



BAPTIST PRESS
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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. Hasty, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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Cooperative Program
Dips During November

N-60

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptists' national Cooperative Program receipts dipped in November but remain ahead of last year's record pace, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

November's total, \$9,672,612, was 10.2 percent behind receipts for the same period in 1985, Bennett reported. However, receipts for the first two months of the 1986-87 budget year stand at \$20,609,728, or 4.04 percent ahead of the rate for October and November of 1985.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' unified method of financing mission, evangelistic and educational endeavors worldwide. Members contribute offerings to their churches, which on average send about 9 percent of their total receipts to state Baptist conventions. The state conventions utilize those funds for their own ministries and send from about 30 to 50 percent of their receipts on to the Executive Committee for disbursement to 19 Southern Baptist entities.

November's Cooperative Program dip follows the best October the program has enjoyed in its 61-year history. October receipts of almost \$11 million were 21 percent higher than those for the same period in 1985, giving the Cooperative Program a fast start on its \$136 million annual goal.

Examining the disparity between the Cooperative Program's fast start and slow second month, Bennett said: "The first two months of the fiscal year illustrate again a trend in Cooperative Program giving cannot be established during such a short period of time. I am not disappointed, but I do feel we must be realistic about conservative estimates of Cooperative Program gifts."

He partly attributed the November dip to reduced oil prices and farm problems, noting the economy particularly has affected states such as Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana.

Nevertheless, Bennett predicted an upswing. "I think there's going to be another spurt in December," he said. "The inclination toward year-end giving and the incentive to give before the Tax Reform Act of 1986 takes effect will motivate a lot of people to make their contributions before the law is enforced."

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Parks Proposes Major Changes
To Carry Out Global Strategy

By Bob Stanley

N-FMB

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—President R. Keith Parks has recommended major administrative reorganization of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board staff to "lift Southern Baptists to a whole new level of involvement in global evangelization."

His proposals, presented to the board's trustees Dec. 9, call for a new top-level International Strategy Group with the expertise and authority to plan and carry out a more effective global strategy.

He also recommended the board's name be changed to International Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to allow greater freedom of operation. The new name, he said, avoids the "considerable disadvantage" which the words "foreign" and "mission" have in the modern world.

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Parks said he hopes the change in the board's name, which would have to be done in consultation with the Southern Baptist Convention, could be made without changing titles on mission properties the board owns overseas.

The reorganization, if approved by the board in February, would take effect March 1.

Parks would chair the new strategy group, with William R. O'Brien, the board's executive vice president, as vice chairman.

Four new vice presidents representing the major continents where Southern Baptists have work would be members of the group. Also on the group would be a vice president for Cooperative Services International, the entity through which Southern Baptists with specific expertise can respond to requests from countries where missionaries cannot work.

Other members of the strategy group would include:

— A vice president for administration and human resources, who would be responsible for worldwide policies relating to missionaries as well as those responsibilities already carried in the office of human resources.

— A director of research related directly to the president who would pull together all research activities now being carried out in various parts of the board.

— The vice president for finance, who would be a resource member at meetings where his expertise is needed.

As part of the plan, the board would set up a well-equipped strategy room, Parks said.

Area directors, now located in Richmond, Va., would live overseas in their geographic areas and have increased authority to make more decisions closer to the scene of the actual work. In addition to their field staff, the directors would maintain an associate area director in Richmond as both a channel and contact point for the home office but would return to Richmond for three of the board's six meetings each year.

"For the whole concept to work, the area director must be given full authority to act in those areas that have administrative definition," Parks explained, "and must take and exercise leadership in the application and implementation of global strategy concepts that will emerge from the strategy group."

Trustees approved a special transitional committee to work with a similar group from the staff in more specific and detailed planning for the reorganization.

Parks estimated it would take most of 1987 to implement the new plan and said 1988 likely would be the first productive year under the new structure.

As key concepts in the reorganization, Parks listed the need to define the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust campaign in measurable terms, develop strategies that would allow maximum use of available resources, free key administrators to concentrate on these strategy concerns and delegate authority to the fields to put decision-making as close to the action as possible.

He also pointed up the need for realignment to "emphasize the cohesiveness of the entire task while providing more appropriate participation in strategic decisions by those with hands-on overseas participation."

At the special session where Parks presented the plan, trustees responded enthusiastically. Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., said he was "thrilled and pleased ... and would like to say thank you" for the proposals.

Harmon Moore, retired state executive director for Indiana Baptists, said the reorganization would enable the board to look more clearly at the 130 to 140 nations where a traditional missionary approach is not possible. He called the plan "the greatest thing that has come down the pike in a long time."

Parks' announcement came 10 months after he told the board last February that Southern Baptists must be willing to face a new and changing reality and make necessary adjustments in their mission efforts if Bold Mission Thrust is to be accomplished. The convention in 1976 adopted Bold Mission Thrust objectives, including an overarching goal of sharing the gospel with all people of the world by the year 2000.

He said it is providential that the denomination is at the mid-point of the 25-year Bold Missions effort. "Frankly," he said, "I would see a strong effort to challenge Southern Baptists to gear up, and I expect us to come up with some more exact definition on what it would cost us to do this."

Parks said he is praying that God would use the plan to "lift Southern Baptists to a whole new level of involvement in world evangelization that would impact what is happening in our churches and in our convention."

He expects some staff members approaching retirement in 1987-88 to have a significant role for the next year or two. He mentioned Winston Crawley, vice president for planning, who already has announced plans to retire in mid-1987 and has accepted a teaching assignment at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Charles Bryan, senior vice president for overseas operations, who plans to retire in January 1988.

Bryan said he felt he could speak for the overseas staff in applauding the new plan. He said he looks forward to the transition as being "a kind of cream on top the cake" for his missions career.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Evangelism Opportunities Abound,
Conference Participants Told

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

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Baptist Press
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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"Our opportunity for evangelism is the fastest-growing thing we face," Charles Lowry told ministers at the recent Church Growth/Evangelism Conference held at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Lowry, director of the Louisiana Baptist church programs division, reported statistics revealing 69 percent of the country's 240 million people are church members but only 40 percent of those regularly attend church.

"This leaves more than 140 million persons not involved," he noted.

He cited three positive developments for leading the church to victory--a new discovery of and return to the Bible in growing churches; a discovery of the dynamics of worship, both personal and corporate, to provide a vibrant worship experience; and pastors rediscovering the dynamics of growing a Sunday school, with the pastors getting involved.

Lowry and other speakers urged ministers, including seminary students, to rediscover the Sunday school as the primary evangelism opportunity.

John Sisemore, a Sunday school consultant, noted strong Bible teaching programs provide numerical bases for growth and make disciples of those who have accepted Christ as Lord.

The theme of the conference, "Leading the Church to Victory," included church planning, finances, developing leaders and the challenge of the cities for evangelism.

"Victorious evangelism must recognize that God has initiated salvation. We haven't discovered God. Victorious evangelism must see the lostness of man," said Charles Harvey, Louisiana Baptist Convention evangelism director.

"If we want to see baptisms, we must enroll more lost persons in Sunday school," he said.

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Charles Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, told participants: "You get the leaders you want by your demonstration of leadership. Pastors need to practice the noble servant style of leadership like Jesus and the partnership style of Paul to motivate the laity to participation."

Sisemore cited statistics that adults are the key to victorious evangelism. He said, "When both parents were enrolled in Sunday school, 72 percent of the children were in church after they were grown." The statistics dropped to 6 percent remaining in church when neither parent attended Sunday school.

O.S. Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., challenged the ministers to motivate and mobilize the members. "No church has maintained its cutting edge without the people being mobilized. The job of the pastor is to equip the saints to do the work of ministry," he said.

Mark Short, a seminary faculty member and coordinator of the conference sponsored by the Louisiana Baptist Convention's church programs division, told the ministers church growth is characterized by planning which eliminates "false starts" for programs.

He said about 250 persons, including seminary students, attended the institute.

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Senior Adult Pride
Major Aging Issue

By Terri Lackey

F-BSSB
Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Older adults sometimes are viewed as obstinate or even odd by younger family members and friends when their actions really suggest a preservation of pride, an advocate on aging said.

"Pride is an enormous part of aging," Albert McClellan, who retired as associate executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, told state family ministry leaders attending annual planning meetings at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn.

Older adults hold on to their pride because "it helps fight off despair and helps them maintain who they are or who they want to be," McClellan said.

McClellan was instrumental in helping senior adults establish a stronger foothold in the Southern Baptist Convention in the early 1970s when it was discovered seniors were largely ignored in the ministries of churches and the programming of state and convention agencies.

"Coming of Age: Senior Adults and the Churches" is the 1986-87 special emphasis of the Sunday School Board's family ministry department, which plans to culminate its year in April with a national senior adult convention in Fort Worth, Texas.

"All people come to old age with a sense that they have one, two, five, 10, 15 years to live, and that's it," McClellan said. "When you love life, that can be despair, and you have to fight it. There's much more in this theme of coming of age than we are apt to see unless we look at it seriously."

Personal experiences with his father's struggle for independence after suffering a broken hip showed McClellan that aging is an extremely difficult part of life, he explained. After the injury, his mother had a ramp built onto the front of the house for easier accessibility. "One day he decided to bypass the ramp and use the steps, and he fell and broke his leg," McClellan said. "When I asked him why, he said, 'I did it because I wanted my independence.' There was pride behind that independence. That ramp was a symbol of isolation."

Likewise, he said his father later insisted on cultivating an okra patch "because he felt in doing it, he was a person of substance."

"I saw in him a struggle of trying to be whole, complete and maintaining a life of dignity. I saw a struggle to fight off despair," McClellan recalled.

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He said churches must build programs for senior adults that "do not so much just fill their time, but fill their lives."

Meanwhile, at the annual meeting, family ministry leaders discussed the launch of two new Lay Institute for Equipping courses, Parenting by Grace and Covenant Marriage.

Parenting by Grace, a course to help Christian parents apply the biblical concept of grace to parenting skills, was launched in October 1986. Covenant Marriage, which will teach the biblical concept of marriage and strengthen marriage bonds, will be launched in October 1987.

"The first indicators of the use of Parenting by Grace have been outstanding," said Gary Hauk, supervisor of the family ministry department's family enrichment section. "After two months, over 5,500 courses have been initiated in churches over the convention," he said. This exceeds the total projection figure of nearly 5,000 set by 38 states and Puerto Rico last year.

Hauk said state family ministry leaders also are setting state goals for the Covenant Marriage course this year, although those figures are not complete.

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Seminary Presidents Approve
Two For Extension Staff

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Jack R. Cunningham of Fort Worth, Texas, and George W. Knight of Nashville, Tenn., have been named to fill staff positions in the Southern Baptist Seminary Extension Department effective Jan. 1.

Both men were elected unanimously by the six Southern Baptist seminary presidents, who comprise the governing board of the Seminary External Education Division. The action came in response to recommendations from division Executive Director Raymond M. Rigdon. The Seminary Extension Department is part of the division and has operated under the joint sponsorship of the seminaries since 1951.

Cunningham, 48, has been assistant to the director of continuing education at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctoral student in education. He will become director of extension center education, coordinating the department's work with more than 350 seminary extension centers around the country.

Cunningham has been on church staffs in Texas and Arkansas and earlier spent 13 years as an intelligence officer with the U.S. Air Force. He and his wife, Jan, have two grown children.

Knight, 46, was named director of independent study education, working with almost 2,000 persons who take seminary extension courses by correspondence. A former editor at the Baptist Sunday School Board, he most recently has been managing editor of biblical reference books for Thomas Nelson Publishers in Nashville.

Seminary extension will be familiar territory for Knight. Since early 1985 he has been a part-time or contract editor of educational materials for the Seminary Extension Department.

Knight and his wife, Dorothy, have two teenage daughters.

In his new position, Knight will succeed Royce A. Rose, who will join the faculty of Southwestern Seminary the first of January as assistant professor of administration. Cunningham will follow Paul E. Robertson, who became director of continuing education and doctoral ministries at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in September.

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