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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Chaplain Referral May  
 Trigger National Response

By Herb Hollinger

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--What began this past summer as an attempt to meet the needs of companies in a local area with an industrial chaplain may have triggered a program which will affect Southern Baptist pastors and churches throughout the United States.

It began in July when Costa-Meda Baptist Association in Concord, Calif., and Rod Murcra, former pastor of First Southern, Santa Paula, Calif., teamed up to provide a chaplain to two large industrial parks in nearby Concord and Walnut Creek.

Last July Murcra started contacting Chevron USA, one of the largest oil companies in the world. Although Murcra envisioned a chaplaincy referral system for the entire company, much like a pastor would as he counsels with his congregation, Chevron liked the proposal but changed it to only refer to the East Bay area.

Undaunted, Murcra made contact with Toyota's national office in Torrance. The Toyota people were not interested...not in a local referral program but they were interested in a national network of referrals to include their 12 regional offices in the United States.

A call by Murcra to the SBC Home Mission Board found the HMB has a chaplaincy program which would be available nationwide to handle referral calls.

But while he was still trying to imagine what might happen with Toyota's proposal, Bank of America responded to a Murcra phone call. "Unless you can handle all of our banking operations from our executive offices to the local banks, we're not interested," Murcra was told by bank officials. Bank of America is the largest bank in the United States.

Again, a quick call by Murcra brought a receptive reply. The state convention office in Fresno, through the Christian social ministries department, helped outline a system of referrals covering the whole state of California.

Robert Williams, CSM department director, told Murcra every associational director of missions could receive calls about a company employee's personal problem or crisis, evaluate the need, locate the address and refer the person to a local pastor to handle the need.

"This is ingenious," Murcra said. "Suddenly, Southern Baptist pastors could serve all of industry, nationwide as resources for hurting people."

What can large corporations get from Southern Baptists that they don't have already?

Murcra willingly lists them: availability of persons who could respond within hours of emergency calls (pastors), hospital visitation, funeral services, weddings, interfaith witness, international referrals, language missions, Christian social ministries. Even some churches are in a position to help people "in the market place," said Murcra.

Murcra's reception with the corporation "executives" has been eye-opening.

Meeting with Bechtel Industries officials, Murcra was told, "If we didn't think this program could help our 30,000 employees, you wouldn't be here today. If we weren't planning to use this program extensively, you certainly wouldn't be coming back to meet with my staff."

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Murcra y said the meeting with Bechtel officials in the company's San Francisco office was beyond expectations. The words "Baptist" and "pastors" didn't bother the executives at all, he said.

"They were interested in performance, nothing more," he added. In fact, Murcra y continued, one of the staff members said "I live on Seminary Drive in Mill Valley. I've become acquainted with some single girls (attending Golden Gate Baptist Seminary) who have since gone to foreign missions. I know Southern Baptists and we need what you have to offer."

Bechtel then endorsed the program to use with all their employees--nationwide.

Again, in a Sept. 26 meeting Murcra y was given approval for a chaplaincy referral program for the American Telephone and Telegraph Company in the western states.

Then came a meeting with Safeway Stores, the nation's largest food retailer with offices in Oakland. Another meeting has been set for Nov. 7, Murcra y said, with the company's staff. Safeway has 2,200 stores in the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe.

So far, Murcra y has set up programs for AT&T's western states division with 14,000 employees; Bechtel Industries with 30,000 employees and the local Dupont, Inc., division with 350 employees. Negotiations are continuing with firms such as: Safeway, Bank of America, Chevron, Pacific Gas and Electric, Toyota, Nissan and Pacific Bell.

"Southern Baptists stand on the brink of a ministry so big we are overwhelmed," Murcra y said. "But they also stand before an opportunity that cannot go unchallenged. Industry is ripe and ready for a spiritual approach to employee assistance. It is clear that they are eager, yet hesitant to go with a chaplaincy program. If, in California, major corporations can be opened up to Christian ministry, then the whole world will come to Southern Baptists for assistance.

"The limitations on this ministry are only in the minds and hearts of those who implement it. If money, or time, or personnel, or whatever stand in our way then the open doors may be shut to us forever. The chaplaincy program to industry, on a national and international basis, links all we do as Southern Baptists and channels our tremendous resources of people towards the goal of reaching people where they live. This is Bold Mission Thrust."

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Gambling Opponents  
Lament 'Black Tuesday'

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press  
11/8/84

WASHINGTON (BP)--Election Day 1984 turned out to be "Black Tuesday" for anti-gambling forces as more states adopted some form of legalized gambling than in any single year in American history.

Voters approved gambling proposals in five of seven elections around the country.

The only defeats for the gambling industry were casino votes in Arkansas and Colorado. Voters in Hot Springs, Ark., rejecting a return to the wide-open gambling status which prevailed until the 1950s, turned down the casino proposal by a "no" vote of 55 percent.

A casino proposal in Pueblo, Colo., also was defeated.

The big winner of the day was the lottery industry, which scored victories in California, Oregon, West Virginia and Missouri.

Lottery supporters in California spent about \$1.6 million--principally from Scientific Games, Inc., a lottery products corporation headquartered in Atlanta--in collecting signatures to get the issue on the ballot and to underwrite promotional expenses.

In Oregon, lottery backers were expected to spend about \$250,000 to the opponent's \$10,000. Scientific Games again was a major supplier of funds for the initiative drive.

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West Virginia voters approved a lottery after a relatively low-key campaign which put to a vote a proposal passed by the state legislature more than a year earlier.

In Missouri, voters overwhelmingly approved both a state-operated lottery and pari-mutuel gambling. Missouri Baptists had worked with a diverse group of religious organizations to present strong opposition to the measures. Nevertheless, the lottery passed with about 67 percent approval, and pari-mutuel received 60 percent approval.

The pari-mutuel vote was particularly disturbing for its opponents since the issue was put on the ballot even though proponents lacked enough legitimate signatures after fraudulent signatures on the petitions were thrown out.

Of the seven gambling votes, five were placed on the ballot by the initiative process, effectively bypassing state legislatures where gambling opponents had concentrated their efforts. In the initiative process, an issue can be placed on the ballot if a minimum level of valid signatures is certified by the appropriate state official.

"The gambling industry seems to have discovered the most effective technique for getting the issue before the voters," said anti-gambling spokesman Larry Braidfoot of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "With this initiative process the deliberation of elected officials is circumvented. Hearings are not held; factual information is not amassed. The issue becomes one where voters are wooed with mass sums of money pumped into a promotional campaign by the gambling forces."

Braidfoot and other anti-gambling strategists anticipate an avalanche of gambling initiatives in 1985.

"The level of intensity was high this year, but that is nothing compared to what we will encounter in 1985," said Braidfoot. "Many people worked hard to prevent states from creating a monster that is unquestionably regressive, spawns growth in illegal gambling and inches the gambling industry one step farther into the social and family life of a state's citizenry."

"If we do not begin now to prepare for this challenge, the results will only worsen."

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Texas Baptists  
Give \$5.2 Million

By Terry Barone

Baptist Press  
11/8/84

DALLAS (BP)--Texas Baptists gave more than \$5.2 million for missions through the Cooperative Program in October--the largest amount ever given by a state Baptist convention in one month.

Texas Baptists gave \$5,254,158 in October which was \$774,991, or 17.3 percent, above the required budget of \$4,479,167.

The October total exceeds the previous record of \$5,071,942 set in May 1984. The two months mark the only time receipts of a state convention's Cooperative Program budget have topped the \$5 million mark.

The \$5.2 million is an increase of \$1,570,233, or 42.6 percent, over the \$3,683,924 received in October 1983.

The 1984 total received to date in Texas through the Cooperative Program is \$45,599,021. The Baptist General Convention of Texas Cooperative Program budget for 1984 is \$53,750,000.

Southern Baptist Convention worldwide causes receive 36.1 percent of the total receipts.

William M. Pinson Jr., executive director of the BGCT, said, "We are grateful to God that Texas Baptists continue to be good stewards of their money in spite of adverse economic conditions."

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"Due to the giving of Texas Baptists the basic Texas Baptist Cooperative Program budget is being met. However, we all pray that the giving in November and December will be even greater so that we can meet the challenge budget."

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Trend To Smaller Youth Choirs  
May Not Reverse, McClard Says

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
11/8/84

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Despite continuing enrollment increases for the total church music ministry, youth music enrollment decreases since 1976 may not change appreciably for several years, according to LeRoy McClard, supervisor of field services for the Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department.

McClard told 250 persons at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's 24th Annual Church Music Institute in Louisville, Ky., population trends, social factors and family changes have affected youth choir enrollments.

"The years 1960 through 1976 embraced the golden years for youth choirs in Southern Baptist churches," McClard said. "Enrollment soared from 150,000 in the early 1950s to 340,700 in 1976, the peak enrollment recorded."

But in 1977 the youth population began a decline which adversely affected many church youth choirs, he observed. "On the basis of projected U.S. school population figures, there will be seven more lean years before the youth population will begin to climb again," he said. Youth choir enrollment for 1983 was 284,654.

Gains and losses in youth choir enrollment parallel times of rapid social change, McClard observed. In the 1950s, society became increasingly youth oriented, "with youth wants, thoughts, clothes and actions as the focus." But today, McClard said he believes in spite of what some are calling "a defocus on youth" churches will continue to nurture and use youth as a vital part of the church ministry.

Continuing social change toward pragmatism, he said, will result in youth choirs which are "efficient, loyal and more ministerial in their perspective and expectations."

In terms of family change, McClard said he sees fewer youth living with both biological parents, with the missing parent most often the father. "Many ministers of music see this as an opportunity because youth may look to them to fill this void."

He cited as cause for alarm several factors that may make youth choir efforts more difficult.

"The competition for the time and interests of youth will be fiercer than ever before. Sunday jobs will increase," he said, "and schools will provide wider choices and obligations for students. Youth will be entertained to an ever higher degree by television, radio and computer games, and they will be more mobile, able to participate in an even greater variety of entertainment activities."

Singing in the youth choir may not be as glamorous as it once was, he observed. "When the contemporary musicals first came on the scene, it was exciting to be in an active youth choir. Now, to a certain extent, the glitter of the 'musical' experience has worn off. The youth choir is no longer the best act in town."

Youth will face increasing difficulties in their family lives, he said. In addition to broken families, "the situation darkens, since few parents will attend churches, even for church music events. Few youth will have solid Christian families."

But McClard feels there are factors of hope. Youth are ready to be motivated by challenging opportunities, he said. "They will still respond to a cause if they feel it is worthy."

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While youth choirs may not be numerically as strong as in earlier years, there is hope for a deeper commitment and a deeper level of friendships among choir members "who are not going with the crowd, but who are beginning to live transformed lives."

Youth will be looking for purpose, guidance, and direction, he predicted. "More than a few will be responding positively to stricter discipline, structured organization and hard work," he said. "Once again they will begin to take pride in looking good and accomplishing something important. They will be challenged to a kind of commitment that requires sacrificial service."

McClard urged institute participants to give youth personal attention, allow them to participate in the important work of the church, to provide music with textual meaning and to offer a variety in types and styles of music.

"Correlate music with other programs of the church," he suggested. "Youth choir directors attribute most successes lately to the DiscipleLife Celebration cooperative effort among church training, church music and church recreation."

The youth choir director of the future, he told institute participants, must develop improved skills as a church music educator, administrator and minister, with excellent skills in interpersonal relationships and negotiation ability.

"Above all, the key to success for the new youth choir director will be to fulfill the role of a minister-musician rather than a musician-minister."



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