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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, 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. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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86-168

Cooperative Program
Enjoys Best 1st Month

N-CO

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists' national Cooperative Program got off to its best start ever, with October receipts totalling \$10,937,115, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee.

The Cooperative Program is the Southern Baptist Convention method of funding missions, evangelism and education endeavors worldwide. The 1986-87 Cooperative Program began its fiscal year Oct. 1; the national goal for the year is \$136 million.

October Cooperative Program receipts were a record for that month and 21 percent higher than the \$9,039,034 posted in October of 1985.

"I was deeply grateful for the large percentage increase we enjoyed in October," Bennett said. However, he noted the 21 percent gain "is not indicative of the percentage increases we will receive the remainder of the year."

He said reasons for the large increase are difficult to determine. It might have been due to churches whose annual budgets close out Sept. 30 sending along their Cooperative Program checks at the end of the fiscal year, which would have been tabulated nationally in October. Or it partially may have been due to churches which surpassed their regular annual budgets channeling significant portions of their "challenge budgets" along to the Cooperative Program.

In addition to the best October on record, the monthly total represented the third-best monthly total in Cooperative Program history.

If Southern Baptists are going to reach their \$136 million Cooperative Program goal, receipts for the remaining 11 months of 1986-87 must average \$11.37 million.

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Clower Says Owen Cooper
Was Example To Baptist Laymen

F-SWBTS

Baptist Press
11/12/86

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"Owen Cooper was the highest type of moral Christian gentleman I've ever known," Jerry Clower said at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Clower, a Christian comedian of Grand Ole Opry fame, was a personal friend of Cooper, who died Nov. 8. Both men were lay leaders in First Baptist Church of Yazoo City, Miss.

Cooper, SBC president from 1972-74, was the last living layman to have been president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Owen Cooper lived and acted like a dedicated Christian. When tragedy struck, he behaved like a Christian, not a pagan," Clower said, adding Cooper "literally believed the Great Commission.

"There are hundreds of churches in pioneer areas that he started," Clower said. "He fed the hungry in India and in the United States."

Clower nominated Cooper for the SBC presidency in 1972. But Clower said Cooper had earned the right to be president. "Owen Cooper served in every phase of the local church before he was elected," Clower said. "Owen Cooper believed that the first place of service for anyone ought to be in the local church."

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Cooper's presidency proved that "a layman can do a super job," Clower said.

"In the spirit of Christian love he could correct people," Clower said. "There were times when I wished he would strike the desk and get mad—but he wouldn't."

Clower spoke to a packed chapel audience. It was his friend Cooper who had suggested Clower should tithe his time to make free appearances at the six Southern Baptist seminaries.

"I love y'all," Clower screamed to the students, faculty and staff. "I'm qualified to say I love y'all because I'm an addicted full-blood Christian Baptist."

"I done been a Southern Baptist for 46 years," he said. "I done been to BYPU, I done been to training union and I would've went to Quest if they'd named it that."

"I done sung in the hymnal when it said 'such a worm as I!'"

In those statements Clower showed an intricate knowledge of Southern Baptist life. Quest was considered but later dismissed as a new name for training union. "Such as worm as I" was replaced in the Baptist Hymnal by "sinners such as I" in the hymn, "At the Cross."

Clower said he loves seminary students because they're "not a bunch of pessimists." Declaring that he was tired of negativism, he spoke of the positive joy that every Christian can have.

Clower took about 40 minutes to tell the homespun tales he has become famous for. He also shared his own testimony of faith in Jesus Christ.

"Christianity works," Clower declared. He called on seminarians to follow Christ's example and "love one another."

Clower said hell is the only place there will be no laughter. "I don't have to worry about that," he said. "I've done made arrangements to miss hell."

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Africa Missionaries To Offer
Concerted Prayer For World

N-FMB

Baptist Press
11/12/86

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The 528 Southern Baptist missionaries in eastern and southern Africa are being asked to commit one day each month during 1987 to concerted prayer for world evangelization.

Focusing on the last part of James 5:16 ("The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"), each of the missionaries and their children will be asked to set aside one day each month to pray specifically for worldwide efforts to present the gospel.

Missionaries within each country also will be asked to elect a prayer chairman, circulate newsletters with prayer requests and reports of answered prayers, and use "A Concert of Prayer" as the theme for annual meetings and for prayer retreats.

Countries in the area include Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Swaziland, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Botswana, Namibia/South West Africa, Angola and the Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius, the Seychelles and Reunion. In January, Lesotho will be added.

Davis Saunders, director for Southern Baptist foreign mission work in the area, led an October leadership conference in Harare, Zimbabwe, which included associate area directors, a media consultant and the business managers and treasurers from all of the countries except Angola.

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Saunders told of a prayer retreat held by the Foreign Mission Board trustees prior to their early October meeting and of the trustees' subsequent call for all Southern Baptists to increase their prayer support of worldwide mission activity.

Prayer commitment cards will be mailed to all missionaries and missionary dependents in Saunders' area, including those in the United States on furlough, asking for a formal commitment to the "concert of prayer."

In June, Southern Baptist missionaries in Venezuela decided to commit themselves to prayer three times daily for evangelization and revival in their country and the world. They also pledged to dedicate the first Saturday of each month to prayer and fasting.

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Ohio Baptists
Have Fellowship

N-CD

Baptist Press
11/12/86

CINCINNATI (BP)--When the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio in its annual meeting in Cincinnati turned to a period of miscellaneous business, the first person to speak thanked others for their expressions of sympathy and friendship when his wife died a few months earlier.

This was an example of the family fellowship that marked the seven sessions of the 1986 Ohio state convention.

The three new officers elected have a combined total of 53 years as pastors in Ohio. Glenn Davidson, the new president, has been pastor of Pisgah Heights Baptist Church in suburban Cincinnati for 15 years.

Darrel Gabbard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Perrysburg in suburban Toledo, is the new first vice president. C. Nolan Phillips, pastor of University Baptist Church in Middletown is the new second vice president.

Gabbard is Ohio's trustee at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Phillips, who recently observed his 20th anniversary as University Baptist Church pastor, is Ohio's trustee on the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

The Ohio convention adopted a Cooperative Program budget for 1987, a new high of \$2,979,307, with 41.5 percent going to national and world mission causes, up one half percent over 1986.

Resolutions expressed prayer support and encouragement for the SBC Peace Committee and deployed the erosion of Judeo-Christian values in the social and moral life of the nation.

The 1987 session of the convention will be in Toledo Nov. 3-5.

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New England Increases
Cooperative Program

N-CD

Baptist Press
11/12/86

GROTON, Conn. (BP)--New England Southern Baptists increased their giving to the worldwide missionary, educational and evangelistic ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention to 20.5 percent of undesignated gifts during their fourth annual convention.

Some 279 messengers to the convention of the Baptist Convention of New England adopted a budget of \$1,815,304, of which \$460,699 will come from the 135 congregations affiliated with BCNE. Of the total contributions, messengers voted to increase giving to the SBC Cooperative Program to \$94,443, or 20.5 percent--up half a percent over 1986 giving.

The convention, which was organized in 1982, now has about 15,000 members in the 135 congregations in the six states: New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

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Messengers re-elected all of the convention officers, naming James Wideman, pastor of Screven Memorial Baptist Church in Portsmouth, N.H., to a second term as president. Also elected were Jack Schneider, pastor of Baptist Fellowship in Columbia, Conn., first vice president; David Waugh of Woodstock (Vt.) Baptist Church, second vice president, and Dianne Rudolph of Milford (Mass.) Baptist Church, clerk.

Also adopted was a long-range planning committee report for programs of the convention 1988 to 1993.

The 1987 meeting will be Nov. 5-6 in First Baptist Church of Sudbury, Mass.

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Information, Fellowship
Yield Action And Growth

By Jim Lowry

N-BSSB

Baptist Press
11/12/86

GARDEN CITY, Ga. (BP)—Diverse, up-to-date information on the Baptist Telecommunication Network has been the key to significant growth and a new positive attitude at First Baptist Church in Garden City, Ga., according to Pastor David Hinson.

"Our members can see they are not just responsible for putting money in the collection plate," Hinson said. "We can know Southern Baptist leaders and become a greater part of who Southern Baptists are.

"Through BTN we celebrate victories with other Southern Baptists on mission fields, struggle together for special offerings and then catch a vision of how to be involved to reach our community," he said.

Hinson said this attitude of action, belonging and understanding has come about to a great extent because of the church's use of BTN, the denomination's satellite teaching and training network sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. Programs are offered regularly on Sunday school lesson preparation, training deacons and other church leaders, missionary activities and improving personal learning and ministry efforts.

"We were skeptical at first, just like anyone would be with something new," Hinson said. "Now it is a big boost for our church's training program, knowing we are doing the best we can for our members.

"Even the dish on the roof of our building is a point of interest for church members and visitors who have said the church must be doing something different," he explained.

"That new attitude is something money can't buy," he said. "We believe we can grow spiritually, numerically and we can generate new enthusiasm not present before.

In the last year, average attendance for Sunday school at the church has grown by almost 100 per Sunday to an October average of 286. Hinson explained that the significance of the increase is underscored by the fact there is no great influx of population into the area, and houses around the church are extremely expensive.

"BTN is a plus for our church because it gives us a greater opportunity to reach lost people," he said. "We are readying ourselves for ministry in the 90s by being on the cutting edge of doing God's work in a new way.

"As a pastor, having informed church members is the greatest gift the Sunday School Board can give me," Hinson said. "The more informed people are, the more willing they are to be servants of Christ.

"Many people don't know how to get involved, but BTN shows them ministry in action—not just by talking. By seeing a missionary, church members are touched by efforts of the denomination," he explained. "People will give to something they know about."

Hinson said his church is careful to choose which programs they use, because of the large number offered. In this way, they have integrated BTN programs into ongoing programs of the church.

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For instance, they have made SBC NewScene a regular part of Wednesday night prayer services. A new weekly workers' meeting also has been started. Hinson said they plan to invite all the churches in the city to come to their facility to watch the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention telecast from St. Louis. He believes that interaction will strengthen the fellowship between members of churches.

"It makes our church a stronger fellowship to realize that Southern Baptists are a family," he continued. "I want our members to feel we are related to church members in Nashville and around the world through Jesus Christ. That makes a difference in how I live my life as a Christian."

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Baptist College Presidents
Named In Leadership Survey

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Comm.* Baptist Press
11/12/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Six Southern Baptist college and university presidents have been identified as among the most effective presidents in higher education.

A two-year comprehensive study named the 100 most effective chief executive officers in higher education as selected by their peers. Those named in the study represent approximately three percent of college presidents across the country.

Baptist college presidents listed in the survey include: Herbert H. Reynolds, Baylor University, Waco, Texas; E. Bruce Heilman, University of Richmond, Richmond, Va.; John E. Johns, Furman University, Greenville, S.C.; Fred B. Bentley, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N.C.; Lewis Nobles, Clarke College, a division of Mississippi College, Clinton, Miss.; and Bruce E. Whitaker, Chowan College, Murfreesboro, N.C.

The study, "The Effective College President," was designed by James L. Fisher, president emeritus of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, and Martha Tack, professor of educational administration and supervision at Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

The researchers surveyed 485 individuals who were considered knowledgeable about higher education. Each was asked to identify five persons they considered to be the most effective college presidents in the nation.

Those named in the study were asked to complete a six-page survey which enabled researchers to identify distinctive characteristics of an effective college administrator.

Preliminary results show that the effective president relies on respect rather than popularity, tends to work longer hours, makes decisions more easily and takes more risks in order to move the institution forward.

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