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88-54

Lottie Moon Receipts
Running Far Behind

N- FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Contributions to the 1987 Lottie Moon offering for Southern Baptist foreign missions had reached less than 80 percent of the goal of \$75 million by late March.

Receipts at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board totaled \$59.7 million by March 28, about \$4.1 million less than the amount recorded last year at the same point.

The annual church offering, which helps support more than 3,800 missionaries in 112 countries, is received by most Southern Baptist churches during the Christmas season. The mission board receives Lottie Moon funds for months afterward. The offering total is calculated at the end of May.

The 1986 offering totaled \$69.4 million, more than \$5 million below the goal of \$75 million. The Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, which promotes the offering, decided not to raise the 1987 goal after consulting with mission officials.

Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks expressed "deep concern" about the pace of receipts for the offering, which was intended to finance almost half of the total 1988 mission budget of \$167.8 million.

"It doesn't look good," Parks said. "It's coming in slower than it has in years past. This creates some serious implications for our budget. I pray and hope that somehow the end result would be better than it now appears to be. This is going to have a serious impact on missions unless such does happen."

For the last several years, board finance officials have issued a projection of the final Lottie Moon total based on a survey of selected states, but they will not do so this year. The data in hand so far, they said, is not clear enough to make an accurate forecast.

The data does reveal, however, that the downturn in giving extends beyond southwestern states strapped in recent years by the oil-related recession and includes several traditionally strong mission-supporting states with relatively healthy economies.

Parks declined to speculate on possible reasons for the giving lag: "I don't see any pattern there that I think is a clear pattern. I just don't believe we have the facts yet to give us a clue to what is happening."

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Senator Urges Ratification
Of Human Rights Accords

N- BJC
By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
3/30/88

WASHINGTON (BP)--During a hearing on two international human rights covenants long stalled in the U.S. Senate, a longtime advocate of the accords said the United States must boldly state its commitment to human rights.

Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., advocated ratification of the human rights covenants that were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966 and entered into force in 1976 following ratification by 35 nations. President Carter signed the covenants in 1977 and submitted them to the Senate in 1978 for its advice and consent. Although hearings were held in 1979, the Senate has yet to take action on ratification.

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No indication was given during the hearing held by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe -- also known as the Helsinki Commission -- as to whether any action will be taken by the Senate in the near future. The accords stalled in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee following the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.

Hatfield said he found it ironic that the Soviet invasion -- which he called "one of the greatest human rights violations in recent history" -- sidetracked Senate debate over ratification of the covenants. Such ratification is long overdue, he added.

"The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights prohibits torture, arbitrary and inhuman punishment, slavery and arbitrary arrest and detention," Hatfield said. "It provides for the freedom of movement and for the integrity of the judicial system. It expressly forbids arbitrary interference with family, home or correspondence and guarantees the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the right to peaceful assembly and the right to take part in public affairs. In short, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights represents the traditional Western view of human rights as incorporated in our Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, as well as the political documents of Europe before them."

Hatfield went on to link those political rights with economic and social rights set forth in a separate covenant likewise pending in the Senate.

"As important as these (political) rights are, they do not mean much if people cannot find enough to eat, a roof under which to sleep, a job or an education," he said. "Human rights must mean more than the absence of torture or the freedom of censorship, and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was drafted in recognition of that fact. It guarantees the right to food, shelter, work and the right to social security, the protection of the family and the right to take part in cultural activities."

"In short, the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights makes clear that human rights are linked inextricably with human needs."

Hatfield, a Baptist, said United States ratification of the covenants -- which he called "weapons of peace" -- would not change the world overnight. Rather, he explained, ratification would send a "strong signal -- a signal that, in the midst of hunger and homelessness, repression and exploitation, we will champion the fundamental importance of human rights."

Such a stance on human rights has a direct relationship to the success of U.S. foreign policies, said Hatfield, who chairs Congress' bi-partisan Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus.

Hatfield cited human rights as the main reason both Iran and Nicaragua turned from being strong allies to being fierce enemies of the United States.

"The reason why these two countries turned on us -- beneath the layers of debate over capitalism and communism, over fundamentalism and progressivism -- has more to do with human rights than with anything else," he testified. "The truth of the matter is that our close allies -- the Shah of Iran and Anastasio Somoza -- brutally suppressed their opponents and used their power to become very wealthy while the vast majority of their people toiled just for enough to eat."

By the time the United States had rethought its support for those leaders, the countries' popular resentment of the leaders and of the United States for supporting their regimes had gone too far, he said, noting revolution was inevitable.

"The lesson to be learned from Iran and Nicaragua is not that we should keep our mouths shut when our allies -- even our closest allies -- violate basic human rights," he said. "Indeed, the lesson is just the opposite. We must state our commitment to human rights strongly and honestly to friend and foe alike."

"And to our friends, our allies, we must do it before revolution is inevitable."

Southern Baptist Nurses Set
First Day Of Prayer May 6

By Susan Todd

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(Wmu)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Baptist Nursing Fellowship leaders have joined other Christian nursing organizations to observe May 6, "National Nurses Day," as a day of prayer.

More than 900 members of Baptist Nursing Fellowship will join in the observance with members of Association of Seventh-day Adventist Nurses, Christian Nurse Educators, Hospital Christian Fellowship, Mennonite Nurses Association, Nurses Christian Fellowship, Nurses for Christ and Sisters of Charity.

Meeting together recently for the first time, representatives from the eight Christian nursing organizations named the day of prayer after identifying two major areas of concern in the nursing profession -- the decline in number of nursing students and the decline in the number of people employed as nurses.

Both factors will contribute significantly to a predicted shortage of nurses by the year 2000, said June Whitlow, executive director of Baptist Nursing Fellowship.

"The value system is changing so rapidly," Whitlow said. "Nurses came into being as a helping profession and now face the probability of acute shortages. We should pray that God would call more men and women into the nursing profession."

In addition to these two concerns, Whitlow called the nurses to pray for the "added dimension of missionary nursing."

Nursing opportunities are limited in foreign countries, she said: "Of approximately 170 women missionary nurses with R.N. degrees, only about 60 have nursing assignments on the field. Most of the others are assigned under the 'church and home' status and use their skills in clinics and similar situations."

She asked nurses to pray for more nursing opportunities to become available in foreign countries.

Whitlow also noted opportunities are available to use nursing skills in the United States.

"A lot of what BNF can do is in the local area," she said. She listed nutrition, migrant care and care of the elderly and the ill in the home as areas suffering from the lack of volunteer nurses.

"BNF members should pray to discover opportunities of service in their own communities, because there are a lot of them there. They need to be willing to give of time and professional skills to those who need medical help. This fits in so very well with mission action in Woman's Missionary Union."

Pastors have been asked to recognize nurses in their congregations Sunday, May 1, to launch the week spotlighting nurses and their work. Nurses are being encouraged to pray individually and in groups.

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(Logo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Woman's Missionary Union.)

Church Brings Hope
To Dying Downtown

By Ken Camp

F- Texas

Baptist Press
3/30/88

ORANGE, Texas (BP)--In a time of recession and record unemployment, the evangelistic missions vision of First Baptist Church, Orange, Texas, helped to bring hope to a community plagued with uncertainty.

When the energy industry experienced unprecedented setbacks in 1982-1983, the effects were soon felt in the oil-dependent Southeast Texas economy. Just six blocks from the front door of First Baptist Church, a drilling rig production company went bankrupt, leaving 2,500 people without jobs. Unemployment in the area soared to 18 percent.

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The recession came at an exceptionally inopportune time for First Baptist Church. In 1982, the century-old congregation completed a three-year long-range planning study. Among other things, the study recommended the church not relocate at the edge of the city, as had been suggested, but it instead expand its facilities and ministries in downtown Orange.

"We felt that if we had the right kind of ministry, people would continue to come downtown," said William White, pastor. The church raised \$1.4 million to build a downtown family life center and to renovate the existing education building.

Initially, First Baptist Church did not feel the economic crunch as much as some other area churches, said White. He noted his congregation is made up primarily of management-level white collar workers and laborers with highly specialized skills.

However, in the months that followed the drastic drop in oil prices, workers began to transfer out of the "Golden Triangle" area. Employees in their fifties were offered attractive early retirement packages, and many moved from Orange.

"When I came here in 1980, one man told me we were 'recession-proof'," White said. "I haven't heard that in awhile."

Although the church was involved in a massive building program and the economic picture was gloomy, First Baptist Church never wavered in its support of worldwide missions through the Cooperative Program and special offerings.

For several years, the church had raised the percentage of undesignated gifts it directed to missions through the Cooperative Program. Last year, the finance and budget committees questioned whether the congregation could afford to continue to increase Cooperative Program giving. When it was discussed, White said some committee members had a very strong conviction: The church couldn't afford to neglect missions.

"They said, 'We're not going to pay for our buildings at the expense of missions'," White recalled. The church agreed to increase its Cooperative Program giving by a quarter of a percent, pushing undesignated gifts to 18.25.

"This year we will undoubtedly top the \$100,000 mark for the first time in our history," said White. He noted special offerings for state, home and foreign missions also have reached record levels in the last few years.

"The WMU has been constant and thorough in dedication to missions. The deacons and other leaders in our church are mature Christians who are committed to what works. We believe the Cooperative Program of missions support really works over the long haul," said White.

"The future of our church's strength will be determined largely by our willingness to be part of missions efforts wherever they are going on in the world," he said. "If we start pulling in the ropes that are holding up our missionaries and start cutting back, it will have a detrimental effect on our church's spirit. But if we can be big-hearted toward others, we'll be big-hearted toward our own programs at home."

Programs in Orange have continued to expand. In a downtown area that was beginning to be deserted, 100 to 150 people now gather each night for activities in the church's family life center.

For the last four years, the church also has sponsored a community missions office that has served thousands of people, providing limited financial assistance for medical needs, food and utility payments.

Also, through the outreach efforts of the Baptist Men of First Baptist Church, a mission will be started at a naval base near the city. Contact with the sailors began when the church opened its family life center to naval personnel for recreation involving the Baptist Young Men.

"As a result, the commander called us and asked if we would consider opening a chapel or preaching point at the base. We'll be starting a mission point at their invitation," said White. "I think we'll see people won to the Lord who have never been in anybody's church."

White emphasizes First Baptist Church is not alone in its commitment to continuing ministry, missions outreach and evangelism in the middle of a depressed economy. He stresses the congregation is typical the mission-minded congregations in Golden Triangle Association.

"For our part, the people of our church were just determined to move forward. No matter what else happened in downtown Orange, our people decided to take a leap of faith and say something to the community. We said, 'We're one group that's going to stay here'," he said.

White said that commitment has served as a rallying point for others in the downtown Orange area, giving them inspiration to stick with the town through tough times.

"When we asked our people what the future ought to be, they determined that this is where we are. This is where our ministry is," he said. "That has given hope to the community."

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Baptizing One-Day Revival
Converts Takes 40 Minutes

By Bob Mathews

N-CO
(OK'd.)

Baptist Press
3/30/88

MOORE, Okla. (BP)--Two ministers, immersing two converts at a time, took 40 minutes to baptize half the results of a one-day Pentecost revival at First Baptist Church of Moore, Okla.

The one-day revival, held March 13, resulted in 171 people making professions of faith. Pastor Bobby Boyles believes 150 of the 171 new converts -- only 8 or 10 of whom were already church members -- will be baptized.

The revival results were the fruits of several factors, Moore said.

"We have a well-equipped Continuing Witness Training program with 130 equippers trained in CWT," he said. Next, he listed an extra four weeks of soul-winning training taken by the members in January. Another factor is the people "are catching the vision and witnessing to others at work and school."

Also, he notes an all-night prayer vigil from 6 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Saturday with as few as 25 and as many as 100 praying in the auditorium. Laypeople were involved on various committees, such as those handling parking and scheduling prayer times.

"I see my ministry as one of motivating the members to do the work of ministry and equipping them to witness as a normal part of their lifestyles," Boyles explained.

Saturday afternoon was devoted to soul-winning visitation as Moore was blitzed with members knocking on doors and distributing tracts, New Testaments and brochures about the church and the revival.

Boyles has been pastor at the Moore church since last September, moving from Retta Baptist Church, a rural congregation near Fort Worth, Texas. Under his leadership Retta's Sunday school grew from 150 to 1,500 in four years.

The Moore church recorded 150 professions of faith from Oct. 1 to March 13. Sunday school attendance has grown from just over 1,000 to 1,625 on Pentecost day. Worship attendance was 1,887 in the 2,300-seat auditorium.

"Follow-up is a must for a successful revival," the pastor said. "It takes two things, preparation before and preparation afterwards," he advises. First Baptist Church uses its computer to furnish Sunday school outreach leaders a printout of names of new converts.

In addition to Sunday school, follow-up also is being done by CWT teams and other visitation teams. "Not only do we follow-up on those making profesisions, we will also go into their homes to witness to family members who are lost," Boyles said. "We are very meticulous in follow-up. In fact, it is a 90 percent factor. We'll keep going back until they tell us 'absolutely no, don't come back,'" the pastor said.

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Another part of the follow-up is the plan followed by North Phoenix Baptist Church in Arizona whereby a Survival Kit for New Christians, a discipleship workbook published by the Baptist Sunday School Board, is delivered to the new members.

Thirteen people joined by letter and 92 made rededications in the March 13 services led by Freddie Gage, Houston evangelist.

First Baptist Church currently is without a youth minister so the young people were led in soul-winning efforts by Gage's son, Rodney. The result was that some of the youth group made professions. Young people in teen hangouts were targeted and Boyles said some who had been "doing drugs" were among those saved. The overall ratio of those making professions was 60 to 40, teens to adults. Few children were among the converts, Boyles added.

The March 13 event was the first of "Six Super Sundays" planned by the church. On the following Sundays other personalities ministering at the church will include Wanda Jackson, Daisy McGrew and Tulsan Leon McAuliffe of Texas Playboys fame.

Stan Coffey, pastor of San Jacinto Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas, and president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, will be evangelist for an April 17-21 revival when the Sunday school goal is 2,000, Boyles said.

"This effort will be a success as we care enough to do both preparation and follow-up," Boyles said, adding First Baptist Church members are learning revival is not something that happens in one day, one week or a series of one-day meetings, but a matter of lifestyle evangelism.

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Texas Sets \$5.6 Million Goal
For State Missions Offering

By Ken Camp

N-Texas

Baptist Press
3/30/88

DALLAS (BP)--A \$5,678,910 goal for the 1988 Mary Hill Davis Offering for State Missions was set by the Texas Woman's Missionary Union Executive Board during its March 22-24 meeting at Mt. Lebanon Baptist Encampment, Cedar Hill, Texas.

Basic 1988 allocations include \$863,157 to strengthen Texas Baptist multi-cultural ministries; \$1,050,000 to reach people through new churches; \$210,000 to aid new church work; \$490,000 to provide customized urban ministries; \$936,630 to contribute to specialized missions opportunities; and \$678,000 to enlarge missions awareness and support through missions education.

An additional \$1,451,123 is added for new mission/church assistance to help churches reach the Mission Texas goal of starting 2,000 new congregations in the state by 1990. All receipts over the \$4.2 million basic goal will be added to the new mission/church assistance fund. Receipts less than the basic goal will be adjusted in the allocations for new mission/church assistance.

One significant new line item in the state missions offering allocations is \$250,000 for a media awareness campaign in 1990. The funds will be used to help churches use radio and television to broadcast gospel messages. The messages will be scheduled to undergird the 1990 simultaneous revivals.

Another new item is \$50,000 for "Share Jesus Now," the planned 60-day emphasis on personal soul-winning involving 89,000 Texas Baptists. The money will be used to help meet the anticipated increase in demand for printed witnessing materials and to help fund a greater than usual number of evangelistic training events.

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