of \$2.5 million, followed that rule.

The commission didn't limit its efforts to large churches, but also helped raise \$83,000 at a 42-family church in Matawan, N.J. and \$50,700 at a 40-family church in North Syracuse, N.Y., among others.

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Religion Writers Pick New
Popes Top Story of 1978

Baptist Press
1/3/79

WILMINGTON, Del. (BP)--Secular religion newswriters consider the death of two popes and the election of new leadership in the Roman Catholic Church as the major story in the field of religion during 1978.

That story just edged the bizarre murder-suicides of members of the People's Temple group in Guyana, which finished second among the ten top news stories of the year.

The 62 religion newswriters who responded to a survey by Eileen Spraker, Wilmington, Del., News-Journal religion editor, placed third the attempt at peace-making in the Middle East, which had both religious and political significance.

Fourth was the controversial World Council of Churches grant to liberation forces in Rhodesia that caused some churches to drop membership in the World Council. Although

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WCC leaders said the money would go to help sustain life for families of some of the revolutionist leaders, and not for military purposes, the church people were shocked that any funds should go to groups using violence.

Other stories in the top 10 were: (5) Strained church-state relationships in the U.S. as church people were riled with Internal Revenue Service rulings which they say interfere with religion by attempting to define a religious group;

(6) The homosexual ordination issue as handled by the United Presbyterians, U.S.A. at its general assembly last May in San Diego. The Presbyterians told presbyteries they recommended not ordaining homosexuals to the ministry;

(7) Increased interest in the Shroud of Tourin and in the legitimacy of claims that the relic belonged to Jesus of Nazareth;

(8) Formation of the Anglican Church of North America resulting from a break with the Episcopal Church in the United States over the issue of ordination;

(9) Refusal of the Church of England to ordain women;

(10) Questions on the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's finances, which in effect opened the books on a number of other religious organizations which collect funds in public appeals.

Not in the top ten but high in the news this year were pro-life advances, especially in elections which put pro-life people into state legislatures and into Congress, and the Mormon "revelation" which opened the priesthood to black members.

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Allen Advises Begin To Have
'Patience of Job' in Talks

Baptist Press
1/3/79

JERUSALEM (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention President Jimmy Allen, in a 45-minute conference with Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin, advised him to have the "patience of Job" in the pursuit of peace, and expressed Southern Baptist concern for continued religious liberty in Israel.

Allen reported by telephone that Begin smiled when advised to have the patience of Job, the steadfast Old Testament believer who refused to renounce his faith in God despite personal and family catastrophes. "If you want me to have the patience of Job, then I'll have the patience of Job," Begin told Allen.

During his nine-day visit to Israel, Allen also conferred with other key Israeli officials to express concern over the year-old anti-bribery law which makes it illegal to offer or receive material or other benefits to change religions. Baptists and other Christians in Israel have feared it might be misinterpreted to prevent evangelical Christians from witnessing to their faith.

Allen said he was encouraged by the reception he received from justice minister Schmuel Tamir and other officials. Allen expressed concern that a new Israeli law now being written include adequate safeguards for religious freedom. Tamir assured Allen that he believes very keenly that Israel "should set the example before the eyes of the world of the protection of conscience."

Allen said the conference with Begin, which took place shortly after noon on Jan. 3, was a "very good visit." The two talked at some length about the current Middle East peace negotiations, with Allen assuring the prime minister of Baptist prayers for him, Egyptian President Sadat, and the role played by the United States.

Allen said that Southern Baptists were praying for Begin's health and for wisdom for him. Begin replied, "My health is in the hands of God. I hope we can have wisdom as we move through the decisions that we make."

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Allen also talked with Begin "about our expectations about religious freedom...and our concern that Israel continue to set an example for the world at this point." The Knesset, the Israeli parliament, is having hearings on this section of the constitution.

"I expressed the hope that the guarantees for religious freedom of speech and the right to change faith that are in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, to which Israel is a signatory, be incorporated into the body of Israeli law," Allen reported.

Allen said Begin did not respond directly to that word, but did say that since Israel has been administering Jerusalem there has been "total freedom of access for all faiths and that there is a commitment on the part of the Israeli government to recognize the rights and freedoms of all individuals of all faiths."

Allen said he had a frank exchange of views with David Glass, chairman of the Knesset committee on law and justice, the committee which dealt with the antibribery law passed in December of 1977.

Glass does not believe in evangelizing as part of one's faith and feels the law is necessary, Allen said. But the official listened to Allen's position that the law is not needed.

Allen, who made the trip to Israel as Southern Baptist Convention president but did not use convention funds for it, was honored at a reception in Jerusalem to which members of the city's religious community were invited.

He also was to meet informally with about 20 of the Southern Baptist representatives who serve in Israel before leaving for Scotland Jan. 6 to confer with leaders of the Baptist Union of Scotland. He and Mrs. Allen planned to return to the United States Jan. 10.

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Bible Brings \$2,250
At Lottie Moon Auction

WAKE FOREST, N. C. (BP)--A retired professor's ordination Bible brought \$2,250 at the second annual auction for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Bible, presented to J. Leo Green at his ordination in 1933, bore the marks of 45 years' use in his teaching and preaching ministry. Green, retired professor emeritus of Old Testament Interpretation at Southeastern, donated the Bible as an expression of the missions theme in his teaching and preaching.

The Bible was purchased by members of the seminary's associate class who have studied under Green. They will donate the Bible to the seminary's library as a reminder of Green's 27 years of teaching at the school.

One of the more unusual items at the auction that raised \$3,400 for the missions offering, was a stone alleged to be the one that David used to kill Goliath. One observer said he wouldn't trust the seller of that stone any further than he could sling him.

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Nevada Baptist
Address Set

Baptist Press
1/3/79

RENO, Nev. (BP)--Ernest B. Myers, executive director of the Nevada Area Baptist Convention, has established temporary office in the Temple Baptist Church near Reno.

The address there is Box 6538, Reno, Nev., 89513; telephone 702-358-0838. Myers is looking for more permanent office space for him and directors of religious education and missions, both of which are yet to be named.

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