

MAR 13 1984

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention



-- FEATUERS

produced by Baptist Press

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

March 12, 1984

84-39

Church Growing Without
Planning To Build

By Clay Renick

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)--The Church of Canyon Crest meets in a movie theater, holds church training in a pizza parlor and conducts evangelism through the mail.

According to Pastor Phil Busbee, Riverside County is the fastest growing area in the country, but 50 percent of the population lives in apartment complexes, most of which do not allow door-to-door visitation or evangelism because they consider it solicitation.

"About the only way you can get into a person's house is through their mailbox," he said. "And it's non-threatening. You can get a letter and put it on your shelf and think about it."

In February 1983, Canyon Crest sent out a 5,000 piece mailout and received 50 visitors. Some did not visit the church until six months after the invitation. The church conducted another mailout in October with 10,000 pieces and had 40 responses. They plan to make it a bi-yearly practice.

Busbee says the mailouts are arranged for the time of year when people are receptive to change: autumn and Easter. School starts in the fall when many people are accustomed to change. And Busbee says Easter "is the most attended day of church the whole year." The people who do not have a church look for one in that week.

The church averages 85 in attendance on Sunday and at this point does not have a building plan. "We want to build into the congregation a ministry mindset," says Busbee. The church gives 16 percent of their total giving to Southern Baptist missions programs.

The church pays a flat rate for Sunday morning access to the theater and has free use of two restaurants and a health spa/nursery in the shopping center.

Most Southern Baptist churches have developed their Bible study curriculum around Sunday school but Canyon Crest centered their Bible study on home fellowships that meet on Wednesday night. Topical studies are taught on Sunday morning. Sunday night is devoted to teaching practical skills needed in ministry. They have six couples and five individuals who plan to enter full-time service.

Home fellowships are the core of the church. The leaders are considered pastors of mini-congregations (which usually do not exceed more than ten members). Most of the leaders are California Baptist College graduates who have decided to postpone seminary for three or four years to get apprenticeship training.

"This way," says Busbee, who is just 29 himself, "they've had four years of academics and will gain three years of practical experience so when they go to seminary they'll have the right questions." His goal is to establish an equipping center for people entering the ministry and a network of home fellowships around Riverside.

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(Clay Renick works for the Public Information Center at California Baptist College.)

Cooperative Program Records
First \$10 Million Month

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
3/12/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The national unified giving budget of the Southern Baptist Convention took a roller coaster ride the first two months of 1984.

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In January, contributions to the national Cooperative Program broke the \$10 million mark for the first time. The \$10,233,923 was \$692,492 more than January 1983 (7.26 percent). In February, however, the contributions of \$8,596,012 were 2.96 percent less than for the same month in 1983--which in turn had been lower than February 1982.

Through the first five months of the current fiscal year the 38 state conventions and fellowships which cooperate with the SBC have contributed \$44,336,226 to support the national and worldwide mission and educational programs of the convention. That compares to \$42,415,118 the first five months of the 1982-83 fiscal year.

But despite the 4.53 percent and \$1.92 million increase over last year, the possibility of the Cooperative Program not meeting its operating budget of \$114.5 million is very real.

Official projections from the SBC Executive Committee put total contributions by the end of the fiscal year in September between \$110 million and \$112 million. "That is not a faith projection, it is just the way the numbers come out," Tim Hedquist, director of financial planning for the Executive Committee, said.

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Executive Committee, pointed out that, "historically, the Cooperative Program has reflected, on a delayed basis, the national economy. Changes in the economy usually show up six to 15 months later in Cooperative Program receipts. What we are seeing now is what was happening at the local church level months ago.

"We have every reason to expect to share, again on a delayed basis, in the economic recovery the nation is now undergoing. However, since the Cooperative Program is the lifeline of all we do as Southern Baptists, our programs will suffer if that lifeline is restricted. But our work will go on--we will continue to do all we can with all we have to present the saving message of Jesus Christ to the world."

In order to meet the operating budget, monthly contributions must average, over the 12 months, more than \$9.5 million. The combined basic, capital needs and challenge budget for 1983-84 of \$125 million requires monthly average receipts in excess of \$10.4 million.

If contributions for March through September average over \$10 million the basic budget will be met. To meet the combined budgets, receipts must average over \$11.4 million for the next seven months.

Florida and Georgia continue to be the only two conventions to rank in the top 10 in both dollar contributions and percentage increase over last year. Florida is third in both categories (\$3,472,072 and 19.23 percent) and Georgia is second in total gifts (\$3,998,216) and tenth in percentage increase (8.44).

Other increase leaders are: Hawaii (54.04); Kansas-Nebraska (42.38); Nevada (15.87); West Virginia (14.34); Arizona (11.05); Illinois (11.03); Arkansas (9.63), and Ohio (8.84).

Other total gift leaders are: Texas (\$7,890,092); North Carolina (\$3,138,960); Oklahoma (\$2,974,866); Alabama (\$2,941,458); Tennessee (\$2,587,510); South Carolina (\$2,504,155); Mississippi (\$2,192,163), and Virginia (\$1,963,967).

Four other conventions have contributed over \$1 million: Kentucky (\$1,898,640); Missouri (\$1,707,900); Louisiana (\$1,662,685) and Arkansas (\$1,605,908).

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TV Show Producers
Threaten To Sue Agency

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
3/12/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Producers of the television series "Lottery!" have threatened legal action against a Southern Baptist Convention agency and one of its staff members who four months ago protested the show's "pro-gambling propaganda."

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But Larry Braidfoot, director of Christian citizenship development for the Christian Life Commission, and Foy Valentine, executive director of the Nashville-based agency, have responded the threat is only a "transparent publicity gimmick" aimed at increasing the program's poor ratings.

Rick Rosner, executive producer of the prime-time series, told Braidfoot in a tersely-worded telegram if the commission's protest resulted in "prejudicing the commercial value and future of our series," then all "appropriate legal action" would be taken against Braidfoot and the agency.

Both Braidfoot and Valentine, however, questioned the timing of Rosner's remarks, pointing out the telegram came more than four months after Braidfoot's criticism of the program and coincided with the reappearance of the series on the air.

The series was temporarily dropped after a short run last fall. "Now the producers, not ABC-TV, are trying to manufacture some news about their still ugly child," said Valentine.

In a letter last October to ABC President Frederick Pierce, Braidfoot charged by airing the new show the network had "either intentionally or unwittingly become the advocate of legalized gambling."

He pointed out Rosner had been quoted in a TV trade magazine as saying the series "will do a 60-minute commercial once a week for having a lottery."

Braidfoot also called on Southern Baptists to register their disapproval with the show's sponsors and ABC-TV.

Rosner's recent telegram, Braidfoot said, is a "thinly-veiled promotional stunt." The publicity, he added, "is also a potential distraction from our much larger agenda to help Southern Baptists respond effectively to the challenge of legalized gambling."

Valentine said the Christian Life Commission "does not expect to be sued."

"We were against lotteries last October," he added. "We are against lotteries now. We expect to be against lotteries when this petty promotional scheme and the series as well have been long since forgotten."

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Two Baptist Missionaries
Return to Lebanon Posts

Baptist Press
3/12/84

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--Two Southern Baptist missionaries returned to their posts in Lebanon March 12, the same day Lebanese Christian, Moslem and Druse leaders were to begin their reconciliation conference in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Russell Futrell, from Pineville, La., and Vivian Trimble, from Holloway, La., took an overnight boat from Cyprus to get to Lebanon.

Futrell evacuated Lebanon Feb. 10 with three other missionaries; Mission Service Corps volunteers Steve and Meriam Fox, from Dayton, Ohio; and five missionary kids. For three weeks before his return, Futrell had helped in the bookstore in Fes, Morocco. He is assigned to Beirut Baptist School in west Beirut.

Trimble, who left Lebanon prior to the evacuation to attend her father's funeral, rejoined her husband, Bill, an English-language pastor from Shreveport, La., in Monsouriyeh on the east side of Beirut.

The Foxes hoped to return to west Beirut March 13 to resume their English-language ministry with University Baptist Church.

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Julia Graham, wife of Finlay Graham, the Foreign Mission Board's associate for the Middle East, reported from Cyprus that 10th, 11th and 12th grade classes are continuing at Beirut Baptist School, even though shooting continues in the area.

In Monsouriyeh, Arab Baptist Theological Seminary classes are being held on Monday-- normally a day off--to help make up for classes missed while the school was closed in February.

Missionaries are anxiously awaiting the results of the Lausanne talks, Mrs. Graham said. The consensus among the missionaries is that if all sides are willing to compromise enough, there will be peace, she said. Otherwise, missionaries believe, "it's going to be worse than it's ever been."

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Two MSC Volunteers
Aid ACTS Cable Effort

By Greg Warner

Baptist Press
3/12/84

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Two Mission Service Corps volunteers will be donating their time and talents to help the Radio and Television Commission negotiate cable TV contracts for the American Christian Television System (ACTS).

George K. Feather of Wichita Falls, Texas, who retired as a colonel from the Air Force Feb. 29, and William Karnes, president of Karnath Corp. in Dallas, both will serve for one year on an on-call basis.

Bill Nichols, RTVC director of broadcast services who oversees the ACTS cable television strategy, said the two men will operate as "troubleshooters," contacting local cable operators and national cable TV corporations having special needs or problems.

"They will assist our consultants in these negotiations, especially in metropolitan areas and areas of new Southern Baptist work," Nichols said. "These men are experts in the field and also are leaders in their local churches. This makes them ideal to work with ACTS."

Feather, a native of Wichita, Kan., is a 29-year veteran of the Air Force. He graduated from Baylor University in 1955 with a bachelor's degree in radio, TV and speech and again in 1963 with a master's degree in English. He taught communications for four years at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Feather is chairman of the communications committee at First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls. The church has broadcast its Sunday worship service for more than 25 years and produces a monthly talk show, "First Things First," on WAUZ-TV.

Feather and his wife, Allete, were commissioned as volunteers in the Mission Service Corps in a special service at First Baptist, Wichita Falls, Feb. 29. Morris Chapman, pastor of the church, and Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Radio and Television Commission, led the service.

The Feathers recently moved to Aurora, Colo., a suburb of Denver.

Feather said it was the needs of Bold Mission Thrust that brought him to consider Mission Service Corps service. With retirement approaching, he called Nichols in January to volunteer.

"My interest in the Radio and Television Commission and in doing this (service) has always been there," Feather said. "I thought it would never happen, but in God's time it did."

Karnes, a native of Dallas, lives in Plano, Texas, with his wife, Diane. He has been in the cable television industry for 27 years. As president of Karnath, Karnes consults with many cable TV companies. Before going into business for himself 10 years ago, Karnes was president of Sammons Communications, now the 13th largest cable TV corporation in the country. Karnes will be on-call for work with ACTS while he continues to run Karnath with his wife.

"I became interested in ACTS about a year ago," Karnes recalled. "I would like to have been involved earlier, but I didn't know about the Mission Service Corps. This is my way to contribute."

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Karnes was commissioned in a service at Richardson Heights Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, Feb. 26. Phil Lineberger, pastor, and Nichols led the service.

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North Carolina Paper
Purchases Own Building

Baptist Press
3/12/84

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)--The Biblical Recorder, the Baptist state paper for North Carolina, will occupy its own building, on or before July 1, 1984, according to Alfred Ayscue, chairman of the board of directors.

"The matter of a building for the Recorder has been under consideration for some time, but especially during the last year under Editor R.G. Puckett's guidance," Ayscue added.

Economy of operation was the primary motivating force, according to Puckett who said, "We had to find ways to reduce overhead of operations at any point we could, because second-class postage rates cannot be controlled."

"We do not set the postage rates, the government does, and that is the most threatening aspect of the survival of Baptist papers in the future," Puckett added.

The paper currently has between 1,200 and 1,300 square feet of space in the new Baptist Building at Cary. Cost for the space was \$10,725 in 1983.

"Through careful management of our limited resources and the generosity of many who love and support the Recorder, we will move into the new building debt-free," Puckett said. "The only costs we will have will be utilities and the condominium association fee. We expect to save at least \$8,000 the first year on building costs."

The Recorder Building will be in Park on the Millbrook, an office condominium complex in Raleigh. The unit which the Recorder will occupy contains 2,000 square feet on two levels. The interior floor plan has been designed exclusively for the functions of a state Baptist paper, Puckett said.

"We must economize in every area possible in order to absorb the rise in second-class postage costs which may be 30 to 50 percent in 1985, according to the proposed federal budget," Puckett explained. "Having our own building, properly designed for our needs and debt-free will give stability and security to the Recorder as we face the onslaught of rising postage costs in the immediate future.

"We want to keep our subscription rates as low as possible for the sake of the churches and keep the request for Cooperative Program funds as low as possible for the benefit of other missionary enterprises," Puckett concluded.

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Clark Elected
PCPA President

Baptist Press
3/12/84

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (BP)--James W. Clark, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn., has been elected president of the Protestant Church-Owned Publishers Association (PCPA) for 1984-86.

PCPA, an organization of some 30 denominationally-owned religious publishers, was chartered in 1951 to improve communications among publishing houses, encourage joint ventures between publishers, share and solve mutual problems and provide training opportunities of mutual interest.

PCPA directors also elected Dessel Aderholt, director of the board's Broadman division; Johnnie Godwin, director of the board's Holman division; and Jimmie Edwards, publishing and distribution vice president for the board, to serve on the PCPA committees. Bob Boyd, executive secretary of the PCPA since 1978, is supervisor of the board's ethnic liaison unit.

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LYNN RAY
NO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE NO
NASHVILLE TN 37234

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

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