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Cooperative Program
Lags Behind 1986-87

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists' national Cooperative Program unified budget has topped \$30 million for the first quarter of its fiscal year, but the pace lags behind 1986-87.

December receipts brought the three-month total to \$30,115,637, or 2.81 percent behind the total for the same period a year ago, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee.

The conventionwide December total was \$9,605,681, Bennett reported. That amount is 7.43 percent behind the \$10,376,194 received in December 1986.

"I am disappointed in the December Cooperative Program total," he said, also expressing concern over the first-quarter total, since it reflects almost a 3 percent drop from 1986-87.

The December downturn may be explained by the absence of a "13th check" from one of the larger Southern Baptist state conventions, noted Tim A. Hedquist, Executive Committee vice president for business and finance. That state contributed a bonus 13th monthly check -- totaling about \$1.2 million -- to the Cooperative Program in December 1986 but did not repeat the procedure in 1987.

"The Cooperative Program is down. We're not trying to make excuses," Hedquist said. "The drop may be an aberration, due to the way the checks are mailed to the Executive Committee. We really don't know."

The Cooperative Program finances Southern Baptist ministries -- evangelistic, educational and missionary activities -- around the world. Individual Southern Baptists contribute funds to their churches, which pass a portion of their receipts to state Baptist conventions, which pass a portion of those receipts to the Executive Committee for distribution to convention agencies.

First-quarter receipts do not provide sufficient information for determining a trend in Cooperative Program totals, Bennett said. Hedquist added: "It's too early to tell. We won't make any predictions until after we see the January and February totals."

The 1987-88 Cooperative Program goal is \$140 million.

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Messengers 'Scramble'
For San Antonio Rooms

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press
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SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--With only about 300 hotel rooms still available to them, prospective messengers to next summer's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting have found themselves in a scramble for places to stay.

A poll of San Antonio hotels uncovered less than 300 non-reserved rooms currently available to messengers to the June 14-16 annual meeting in the Texas city.

The poll -- conducted in December by the SBC Executive Committee -- also disputed rumors that factions within the controversy-plagued convention are holding large blocks of hotel rooms for their supporters.

But a document prepared by the pro-moderate Baptist Laity Journal advertises 1,420 rooms in 13 San Antonio hotels.

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Journal Editor Neal Rodgers confirmed reservations for the rooms are being coordinated through the newspaper's office: "The rooms came from us. I think everyone knows it. It's pretty common knowledge."

Rodgers said the majority of the rooms were booked through a single travel agent. "I just happened to come across a situation at the right time," he explained.

Convention Manager Tim A. Hedquist said such blocks would not have appeared on the Executive Committee's hotel poll if they were listed as individual reservations. Rodgers said the reservations are not listed under the Journal's name but declined to say how they are held.

San Antonio room reservations have been an issue among Southern Baptists since early last fall. About 6,000 of them participated in a registration program, seeking reservations for 4,000 downtown hotel rooms.

The registration program was conducted by the San Antonio Housing Bureau, in cooperation with the SBC Executive Committee. All assignments were made to individuals whose housing request forms were dated Oct. 1, the first day of the program. More than 2,000 other requests could not be filled from the downtown convention block.

Following that drawing, the Executive Committee sent each of the individuals who did not get a reservation a list of the 41 other San Antonio hotels recognized by the housing bureau.

The situation heated further in late November, following state Southern Baptist conventions' annual meetings. The theological/political controversy that has engulfed the SBC for much of the past decade surfaced at a record number of state meetings.

One result was a rush on rooms for San Antonio, as messengers began making early preparations for attending the next SBC annual meeting, reported Hedquist, Executive Committee vice president for business and finance.

San Antonio has about 9,000 hotel rooms in addition to the 4,000 downtown rooms that were assigned through the October registration program, Hedquist said. But if the San Antonio meeting gains mammoth proportions -- such as the 1985 and 1986 meetings, when more than 40,000 people showed up -- housing indeed will be tight.

"One of the reasons these rooms (in the moderate-controlled block) are so important to us is that so many of our people were turned down in the draw" held by the housing bureau in October, Rodgers told Baptist Press. Several longtime moderate leaders did not get reservations in the downtown rooms, he said, explaining a need for securing facilities elsewhere.

Rodgers charged that SBC conservatives also have secured blocks of rooms for messengers who support their cause: "They've probably got more rooms than we do. They're just tight-lipped about it."

A conservative leader, however, said fellow conservatives did not fare well in the October draw and noted they also have been shut out from reservations in other hotels.

"I have friends who participated in the draw who were not able to get rooms," said Paul Pressler, a Houston appeals court judge and conservative leader. "They then tried to get rooms from the secondary list that was supplied to them by Dr. Hedquist. They found these rooms had been taken, evidently not by individuals. I know many people scrambling for rooms."

Pressler added conservatives have not secured blocks from the motels listed by the Executive Committee following the October drawing. "I did not get any rooms at these 41 motels that were on the convention headquarters list. I don't know anyone who is involved in the conservative movement who did. There are some people scrambling to try to find some (rooms). I don't know what success we've had."

Hedquist said the downtown hotels included in the October drawing and the 41 hotels listed by the housing bureau represent virtually 100 percent of the city's usable hotel rooms.

Both Pressler and Rodgers told Baptist Press messengers should have a right to hotel rooms.

Pressler said: "I believe Southern Baptists are best served when we have maximum participation of messengers. It would be a tragedy if the liberals were able to pre-empt the rooms in such a way that it would deny grassroots Southern Baptists the right to participate fully in the national convention."

Rodgers added: "Every year the convention only reserves so many rooms. And because we feel there are so many laypeople and others who have an interest in the convention in San Antonio, we wanted to make sure they would have a place to stay. That was our purpose in grabbing hold of these rooms when they became available to us."

Help Available
For SBC Housing

Baptist Press
1/11/88

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Messengers who have not secured hotel rooms for the 1987 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting may not have to camp out during the June 14-16 gathering in San Antonio, Texas. But help is available for those who choose that route.

A list of recreational vehicle campgrounds, and information about available amenities, may be obtained from the SBC Executive Committee, said Convention Manager Tim A. Hedquist.

Hedquist's office also can provide up-to-date information on the availability of hotel rooms, he said.

A December poll of San Antonio hotel rooms uncovered less than 300 rooms currently available to messengers. However, Hedquist secured agreements from most hotel managers that the hotels will contact the Executive Committee when additional rooms become available.

For information on camping and hotels, contact SBC Housing, 901 Commerce, Nashville, Tenn. 37203; phone (615) 244-2355.

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Baptist Men's Teleconference:
Daily Commitment Of Missions

By Jim Burton

Baptist Press
1/11/88

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Lawyers should be reconcilers and not adversaries when dealing with clients facing divorce, according to Indianapolis attorney Ted Wilson.

"I have a strong feeling that lawyers ought not be in the divorce business anyway," said Wilson during the 1988 Baptist Men's Teleconference. "If we are going to go by the adversary system, each lawyer is pulling the family apart."

Wilson's comments came during the teleconference, hosted by James H. Smith, Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission president, Jan. 9.

To support the 1987-88 Baptist Men's theme, "Missions Involvement Through Daily Life," four laymen joined Smith to discuss the personal ministries they have developed both on and off the job. Wilson and his wife, Mamie, who has a doctorate in psychology, have formed an organization called Domestic Evangelistic Ministries, Inc., a not-for-profit Indiana corporation committed to addressing issues facing American families. The greatest issue is divorce, Wilson insisted.

"We feel that if we are going to maintain the basic fabric of our American society, then we ought to try and cut out divorce altogether or certainly minimize it," he said. "So when they come to my office, we talk reconciliation, because all the answers to divorces and all the answers to all our problems are found in the Holy Scriptures."

In addition to Domestic Evangelistic Ministries, the Wilsons soon will be opening a shelter in Indianapolis to minister to the homeless. Wilson said residents will be allowed to stay up to a year as they develop coping skills through counseling.

Memphis, Tenn., businessman William Gurley's personal ministry is marketplace evangelism. While Gurley had been active in missions for a number of years, he became concerned about ministering to employees.

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"I realized that I had a mission field even in my own company," said Gurley. "So I made a commitment ... to take each individual one-on-one and to share the gospel with those who had never accepted Christ."

In addition to witnessing within his own company, Gurley has had the opportunity to go into other businesses to talk with employees. At businesses where he has had the opportunity to witness, 30 percent of the employees were non-Christians, Gurley said. Of those, about 75 percent made professions of faith in Christ following his visit.

In addition to telling people about Christ, Gurley is committed to starting Southern Baptist churches. He formed a foundation that makes interest-free loans to build churches in states where Southern Baptist work is new or not strongly established.

For Don Putnam, a businessman from Lexington, Ky., daily missions involvement began over 20 years ago through church renewal.

"We felt a call that God wanted us to do something special with our life," said Putnam, "more than washing communion cups."

Putnam and his wife, Nora Lee, became committed to the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer. "We are a kingdom of priests, a kingdom of ministers," he said. "The pastor is a very critical influence in that body. But there isn't just one minister in a church. We are all ministers. We are all priests."

Since that time, the Putnams have opened their home to foster children and adult public offenders.

Currently, they are involved in Quest Farm, a ministry in Scott County, Ky., for mentally handicapped adults. In addition, they teach a Sunday school class for mentally handicapped people at Trinity Baptist Church in Lexington.

Church renewal also has played an important role in the life of Manuel Galindo of Harlingen, Texas. He is the executive assistant to the president of Valley Baptist Academy.

For the past seven months, Galindo has been the assistant disaster relief coordinator at Saragosa, Texas, the western Texas town that was destroyed by a tornado last spring.

"My ministry has been expressed in motivating others, almost as a spiritual catalyst," said Galindo. "By nature I'm allergic to work. I've been gifted with finding the right people ... for specific involvement in missions."

That gift was particularly crucial during the rebuilding of Saragosa. Last year during Labor Day weekend, more than 700 volunteers, mostly Texas Baptist men, went to Saragosa to rebuild homes.

The 1988 Baptist Men's Teleconference was the second produced by the Brotherhood Commission. Both the American Christian Television System and the Baptist Telecommunication Network carried the program live. The teleconference promoted Baptist Men's work and Baptist Men's Day, Jan. 24.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Brotherhood Commission

Texas Church Planter
Puts Talents To Use

By Clay Renick

Baptist Press
1/11/88

HOUSTON (BP)--Harvey Kneisel never expected trumpets, used cars and the gospel to mix until the combination helped start 11 congregations.

"There are no coincidences with God," he says.

A trumpet player throughout secondary school and Oklahoma Baptist University, Kneisel, 56, felt playing trumpet wouldn't help him in the ministry. But an invitation to lead music during a revival led to other opportunities in Texas, Oklahoma, India, South America and the Philippines.

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"Everywhere I've gone, it's (trumpet playing) has been a door opener," he adds.

As a Southern Baptist missionary to Guyana, South America, he was climbing through a forest one night on the way to a village. His trumpet dropped down a cliff, and the bell of the horn bent straight up. Only one valve would work. "All I could play was 'Tell it to Jesus,'" he recalls. "The Indians didn't know the difference."

He would enter a village playing the horn. That drew crowds and helped when he would announce the formation of a Bible study. He later used the same approach with free study courses in Texas.

A former used-car salesman and now director of Westview Baptist Center in Houston, Kneisel teaches free classes on "How to Buy a First-class Car for Under \$500 a Year." His students are apartment residents who have a difficult time owning a car.

Elderly women and refugees attend. They learn how to buy wholesale, sell retail and keep the car looking nice. When the class is finished, Kneisel announces the start of a Bible study.

"There's seldom a week goes by someone doesn't call them to start a new work in the apartment complexes of Houston," says Carl Elder of the General Baptist Convention of Texas. "Many of them will give him an apartment to meet in and another apartment for the workers to live in."

"The only way we can win our people in the United States is to start multitudes of new churches," claims Kneisel. "In Texas alone, 80 percent of the lost people (non-Christians) are the poor and ethnics."

The area around Westview is filled with Vietnamese, Laotian, Hispanic and Korean refugees. Westview started as a white middle-class church in the 1950s. But the membership dropped from 500 to 50 in the last 10 years.

The local economy began to worsen, and apartment complexes moved in. Whites moved out. Ethnics filled the complexes, and many couldn't speak English.

Rather than disband, Westview merged with First Baptist Church down the road. They decided to use the smaller building as a center to start other churches and called Kneisel to direct the work.

After he draws a crowd and starts a new Bible study, Kneisel calls local pastors within the same ethnic group to lead the new missions. Now five congregations share Westview's old building. Collectively, 11 missions started, with the combined average attendance growing from 150 to 930 in the last 30 months.

"We're encouraging people to follow the Westview model," says Chuck Dooley, church extension consultant for the Texas convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

All Westview churches follow the same pattern of outreach. Sometimes Kneisel leads the way with his trumpet, drawing crowds for Backyard Bible Clubs. They also try to find adults through free classes like "Gourmet Cooking On A Fast Food Budget" or "English As A Second Language." Kneisel shares from his experience with cars.

That interest also helped start a foundation that provides free transportation for missionaries on furlough. Kneisel locates church members who are willing to donate their second cars instead of trading them in. They in turn deduct the fair market value from their federal income tax.

One man gave a 1981 Chevy with 181,000 miles on it. Kneisel's foundation gave it to a missionary who added another 100,000 miles.

Kneisel now has 25 cars on the road and another 10 being repaired. He sells them when they begin to wear out and uses the money to support the foundation.

"He's leaning heavily on a strategy of using laypeople," says Elder. "I wish we had 100 people like him in Texas."