



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Craig Bird, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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83-189

November Another \$8 Million
Month For Cooperative Program

By Craig Bird

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Record giving to the national Cooperative Program continued in November--but the rate was still below budget requirements.

Total gifts from the 34 state conventions affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention to the SBC's unified giving program was \$8,019,435 during November. It was the first time November gifts had exceeded the \$8 million mark and reflected an 8.59 percent (\$634,297) increase from November 1982 gifts.

However, the 1983-84 budget calls for average monthly contributions of more than \$9.5 million in order to underwrite the basic operating budget of \$114.5 million for the convention's worldwide mission and education programs. It will take average monthly gifts in excess of \$10.4 million to reach the combined basic and challenge budget of \$125 million.

On that basis, the national Cooperative Program is more than \$2.4 million behind the basic budget and approximately \$4.2 million below the basic/challenge budget.

The gap should close as the year progresses, however. In the past five years, October and November have been the lowest two months for receipts in the year. Also, 22 of the 34 state conventions recently increased their contribution rate to the national program and that additional income will not show up until early in 1984.

According to SBC officials, the 1983-84 budget was planned to allow for an inflation rate of eight or nine percent. With the inflation rate less than half of that, projected income has fallen short even though the receipts, in terms of real dollars, have been more than adequate.

Still, the growth in national Cooperative Program income has been staggering.

In the first two months of the fiscal year contributions have totaled \$16,657,690--8.47 percent (and \$1.3 million) more than October-November 1982. Five years ago the two month figure was \$9.5 million and in 1973 the two month total was just \$5.8 million.

In fact, the national program has received more money in the first two months of the current fiscal year than it received in the first five months of the 1973-74 fiscal year.

The top 10 contributors, after two months, are: Texas, \$2,967,687; Georgia, \$1,401,347; Florida, \$1,240,157; North Carolina, \$1,141,208; Oklahoma, \$1,126,097; Alabama, \$1,059,483; Tennessee, \$952,643; South Carolina, \$844,051; Mississippi, \$825,690; Louisiana, \$814,830.

Twenty-four of the 34 state conventions have increased their total dollar contributions over the first two months of 1982-83.

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Elevate Laity, Study Ordination,
New Orleans Speakers Urge

By Jack U. Harwell

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Ringing declarations for Southern Baptists to elevate the place of the laity in church and denominational life, and to study the entire question of ordination, were made during a Convocation on the Laity.

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The convocation, held at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, was convened by an ad hoc committee chaired by Owen Cooper of Yazoo City, Miss., last layperson to serve as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. About 200 persons attended.

Hershel H. Hobbs told conferees: "If you are a Christian, you are part of the laos, the people of God. You have entered into a sacred covenant with God. This laos is not restricted to a certain group or class of Christians."

Hobbs is pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, which has recently been in controversy with its local association because it ordained women deacons. He is also a former SBC president.

"We ought to study the entire issue of ordination itself," Hobbs said. "We inherited our current concept of ordination from Roman Catholics. You won't find this concept in the scriptures."

Landrum P. Leavell III, president of New Orleans seminary, agreed, "This is something Southern Baptists ought to study and make some determination about." He made some of the most direct statements of 18 program speakers when he said: "Our laity must rise up and counteract the hierachical and authoritative trend in our convention today. It is coming from our independent Baptist brethren. It manifests itself in extreme localism."

Leavell drew "amens" when he declared, "We are moving back toward the dark ages, when the clerics ruled with total authority and the laypersons were kept in the dark.... By neglect or design we have wasted the most precious resource we've got, the laity in the pews.

"It's nothing short of the sin against heaven that our convention has not had a layman as president since Owen Cooper...most of the problems in the SBC today could be solved by allowing more laypersons to be involved at every level."

He urged churches set up "equalization" budgets to pay expenses for as many laypersons to attend Southern Baptist Convention meetings as do ordained staff members.

The theme of lay involvement was hammered over and over again by 18 speakers at the three-day session. Cooper said proceedings of the New Orleans meeting will be published in book form. Messages are also available on audio and video tapes from the New Orleans seminary library. Other such meetings will be scheduled later.

Cooper stated the overall purpose of the convocation: "We need to develop a theology which will help me as a layperson validate my call to serve where I am, and to challenge me to the same degree of commitment for Christian ministries as the person who is ordained.

"It is rare to find an unordained person who believes they are performing a ministry. They have seldom been told this, they are called laymen or amateurs, and they are not aware of a theology which acknowledges that they, too, are ministers."

Speakers repeatedly referred to the fourth chapter of the book of Ephesians which refers to the different gifts of Christians.

Gerhard Claas, executive director of the Baptist World Alliance, said, "Eighty percent of ministers in eastern Europe are lay ministers, with no college or seminary training. They have only the Bible...it is only with the laity that we can win eastern Europe to Christ. That is why churches are growing in Communist countries, in Korea and in Africa...."

Fred Roach, president of Centennial Homes, Inc. in Dallas, testified "my involvement as a Christian layman has to center on my own uniqueness. I can't do anything like someone else. I can just be myself under God's leadership.... My involvement tells me there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular."

Lewis Drummond, Billy Graham professor of evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., spoke about gifts. "The kingdom of God provides gifts to equip every believer with ability to do the work of kingdom progress in the world," he said. The churches ought to be designed to aid and enhance all of the people in their particular gifts."

Reid Hardin, who directs lay renewal and evangelism support at the SBC Home Mission Board in Atlanta, said he has, "found tremendous hostility and fear and suspicion across the SBC about the lay renewal movement. I experienced great pain as a layman...."

"Laymen are coming alive by the thousands. The convention is scared. The leadership is scared. The challenge for the next ten years is to start renewal among the pastors."

Findley Edge said, "God not only calls the laity to ministry in general, but to specific ministry for certain periods in our lives...ministry cannot be performed by proxy; it must be performed in person...the recovery of God's call to the laity is a cause for rejoicing; but it is a call fraught with responsibility and accountability."

Edge recently retired as religious education professor at Southern seminary. He lives now in Winter Park, Fla.

Dorothy Sample, national president of SBC Woman's Missionary Union, was the only woman speaker on the program. She said, "Women do have a part in the Great Commission. They played a vital role in the early Christian churches; they still do...we need to relax in our uniqueness and stop comparing ourselves to someone else."

Bill Clemmons told conferees "the world of religion on Sunday cannot be divorced from the world of business on Monday without doing serious damage to the spiritual and emotional health of Christians."

"Many denominations are making brand new statements about the work of the laity in the world...many lay people in their marketplace ministry, are keeping the world from falling apart." Clemmons, professor of religious education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., led participants in a response litany entitled, "Thank God It's Monday."

William Pinson, executive director of Baptist General Convention of Texas, said, "Bold Mission Thrust is an empty slogan without involvement of all of God's people.... We must minister across racial, cultural, political, ethnic and sexual barriers."

SBC Brotherhood Commission President James Smith pointed out, "The Bible clearly states we need Word ministers and table ministers...the only Bold Mission Thrust is to become a reality is to mobilize the laity."

According to Richard Broholm, the object of lay ministry must be "out-house" not "in-house." The church must do a better job of equipping laypersons for that ministry, rather than making them feel guilty about not spending more time at church," said Broholm, executive director of the Center for the Ministry of the Laity at Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass.

The executive director of Louisiana Baptist Convention, Robert L. Lee, said, "It is indispensably required lay ministers be involved in our state conventions...in Louisiana we don't consider sex or ordination when looking for people to serve...we look for those who are committed to Christ and to his children...."

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Controversy Greet's New
Virginia-Intermont President

By Tom Miller

Baptist Press
12/13/83

BRISTOL, Va.(BP)--James E. Martin Jr., president of Virginia Intermont College since Sept. 1, became locked in controversy with some students and faculty members Dec. 3 when he ordered two charcoal sketches of nudes temporarily removed from a campus art exhibit.

Martin told the Virginia Religious Herald on Dec. 12 he had the pieces removed because they "could have been offensive" to persons who were to pass through the gallery on their way to dedication of a renovated theater in the fine arts building.

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"I made a value judgment," he said. "It was not censorship; it was a matter of taste. There were going to be people there for a purpose other than viewing art--we were having a service of dedication."

Other students in the exhibit then withdraw their art, thus closing the display.

A reported 21 faculty members then signed a statement criticizing Martin for "censorship". A local newspaper quoted the document as saying "...we regard it as intolerable both of itself and as it might serve as precedent for action on the part of the president." Acknowledging Martin's "good intentions," the faculty members nevertheless said "in the fields of sculpture, painting, drawing, photography, creative writing and communications, only one standard can be used as grounds for censorship: that standard is quality."

In a three-hour meeting with the dissenting faculty Dec. 9, Martin refused to meet demands he "promise" not to do it again. "I appreciate art; I am no expert but I am president of this college," he said. "If an action or activity of the college is offensive, I am ultimately responsible to the college, the community and the church with whom we have affiliation.

"If the situation should arise again, I would want to sit down with all the parties concerned and explain my position and hear theirs. But I will not abrogate or negate my responsibility to be totally responsible for the institution."

All of Martin's trouble is not artistic. He made clear to the board of trustees before his employment as president he was opposed to alcoholic beverages. Soon after arrival he outlawed the serving of alcohol at any college sponsored function whether on or off campus.

That policy brought him into sharp conflict with some students. Curtailing (though not eliminating) visitation between sexes in dormitories also met with student uproar.

Martin feels the latest flap is "absolutely" related to the dispute over alcohol. On the latter subject he said, "I have seen too many young lives ruined. I have seen the devastating results of alcohol abuse. Whether a college is church-related or not, we have a professional and moral responsibility to address the problem of alcohol on campus."

The president said there are "--some who disagree with the whole direction I am trying to lead the school" but reported many expressions of support from churches, trustees, other college presidents and alumni from Virginia-Intermont.

Martin came to V-I from the position of dean of men at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, where he had been a member of the administrative staff since 1978.

V-I is a co-educational senior college with approximately 600 students. It has a programmatic relationship with the Baptist General Association of Virginia and in 1984 will receive \$237,022 in Cooperative Program support.

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'Concerned Baptists' Form
Non-geographic Association

By Tom Miller

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12/13/83

LYNCHBURG, Va. (BP)--Ninety-five persons from ten churches met at Lynchburg's Old Forest Road Baptist Church and formed the Concerned Baptist Association of Virginia.

Fifty-seven of those attending were members of Old Forest Road and 29 others are members of Jerico Missionary Chapel, a black mission of Old Forest Road.

There were two representatives each from Worsham and Sycamore Baptist churches, Southside Association, and Horeb Baptist church, Natural Bridge Association.

Four churches had one representative each. They are Highland-Lynchburg; Level Green-Norfolk; Shenandoah church, Shenandoah Association; and C. Street, a black independent church in Lynchburg.

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Arthur B. Ballard, pastor of Old Forest Road, was elected moderator and Don Gillette, pastor of Timber Ridge, Strawberry Association, was elected treasurer. Gillette apparently was not present since his church was not listed as having a representative at the meeting.

Robert Powers, pastor of Level Green, was elected vice moderator and Ron Hunt of Old Forest Road was elected clerk.

A constitution was adopted and resolutions were adopted opposing abortion, pornography, and ordination of women deacons and ministers. Resolutions passed favoring prayer in public schools, support of the 1983 SBC resolution on nuclear disarmament and negative designation of funds to selected parts of the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program.

Ballard told the group Old Forest Road "has spent \$15,000 in our effort in the conservative move in the state of Virginia, \$1,800 of this was for the speakers (Paige Patterson of Dallas and Robert Witty of Jacksonville, Fla.) for the last meeting."

The new group plans to publish its own newspaper, the Concerned Baptist Messenger, and seek representation on the Virginia Baptist General Board. They say they will maintain current ties with district associations where they exist and have dual affiliation with the new statewide association.

Speaker for the meeting was Stanley Frye who was pastor of Leedsville Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg Association, when the church voted to withdraw and become independent. He declared he now has resigned and become a Southern Baptist again and is moving to North Carolina where he will be a full-time evangelist.

The next meeting of the association will be Feb. 24, 1984.

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Ghana Hospital Closes
Because Of Fuel Shortage

Baptist Press
12/13/83

NALERIGU, Ghana (BP)--Fuel shortages in Ghana forced Baptist Medical Centre, Nalerigu, to close in early December in the midst of a yellow fever epidemic.

"But we will get it open again," said John Mills, the Foreign Mission Board's director for West Africa. Mills said he has sent word to Nalerigu missionaries the Foreign Mission Board will seek ways to help the hospital secure fuel.

The hospital closing will mean people will die, he said, but the hospital had no fuel to sterilize equipment, operate lights in the surgery theater or pump water.

Before the closing, missionaries rationed some of their last fuel to use most of an emergency shipment of 100,000 doses of yellow fever vaccine provided in November by the Foreign Mission Board.

During recent years, the hospital staff has dealt with growing fuel shortages by cutting back generator use, using it only during surgery in recent months.

Missionaries living on the Nalerigu compound also are without electricity in their homes, but most have underground cisterns from which they can dip water for household use.

Mills has been unable to contact the Nalerigu hospital directly, but got word of the closing from missionary nurse Diana Lay who stopped in Upper Volta on her way to Ghana after furlough.

Ghana's lack of foreign exchange has caused fuel shortages across the country but the hospital's situation is made worse by its location in a remote northern region far from the nation's ports.

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