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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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June 23, 1983

83-94

Cooperative Program Giving  
Blooms In May--\$9.1 million

By Craig Bird

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--More money, \$9,115,509, was received by the national Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention in May, 1983 than in any May in history.

"This is only the fourth month in the 58-year history of the Cooperative Program (the SBC's unified giving plan) that gifts have exceeded \$9 million," Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-director of the SBC Executive Committee, said. "And this is the first time Southern Baptists have given at that level in some month other than January."

The monthly total is 17.17 per cent (\$1,335,482) above May, 1982 figures. For the first nine months of the SBC fiscal year, CP contributions are 9.4 percent (more than \$5.8 million) ahead of the same period a year ago.

"I am awed and thankful for the commitment to Bold Mission Thrust (the SBC effort to share the message of Christ with everyone in the world by the year 2000) and for the confidence in the national SBC programs these gifts reflect," Bennett said.

"When you add the designated gifts to the Cooperative Program gifts, Southern Baptists provided almost \$17.8 million during May to help present the claims of Jesus Christ to our world, both immediately through our mission programs and in the future through our educational efforts," he added.

The more than 36,000 SBC churches send voluntary contributions to the 34 state conventions which, in turn, decide for themselves what to send to the national level. Approximately one-third of the money sent to the states is forwarded to the national SBC.

The \$9 million month also pushed the budget back on target to meet both the basic and the challenge budgets of the SBC. If the present level of giving is sustained, national Cooperative Program receipts would total \$102,717,318.

Designated gifts to national programs are up 6.15 percent over a year ago. After nine months designated gifts totalled \$68,172,808 (\$66.2 million to the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board).

If both CP and designated giving continues at the same rate, the national programs will receive more than \$200,000 million during the present fiscal year. After nine months the combined CP and designated totals are more than \$10 million ahead of last year.

During May two state conventions, Texas (\$1.5 million) and Florida (\$1.2 million) gave more than \$1 million to the national Cooperative Program and five other states (Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma and Tennessee) gave more than \$500,000.

Designated gifts for the month also saw two states, Texas (\$1.9 million) and Georgia (\$1 million) contribute more than \$1 million while five states (Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee and Virginia) gave more than \$500,000.

The Florida Baptist Convention is the only state convention to rank in the top five in both dollars contributed and percentage increase over a year ago. Florida is third in both categories (\$5,455,582 and 28.52 percent).

The other dollar leaders are: Texas (\$12,379,996); Georgia (\$5,632,443); North Carolina (\$4,732,075); Alabama (\$4,575,621); Oklahoma (\$4,492,264); Tennessee (\$4,104,168) Mississippi (\$3,286,574), and Louisiana (\$3,185,197).

The other percentage increase leaders are: New York (58.4); Northern Plains (44.2); Illinois (25.9); Colorado (22.1); Hawaii (20.4); Arizona (14.8); Nevada (14.1); Maryland (13.6), and Northwest (12.0).

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Spiritual Revival Claims  
3,771 More Zimbabwe Converts

Baptist Press  
6/23/83

SANYATI, Zimbabwe (BP)--Another round of spiritual revival erupted during a three-week period in Zimbabwe's bush country as 3,771 persons made professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

The responses, which may add at least 11 churches, followed repeated showings of the Life Ministries' film "Jesus" in late February and early March in 24 locations. A team from Life Ministries, called Campus Crusade for Christ in the United States, showed the film twice nightly to 14,085 people at schools, churches, compounds and townships in the Sanyati and Gokwe areas.

"Not a single Baptist church existed in 11 of the 24 areas the film was shown," said Southern Baptist missionary Bob Parker, a church developer. "We're praying churches will start there. The interest appears to be present in all 11 areas."

The first round of revival occurred late last year when Parker, of South Carolina, visited 38 government bush schools in Sanyati and Gokwe. He preached to more than 20,000 students and accounted for 6,037 professions of faith.

Those converts were enrolled in "One Way Clubs" for discipleship training organized by Parker and led weekly by missionary journeymen Mark Dewbre of Arkansas and Marty Escoe of Georgia. Zimbabwe Baptist leaders then projected a potential doubling of churches in the revival area of the Southern African nation.

Parker, Dewbre, Escoe and others promoted film attendance at One Way Clubs. Zimbabwean Baptists, missionary journeymen Chuck Cole of Texas and others joined them in counseling converts and planning follow-up.

Missionaries expect the new converts to increase church growth, attendance at One Way Clubs and enrollment in the Zimbabwe Baptist Mission's Bible Way Correspondence School.

Parker said the mission will seek to enroll people more than 12 years old in the Bible Way Correspondence School and incorporate all school-age children into the One Way Clubs. He will encourage Zimbabwe Baptists to provide discipleship training for new converts.

He also plans to conduct weekend revival services where the film was shown.

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Nancy Parks Finds Undercurrent  
Of Believers In Egyptian Town

Baptist Press  
6/23/83

MINYA, Egypt (BP)--Nancy Parks didn't expect a fellow Christian to guard her hotel room on her first overnight trip from Cairo, Egypt. But neither did she expect to find too many believers in Minya, a town 150 hot and dusty miles south of Cairo.

Parks and a fellow Baptist representative, Madelyn Edens, were attending a women's meeting at the Baptist church in Minya. They arrived at dusk, weary of a day of university Arabic classes and the long, bumpy trip.

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The hotel manager said he had no rooms available but finally found two after the women pleaded with him. Parks, her mind on sleep and her husband, Randall, and 18-month old daughter, Jennifer, back in Cairo, hardly noticed the man carrying her luggage.

When they got to her room, he lifted his sleeve to reveal a cross tattoo on his wrist, the sign of Christians throughout Egypt. In broken English, he assured her, "I will watch your room all night." Despite her protests, he parked himself in a chair outside her door and remained there until morning. "He had felt compelled to protect me...because I was his sister in Christ," she said.

"I had arrived in Minya feeling somewhat defeated by the strain of language school, the harshness of Egypt's environment and the impossibility of reaching Egypt's lost," she admitted later. Before she left, she was to meet other believers in Minya--in the hotel, the restaurant and th church.

"That night as I walked up the steps of the church standing in the shadow of the (Islamic) mosque, the call from the minaret was not so ominous as it had always been before," she said. "For then I knew there were many believers, a whole undercurrent of them in this Islamic land."

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(Nancy Parks is press representative for the Egypt Baptist Mission and daughter-in-law of R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.)

Miller Retires As Nevada  
Editor; McCullough Named

Baptist Press  
6/23/83

RENO, Nev. (BP)--Vern A. Miller has retired as editor of the Nevada Baptist and will be replaced by Mike McCullough.

Miller, a retired veteran of the U.S. Navy, was selected in February 1979 to establish the newspaper shortly after the Nevada Baptist Convention was formed.

In an editorial in the June issue of the newspaper, Miller harked back to Navy days to comment that the flag is flown at one place when the ship is underway to another when it has dropped anchor.

"Once prior to now I have personally shifted colors with my retirement from active Navy duty. Now, once again, for the second time, I am making a personal shift of colors by retiring...as editor," he wrote.

He added he would "never readily accept this (retirement) but for the fact that there are several journalistic projects that need to be done and time grows short...There are books to write, features to cover as a freelance photo-journalist...."

McCullough, a native of San Antonio, Texas, will assume the editorship with the July issue, according to Nevada Executive Director Ernest B. Myers. He has been on the staff of the convention as director of Christian social ministries since January of 1982.

He is a graduate of Texas A & M University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Louisiana State University. His wife, Sarah, is a graduate of San Jose State University and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.

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*These are the kind  
of articles BP says  
they'd like from  
us. your comments?  
Handle with care!!  
LAH!!*

Hinson Gives Mixed Review  
On Freedom Within SBC

By Larry Chesser

ANNANDALE, Va. (BP)--Expressing "cautious optimism," fundamentalist efforts to take control of the Southern Baptist Convention will fail, a Southern Baptist church historian said he is not optimistic the Baptist idea of voluntariness in religion will survive.

Speaking at Ravensworth Baptist Church following the Southern Baptist Convention in Pittsburgh, Wake Forest University professor E. Glenn Hinson offered mixed assessments of the immediate effort by fundamentalists to gain control of SBC agency boards and the long-term survival of the Baptist heritage of free religion.

From their beginning, Hinson asserted, Baptists have affirmed the idea "to be authentic, faith must be free; to be authentic, religion must be voluntary religion."

That Baptist idea is threatened today by several factors, Hinson said. He included efforts to equate fundamentalism and "Baptist," but said a larger threat is the fact the Southern Baptist Convention has now become the "established" church of the South, causing Southern Baptists to "no longer think like their Baptist forebears."

Although it contributes to the confusion of Baptist identity, Hinson said the current fundamentalist push may actually "help us to worry enough about the Baptist tradition that it may survive longer. We are going to be forced to see Baptist over against fundamentalist right now."

Hinson's cautiously optimistic assessment of the chances of avoiding fundamentalist dominance in the SBC stems in part from trends he has observed in the denomination's recent annual meetings.

Moderates are getting sufficiently organized now "that we are not going to be run over by the fundamentalists any more," he said. "I don't believe they can pull off another Houston or St. Louis on us," he added, referring to the 1979 and 1980 conventions where organized fundamentalist efforts produced first-ballot presidential victories.

The recent convention in Pittsburgh represented a move back toward the center, Hinson said. Resolutions adopted there, "sounded more like resolutions Baptists might write."

At Pittsburgh, he added, "messengers steered a little bit left toward the center of the road. We had been running along the curb or sometimes way over in the ditch on the right. We kind of got things back on the road moving a little bit toward the center of the road."

Current SBC president James T. Draper Jr., reelected without opposition in Pittsburgh, deserves commendation for his conduct there, Hinson said.

As to future SBC elections, Hinson expects the convention to turn to more centrist candidates, saying most messengers will avoid voting for candidates identified with either the fundamentalist or moderate wing.

"That will mean the moderates will not get some of the people they might propose," Hinson said but added they should be satisfied to elect "people who really understand and are sympathetic" to the work of SBC agencies.

Former presidents Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., and Bailey Smith of Del City, Okla., Hinson said are "people who neither understood nor had appreciation for these agencies. In fact, Rogers has his own school going (Mid America Seminary in Memphis). He is competing with Southern Baptists."

The moderates' hope, Hinson said, is in electing someone not identified with the fundamentalists. "Maybe that's John Sullivan," he suggested, pointing to the Shreveport, La., pastor who was also reelected without opposition to a second term as first vice president in Pittsburgh.

Despite the unbroken success of fundamentalists in electing SBC presidents since 1979, Hinson disagrees with claims by fundamentalist leader Paige Patterson of Dallas that the faction is running two years ahead of schedule in gaining control of agency boards.

"Actually, Paige Patterson is all wet," Hinson said. "They have nominated a lot of people they think are their people who aren't ideological at all. As many nominees as they have had, they have not been able to find hardline fundamentalists who think like they do."

Hinson further disputed fundamentalist claims that the SBC controversy is over inerrancy, declaring "the inerrantist people basically are not really inerrantists." Instead, he said, they are "selective literalists" who will admit some things in scripture are metaphorical and "can't be taken literally."

"So they are not that consistent," he said. "What it really comes down to then is whether or not the pastors of a few jumbo size churches can establish themselves as the inerrant, infallible interpreters of the Bible."

Hinson, who taught church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary before moving this year to Wake Forest, is much more concerned about the survival of Baptist identity and heritage in the SBC.

"Virtually every denomination may be represented in a large congregation of Baptists," he said. "You have a mixture of people who come from other religious backgrounds and are going to bring their traditions. Now that means they really will not think like Baptists."

Also adding to the confusion of Baptist identity and threatening the Baptist free heritage is the electronic church, Hinson said. "The influence of the electronic church is massive," Hinson said, adding almost all of its spokesmen are fundamentalists. He pointed to the fundamentalist influence of television preacher Jerry Falwell as particularly damaging to Baptist identity in the SBC.

Two studies among Southern Baptists, Hinson said, "indicate the single most influential person shaping the thought of Southern Baptist ministers is Jerry Falwell. He is the model they are looking to in that jumbo church in Lynchburg, Va."

This influence, Hinson said, is confusing Baptist identity because "it is holding out Mr. Fundamentalist as Mr. Baptist."

But it is the establishment of the SBC as the "Catholic church of the South" that poses the greater threat to the survival of the Baptist heritage, Hinson said. Within the area east of Texas and south of the Mason-Dixon line, Southern Baptists represent "in almost every county a plurality of the total population and a significant majority of the church population."

"It seems we no longer think like the minority," he said. "We no longer think like our Baptist forebears did. We think like people who are the establishment."

Establishment thinking was evident, Hinson said, in a 1982 resolution endorsing President Reagan's school prayer amendment; in a pro-Israel resolution recommended by the 1982 resolutions committee but rejected by SBC messengers, and in the White House influence on the 1982 resolutions process.

A "corporation mentality" also has resulted from the size of the SBC, he said. "I see no way to avoid the corporate outlook and mentality," he added, warning it undermines individual freedom and means "we will tend to act like and think like giant corporations."

Baptist forebears, Hinson said, emphasized every person must be free to interpret scripture. Today, he said, many Southern Baptists have changed that to say "every Baptist must be free to interpret scripture for himself or herself except employees of the corporation."

The corporation mentality, Hinson said, says "employees cannot do that because they have to represent the corporation. And so they ought to think like the corporation." Insistence on freedom to interpret scripture as Baptist forebears did "tends to make the corporation unstable. If you have people who might think for themselves, that's dangerous."

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NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION