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October 4, 1985

85-121

National Cooperative Program
Receipts \$117,526,691 For Year

By Craig Bird

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention closed its books on the 1984-85 fiscal year for the national Cooperative Program Sept. 30 after receiving \$117,526,691 in undesignated contributions to its worldwide mission and education programs.

"I believe the amount received represents an awareness and commitment to the mission causes the Cooperative Program supports," A.R. Fagan, president of the Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, said. "This commitment is true not only of individual Southern Baptists but also of churches and state conventions.

"The real growth in giving is realized as it relates to the Consumer Price Index. In real dollars this is the strongest gain we have experienced in recent years."

The 1984-85 total was 7.99 percent (\$8,690,959) above 1983-84 contributions while the inflation rate is approximately 3.5 percent, meaning growth in giving has more than doubled the rate of inflation.

September contributions from the 37 conventions (which include all 50 states) which are affiliated with the 14.4-million member SBC of \$9.75 million left income slightly more than \$473,000 below the basic budget goal of \$118 million. No funds were available for \$6.874 million capital needs portion of the budget or the \$5.126 million challenge budget.

The 1983-84 gifts, leveled when inflation dropped to approximately three percent after planners had anticipated a 12 percent inflation rate, fell \$5.7 million below basic budget goals.

Under the SBC budgeting process, unfunded capital needs are carried over to the next budget year so 1984-85 capital needs have been added to the 1983-84 capital needs of \$3.34 million and carried over to the 1985-86 budget which began Oct. 1.

The current basic budget goal is \$120.6 million and no new capital needs have been approved in addition to the carryovers.

Cecil Ray, who is heading Planned Growth In Giving, a 15-year program seeking to increase the basic giving patterns of individual Southern Baptists as well as local churches and state conventions, was both gratified and challenged by the 1984-85 budget report.

"The continued growth of the Cooperative Program--the very fact that a totally voluntary program generated more than \$117.5 million dollars--gives reason to say 'thank you' to Southern Baptists, and the growth rate of almost eight percent is outstanding compared to the economic realities of our day," Ray said.

"But the opposite side of that is that it will take a growth rate considerably above eight percent if Southern Baptists are to achieve our Bold Mission Thrust goals of growing great churches, evangelizing the nation and dramatically enlarging our foreign mission program.

"Planned Growth In Giving is a way for every individual Southern Baptist, every church and every state convention to help turn Bold Mission Thrust into reality by funding the programs we will need to share the message of Jesus Christ with every person in the world by the year 2000."

The voluntary nature of the Cooperative Program provides a unique method of funding for SBC activities around the world. Though typically Baptists hold a Christian should give 10 percent of his income to his church as a tithe no local church is required to do so. To give--that is considered to be between the person and God.

Likewise the state conventions do not tell local churches how much of their income to pass on to the state level--and the national convention doesn't instruct state conventions in how they should divide their income with the national programs. Each step of the process is voluntary--and totally consistent with the closely held Baptist doctrine of priesthood of the believer.

Planned Growth in Giving hopes to influence individual members who are not tithing to begin giving 10 percent of their income to the local church and those already tithing to increase their percentages, to cause local churches to increase the percentages they sent to the state convention and the local associations, and to urge state conventions to move to a 50-50 split of their income with the national programs.

Two state conventions, Oklahoma and Florida, already send half of all undesignated gifts to the national programs through the Cooperative Program.

Eight state conventions broke significant barriers in their total giving, led by Texas and Georgia. Texas became the first state convention to give more than \$20 million through the national CP in one year (\$20,645,028) and Georgia became the first state other than Texas to give more than \$10 million (\$10,578,430).

Two conventions broke the \$5 million mark for the first time: Kentucky (\$5,161,509) and Louisiana (\$5,315,259); and Ohio made its first appearance at the \$1 million level (\$1,047,433).

Finally three conventions in "pioneer" SBC areas contributed in excess of \$100,000 for the first time: District of Columbia (\$105,874), Pennsylvania-South Jersey (\$111,099) and West Virginia (\$104,701).

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Oklahoma, Florida
CP Per Capita Leaders

Baptist Press
10/4/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--It can't be proven to a mathematical certainty, but Southern Baptists in Florida and Oklahoma can lay strong claims to having been the individual leaders in supporting the national programs of the Southern Baptist Convention.

By taking the latest available membership figures for the 37 state conventions which are voluntarily affiliated with the SBC (for calendar year 1984) and comparing them with final figures for the national SBC fiscal year (Oct. 1, 1984-Sept. 30, 1985) an approximate "per capita" giving figure can be established--while remaining fully aware the time periods being compared are off by six months.

But by that non-scientific, but useful, procedure Florida's national Cooperative Program contributions of \$9,450,519 and membership of 871,113 produces a per capita gift of \$10.85.

Likewise, Oklahoma's numbers of \$7,815,188 and 729,879 works out to \$10.71 per member to fund the work of more than 6,000 missionaries in 106 foreign countries and all 50 states, six seminaries and various other boards and agencies of the 14.4-million member SBC.

The SBC-wide figure (based on gifts through the national Cooperative Program of \$117,526,690) is \$8.19.

Obviously the per capita figures are directly influenced by the percentage of income the state conventions share with the national programs--and Oklahoma and Florida are the only two conventions which divide income 50-50, though most of the 37 conventions are moving their percentages up each year toward that goal.

The conventions, their per capita figure and their total gifts through the national Cooperative Program are:

Alabama, \$7,890,517 (\$7.79); Alaska, \$122,677 (\$7.58); Arizona, \$591,178 (\$5.19); Arkansas, \$4,399,840 (\$9.85); California, \$1,330,056 (\$3.55); Colorado, \$272,085 (\$4.24); District of Columbia, \$105,874 (\$3.58); Florida, \$9,450,519 (\$10.85);

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Georgia, \$10,578,430 (\$8.92); Hawaii, \$111,149 (\$8.64); Illinois, \$1,869,675 (\$8.06); Indiana, \$441,229 (\$5.19); Kansas-Nebraska, \$427,533 (\$5.45); Kentucky, \$5,161,509 (\$6.80); Louisiana, \$5,315,259 (\$9.36); Maryland, \$912,982 (\$9.29); Michigan, \$223,141 (\$4.53);

Minnesota-Wisconsin, \$54,160 (\$4.52); Mississippi, \$5,775,203 (\$8.96); Missouri (including Iowa), \$4,452,035 (\$7.14); Nevada, \$63,736 (\$3.54); New England, \$62,680 (\$4.52); New Mexico, \$684,019 (\$5.76); New York, \$92,746 (\$4.13); North Carolina, \$8,105,475 (\$7.05);

Northern Plains, \$36,136 (\$2.29); Northwest, \$447,344 (\$5.70); Ohio, \$1,047,433 (\$7.48); Oklahoma, \$7,815,188 (\$10.71); Pennsylvania-South Jersey, \$111,099 (\$6.36); South Carolina, \$6,465,844 (\$9.40); Tennessee, \$7,008,667 (\$6.67); Texas, \$20,645,028 (\$8.74);

Utah-Idaho, \$61,022 (\$3.74); Virginia, \$4,862,139 (\$8.22); West Virginia, \$104,701 (\$4.08), Wyoming, \$56,379 (\$4.84).

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Foreign Board Approves \$406,500
For Mexico Rebuilding Project

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
10/4/85

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board earmarked \$406,500 Oct. 3 to buy equipment and feed 3,000 Mexicans while they are trained to help dig Mexico City out from under the wreckage of two earthquakes.

More than half of the money will pay for nine big compressor jackhammers, plus smaller equipment such as blowtorches and power saws for cutting metal. The rest will finance up to three weeks of food each for 3,000 jobless Mexicans as they are trained to use the equipment.

An additional \$200,000 may be allocated for more compressor jackhammers in a second phase of the project if the overall effort succeeds.

The project emerged as Mexican Baptists, Southern Baptist representatives and Foreign Mission Board human needs consultant Don Turner met in Mexico City to evaluate long-term earthquake relief needs. Mexican Baptists identified three major needs beyond current emergency feeding and shelter: 1) cleanup and reconstruction in the city, 2) jobs and vocational training for those left unemployed and homeless and 3) temporary income or food during the training.

As unofficial earthquake death tolls topped 7,000 at the beginning of October, an estimated 1,400 buildings in Mexico City lay in various stages of ruin. Many of the buildings housed businesses and government offices, and as many as 30,000 families lost work, according to Turner.

Turner said government officials have said "the greatest need is for compressors, jackhammers, electric steel cutting saws, hacksaws and cutting torches. Right now the (cleanup) work must be done by hand and is terribly slow. They have some big equipment, but need the jackhammers to get things ready to move."

Mexican Baptist businessman Raul Castellanos, an executive in the Aristos hotel and construction group, has offered to provide training for the 3,000 workers, followed by employment with Aristos, other construction companies and the government.

First Baptist Church of Mexico City, in the heart of one of the worst-hit areas, will likely be the training site. The church owns two adjacent lots with facilities big enough to house the training project, which will include on-the-job experience in the ravaged city. In addition to general demolition, the trainees will learn general repair, maintenance, mechanics and construction work in concrete, asphalt and steel.

The Aristos group is willing to train the 3,000 men in return for their labor during training and use of the equipment, Turner said. He added the skills would help them find employment long after the cleanup is completed. Castellanos is also working with Mexico City government officials, who reportedly have expressed a willingness to cooperate, to assure the workers and equipment are used in actual restoration efforts.

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Aristos has agreed to buy the compressor jackhammers after the training period at the market price for used machinery, enabling the Foreign Mission Board to recover at least half of the retail expenditure. Those funds will in turn be funneled by Southern Baptist representatives and Mexican Baptists into additional relief-related projects.

In cooperation with the National Baptist Convention of Mexico and its Disaster Response Committee, First Baptist Church will coordinate a program of Christian witness and training for the workers involved in the training program. Turner said First Baptist would no longer offer its facilities for emergency shelter after Oct. 2, but will keep distributing food for quake survivors as long as the need exists.

Meanwhile, Southern Baptist relief teams from Mississippi, Louisiana and Oklahoma arrived in Mexico Sept. 30 to help in continuing Baptist emergency feeding efforts. Louisiana Baptists sent 15 volunteers, according to the Foreign Mission Board's human needs office. Oklahoma and Mississippi Baptists sent 12 volunteers each.

Reinforcements have arrived to relieve the original team of 13 Texas Baptist men who arrived in Mexico City Sept. 26 with a portable field kitchen. Texas Baptists have also sent 80 Spanish-speaking counselors to aid people suffering emotional trauma from the horrors of the earthquakes.

In Richmond, Foreign Mission Board staffers reported receipt of more than \$14,000 in Mexico relief contributions from Southern Baptists by Oct. 2. A great deal more money, they reported, is "in the pipeline" as it moves from individual churches through state Baptist conventions. The board is also sending \$10,000 contributed by the Baptist World Alliance for use by Mexican Baptists in earthquake relief.

A second quake-related death among Mexican Baptists has been reported, but details on the identity of the victim have not yet become available. Earlier reports listed Noemi Avila Betancur, 22, a nurse and member of Bethel Baptist Church in Mexico City, as missing and presumed dead in the wreckage of General Hospital.

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Baptist Relief Units
Feed 30,000 Daily

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
10/4/85

DALLAS (BP)--Baptists from Texas, Oklahoma, Mississippi and Louisiana are operating field kitchens capable of serving about 30,000 meals a day to earthquake victims in Mexico city.

About 80 Spanish-speaking Texas Baptist counselors also are working in Mexico City on a one-to-one basis with people who need emotional and spiritual help because of the earthquake.

Thirteen Texas Baptist volunteers began serving hungry victims of the earthquake in the Tepito neighborhood of Mexico City on Sept. 26 at a rate of 2,000 meals per hour for the first four hours. Meals were served from the disaster relief mobile unit, an 18-wheel tractor trailer rig with portable field kitchen.

Four days later the Texas disaster relief team was joined by Louisiana, Oklahoma and Mississippi disaster relief units. The Louisiana unit is set up at Centro de Carranza, the Oklahoma unit is four blocks from the Texas unit at the "Sal" Sanchos Center at El Centro Morales, and the Mississippi unit is in Oceania. The Texas unit was expected to move Oct. 3.

From a command post at the Texas disaster relief unit, the volunteers are directing feeding operations and training local Mexican Baptists in field kitchen feeding techniques, said Robert E. Dixon, Texas Baptist Emergency Task Force coordinator. A ration store of stockpiled food is being set up, and soon disaster victims in some areas will be able to cook their own food.

"The next step after putting food on plates is giving people pots and pans and teaching them how to cook," said Dixon. "This aids them in a stable recovery."

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Eighty bilingual Texas Baptist pastors and deacons are being assigned to the four disaster relief units, acting both as counselors and interpreters.

"In an effort to minister in a holistic way to the earthquake victims, our volunteers will seek to offer spiritual and emotional counsel as well as meeting immediate physical needs," said Charles P. McLaughlin, chairman of the Texas Baptist Disaster Relief Committee.

More than 2,000 professions of faith have been recorded as a result of the feeding and counseling ministry. At least four new churches will have been established when the disaster relief crews leave, Dixon said.

To enhance communication during the relief effort, the Texas mobile unit has been granted the use of a reciprocal HAM radio license, one of the first issued in Mexico. The call letters are XEINBN.

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Panel Sends School Prayer
Issue To Senate Floor

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
10/4/85

WASHINGTON (BP)--Debate over a constitutional amendment authorizing silent prayer in public schools will go to the Senate floor as result of action taken by a Senate committee Oct. 3.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 12-6 to put S.J. Res. 2 on the Senate calendar for full debate. The measure states: "Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group silent prayer or reflection in public schools. Neither the United States nor any State shall require any person to participate in such prayer or reflection, nor shall they encourage any particular form of prayer or reflection."

Supporters of the proposed amendment hope it will nullify a recent Supreme Court ruling that struck down an Alabama law requiring a moment of silence for prayer or meditation at the beginning of each school day.

The amendment's co-authors, Sens. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, and Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., led the vote to approve. Joining them in that vote were Sens. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C.; Paul Laxalt, R-Nev.; Alan K. Simpson, R-Wyo.; John P. East, R-N.C.; Charles E. Grassley, R-Iowa; Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala.; Mitch McConnell, R-Ky.; Joseph R. Biden, D-Del.; Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., and Howell Heflin, D-Ala.

Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., argued that a constitutional amendment is unnecessary, explaining silent prayer already is lawful in light of Supreme Court decisions. "We should not recommend an amendment to the Constitution except in extraordinary circumstances and especially not when it is already appropriate to have a period of silence to pray, meditate or do nothing," he stated.

Joining in opposition to the measure, Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., declared, "I don't think this amendment has any secular purpose. Its aim is to promote religion."

Also voting to oppose were Sens. Charles McC. Mathias, R-Md.; Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt.; Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass.; and Howard M. Metzenbaum, D-Ohio.

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EDITOR'S NOTE---The photo for Baptist Press Story, "Edwin Carr: Diplomat With a dual mission, will be mailed to Baptist state newspapers on Tuesday, October 8 by the Washington bureau of Baptist Press. There was a delay in getting a photo from the state department. The Carr story was mailed 10/3/85

Thanks,
Baptist Press



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