



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Together We Build Efforts
Pass \$250 Million Mark

MIDLAND, Texas (BP)--Over a quarter of a billion dollars has been raised by the Together We Build program of the Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Wilshire Baptist Church in Midland, Texas, carried the program over the \$250 million mark April 29 when the 890-member congregation, led by Chris Osborne, pastor, pledged \$557,064 in exceeding its third goal. John E. Malone, lay director of Together We Build, said, "The tog thern ss that each of us achieved by doing the Lord's will was a real victory."

Since 1969, staff consultants from the Stewardship Commission have assisted 819 churches in the consultant-led, copyrighted Together We Build program.

"The real glory of this (raising one-quarter of a billion dollars) is that many of these churches were beyond themselves but they needed a building and this program let them get it," said Fred Chapman, director of endowment and capital giving promotion for the Stewardship Commission. Of the 819 churches, more than half had annual budgets of less than \$100,000.

He noted the program has proved successful in newly established churches such as First Baptist Church of Pinckney, Mich., (\$33,418) where Steve Hodges is pastor, as well as in larger churches such as Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., (\$4,034,670) where Adrian Rogers is pastor.

Chapman, who has been at the Stewardship Commission for 12 of the 13 1/2 years of this consultant-led service to churches, said First Baptist Church of Augusta, Ga., was the first Southern Baptist church to pledge more than a million dollars in a Together We Build program.

A.R. Fagan, executive director of the Stewardship Commission, commended the staff of nine consultants for the accomplishment. He said there is no way to calculate the millions of dollars all types of churches across the Southern Baptist Convention saved by not having to borrow the \$250,074,737 raised through Together We Build.

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(Photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Baptist Press.)

Jerry Clower Speaks Out
For Royal Ambassador Program

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BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)--Jerry Clower, nationally renowned Mississippi humorist, has joined forces with the Royal Ambassador Speak Out Program of the Brotherhood Department of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Royal Ambassadors (RAs) is a mission organization in Southern Baptist churches for boys in the first through twelfth grades. The Speak Out Program has been part of the RA state convention activities for several years, but beginning with the 1984 session in Memphis, boys in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades will participate in the "Jerry Clower Ambassador Service Speak Out."

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They will write their own speeches on moral and social subjects, consistent with the missionary education emphasis of RAs and deliver them at the state convention. Clower will present an award to each participant.

"I love to help young men become all that God wants them to be," Clower, an active Southern Baptist layman in Yazoo City, Miss., said. "If my encouragement and help will guide one boy or one young man in the right direction, then I'll give it my best."

Clower said the first time he ever spoke in public was at a Baptist Young People's Union meeting. "Simply, I am on your side," Clower told a group of Tennessee Baptist Convention leadership. "Being identified with the Speak Out Program seems appropriate--after all, I make my living by speaking out in public.

"The things that happen to us as youngsters have the greatest impact on our lives. I want to help boys learn to express themselves and to express that Christianity works!"

Archie King, director of the Tennessee Baptist Brotherhood Department, said he hoped the Tennessee program would encourage the other 34 state conventions of the Southern Baptist Convention to include a Speak Out Program in their RA work or strengthen the programs they already have. "It is tragic to be smart but not be able to communicate," King said. "It is tragic to be a Christian and not be able to tell others."

Tandy Rice, Clower's agent and also an active Baptist layman, originated the idea of Clower joining forces with the Speak Out Program. "This mix is really a natural," Rice said. "Jerry loves kids, he loves the state of Tennessee and he loves the Baptist church."

In Tennessee, almost 1,000 churches have RA chapters with a combined enrollment in excess of 15,000 according to Kenny Rains, director of the Royal Ambassador organization for the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

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April Cooperative Program
Giving Up Almost Nine Percent

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Cooperative Program received more than \$8.5 million in contributions in April, pushing the fiscal year total to \$59,362,703.

The seven month total is 8.25 percent ahead of the 1981-82 figures. April 1983, income was 8.78 percent ahead of April 1982.

Additionally, the 36,000 SBC churches have contributed another \$61 million to designated causes (primarily the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board), an increase of five percent over last year.

The Baptist Convention of New York has shown dramatic percentage increases in giving both to the Cooperative Program and in designated giving. Its CP contributions are up 40.45 percent and designated gifts are up 20.65 percent. Both figures are second among all 34 conventions.

The Northern Plains Baptist Convention continues to be the leader in CP percentage increase (53.76) followed by New York, Hawaii (22.32), Colorado (19.31) and Florida (18.65).

Florida is the leader in total dollar increase over last year, \$672,286, followed by Georgia (\$583,251), Alabama (\$367,125), Texas (\$336,947) and Oklahoma (\$327,071). Thirty of the 34 state conventions have increased their giving to the Cooperative Program this year.

Maryland is the leading convention in increasing designated giving, having upped contributions in that category 28.31 percent over last year.

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Hatfield: Official Religion
Valid But Of Little Value

WASHINGTON (BP)--Even though ceremonial expressions of religion in the state "do not violate the separation of church and state," they "do not do a great deal of good," either according to U.S. Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore.

Speaking at the 50th anniversary service of the dedication of the National Baptist Memorial Church, Hatfield said the original intent of the Constitution was to protect both church and state, a view disputed by leaders of the Religious Right.

He also warned against an "unholy alliance of preachers willing to do the president's bidding," an apparent reference to Religious Right leaders such as Jerry Falwell, founder and president of Moral Majority.

Hatfield defended the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court rulings striking down state-written and state-required prayer in public schools. The high court did not rule out truly voluntary prayer, he said. He added religion is "too sacred, personal and holy" to permit government interference. "We serve God willingly and from the heart, not by constraint."

Speaking to the Baptist distinctive of separation of church and state, Hatfield said: "The heritage Baptists have that ties us together for political and religious liberty is our greatest contribution to the nation and the world."

Originally conceived as a memorial to Roger Williams, the church was dedicated to religious freedom, one of the basic foundations of the Baptist belief. Formal dedication took place on May 23, 1933, when the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Church s, (then the Northern Baptist Convention,) scheduled their annual meetings in Washington.

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Preach Surety Of Gospel,
Paschall Urges Graduates

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5/24/83

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--In a world plagued by uncertainty, ministers can stand confidently on the sure foundation of the gospel.

With that reminder, Tennessee pastor H. Franklin Paschall challenged graduates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to proclaim "good news that never becomes old."

"The gospel is the fulcrum, the fixed point from which we can not only lift ourselves but also lift the world," he declared. "Let's admit that the bottom line is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is really all the good news we have."

Paschall, pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., for more than 26 years, spoke at Southern Seminary's 151st commencement May 20.

The urgency before ministers today, Paschall said, is to preach the gospel to a world that resists its message. "When the world is at its worst," he concluded, "that's when the gospel is at its best."

Paschall warned the graduates that resistance to the message can take various forms, including misleading alliances between church and state. "I get uneasy when government and the church get too close together," he said. "I'm a flag-waving preacher; I love my country. But as much as I love and respect it, I do not equate it with the Kingdom of God."

Despite the obstacles, the gospel is forever relevant, Paschall claimed, because of the unique incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. "Jesus Christ was no phantom man," he explained. "He was not unreal in any sense. That's why the gospel is relevant."

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Supreme Court Rules
Against Bob Jones University

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--Religious schools which discriminate on the basis of race in admissions policies are not entitled to federal tax exemption, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled May 24.

In deciding its most celebrated case of the current term, the high court held, 8-1, that Bob Jones University, of Greenville, S.C., and Goldsboro (N.C.) Christian Schools have neither legal or constitutional grounds on which to enjoy tax-exempt status, nor are they entitled to receive tax-deductible contributions, the court ruled.

The court's unexpectedly strong decision ended an extended legal battle between the two schools and the Internal Revenue Service, which in 1976 revoked Bob Jones University's tax exemption and has denied the privilege outright to Goldsboro Christian Schools since 1969.

Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, writing for the majority, rejected the schools' key claim that the IRS actions violated their right to free exercise of religion, a guarantee protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution. According to both schools, the policies of discriminating racially in admissions were based on sincerely held religious beliefs against mixing of races.

But Burger, quoting from a decision he wrote last term, held "not all burdens on religion are unconstitutional...The state may justify a limitation on religious liberty by showing it is essential to accomplish an overriding governmental interest." He added: "The governmental interest at stake here is compelling...the government has a fundamental, overriding interest in eradicating racial discrimination in education.... That governmental interest substantially outweighs whatever burden denial of tax benefits places on petitioners' exercise of their religious beliefs."

Besides the claim IRS violated their freedom of religion, Bob Jones and Goldsboro also argued the tax collecting agency overstepped its legal authority in that Congress had never written specific language into the Internal Revenue Code to deny tax exemption to religious schools that discriminate on the basis of sincerely held beliefs.

That view, too, was rejected. Burger, after an extensive review of the tax laws, said his examination revealed "unmistakable evidence" that "entitlement to tax exemption depends on meeting certain common law standards of charity--namely, that an institution seeking tax-exempt status must serve a public purpose and not be contrary to established public policy."

On that basis, Burger continued, IRS acted within the bounds of the law when in 1970 it issued a revenue ruling declaring it would no longer grant tax exemption to schools practicing race discrimination in admissions policies.

While acknowledging the serious nature of determining that schools such as Bob Jones and Goldsboro are not entitled to tax exemption and to receive tax deductible contributions, the chief justice said: "...a declaration that a given institution is not 'charitable' should be made only where there can be no doubt that the activity involved is contrary to fundamental public policy. But there can no longer be any doubt that racial discrimination in education violates deeply and widely accepted views of elementary justice."

Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., who agreed with the chief justice's reasoning in holding that the governmental interest outweighed the schools' claimed freedom of religion rights, nevertheless questioned whether IRS possessed the necessary statutory authority "to decide which public policies are sufficiently 'fundamental' to require denial of tax exemptions." He added: "Its business is to administer laws designed to produce revenue for the government, not promote 'public policy.'"

Powell also issued a challenge to Congress to move quickly "in articulating and codifying its desired policy as to tax exemptions for discriminatory organizations." Such revisions of existing tax laws are needed, he said, because "many questions remain," including whether organizations violating other accepted "public policies" are likewise to be denied tax exemption.

The court's lone dissenter, William H. Rehnquist, wrote that although he agreed with the majority that Congress has the authority to deny tax exemptions to religious schools that discriminate, "I am convinced that Congress simply has failed to take this action." He added: "Whatever the reasons for the failure, this Court should not legislate for Congress."

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Retired Postmaster
Posts His Own Reward

Baptist Press
5/24/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Harley O. Mullins, 70, was looking for a way to reward himself. He finally decided on a 2,400-mile graduation trip.

The retired postmaster of Aurora, Colo., completed the requirements for the sixteen-course diploma in biblical studies from the Seminary Extension Department this spring. He decided to stop at the Southern Baptist Convention building as part of the family vacation and pick up his diploma.

Family plans changed and the vacation trip was cancelled, but Mullins still wanted to pick up the diploma personally. "I worked hard on those courses over these past six years, so I felt I deserved some sort of reward," he said. In the end he paid his own air fare roundtrip from Denver.

The Seminary Extension Department responded by planning a special celebration for his "graduation." Mullins was presented his diploma by SED director Raymond M. Rigdon in the weekly chapel service at the SBC building. He was introduced to four of the instructors who had worked with him on his correspondence courses. One of them, SBC registration secretary Lee Porter, spoke in the chapel service. After chapel, there was a time of fellowship with all the SED personnel.

Pursuit of a reward was not what motivated Mullins to begin the study program in 1977. At the time, he found himself the teacher of a large mixed Sunday school class for senior adults at Riverside Baptist Church. The class included three ordained ministers several school-teachers and other professional people. As one who had not finished college, he knew he was going to need some help. Seminary Extension's courses in biblical and theological subjects proved to be just what he needed.

"Being the teacher of a class of 89 people is a lot like being the pastor of a small church," Mullins observed. "Especially in this age group, there are so many needs to be looked after." He expects to continue his studies with Seminary Extension since, "there is always more to be learned," he said.

The Seminary Extension Department is a part of the Seminary External Education Division, a jointly sponsored arm of the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

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(Photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Baptist Press.)