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March 14, 1989

89-40

CP tops previous pace,
stays behind inflation

N-CO

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists' unified budget continues to stay ahead of last year's pace, but it lags more than 1.5 percentage points behind inflation.

The national Cooperative Program received \$11,428,715 in February, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the denomination's Executive Committee. That amount is a 1.74 percent increase over February 1988.

At the end of five months of the fiscal year, the Cooperative Program's year-to-date total is \$58,670,856, Bennett reported. That total is 3.18 percent more than receipts for the first five months of 1987-88.

The most recent U.S. Department of Labor figures show the country's current inflation rate is about 4.7 percent.

"I am glad that the amount received in February was not less than February of last year," Bennett said. "I still hope that the churches will increase Cooperative Program giving."

If Southern Baptists are to reach the Cooperative Program's \$145.6 million goal for 1988-89, national receipts must average \$12,418,449 for the seven months remaining in the current fiscal year. Only four months have exceeded that amount in the budget's 62-year history.

The Cooperative Program supports Southern Baptist evangelistic, educational, missionary and church-starting ministries worldwide. It is funded by individual Southern Baptists, who channel their money through churches and state Baptist conventions and on to the national and international causes.

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Hawaii Baptists pick
Efurd as new leader

N-CO
(Hawaii)

Baptist Press
3/14/89

HONOLULU (BP)--O.W. (Dub) Efurd has been elected executive director-treasurer of the Hawaii Baptist Convention.

Efurd was elected unanimously by the HBC executive board in a called meeting March 9. His tenure will begin April 1.

A missionary with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's metropolitan missions department, Efurd has been director of missions for the Central Leeward, Honolulu and Windward Baptist associations on the island of Oahu since 1986.

Efurd was president of the convention from 1982 to 1984. He also has been a member of the HBC executive board and was the convention's interim executive director in 1982-83. He has been pastor of churches in Hawaii, Texas and Oklahoma.

A native of Fort Smith, Ark., he is a graduate of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He is married to the former Grace Agene, a native of Kakaha, Hawaii. They have two children.

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Efurd succeeds Dan H. Kong, who resigned to become president of Hawaii Baptist Academy.

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Tough to leave Brazil,
black journeyman says

By Eric Miller

F-Fm B
Baptist Press
3/14/89

TERESINA, Brazil (BP)--Saying goodbye was too much for Southern Baptist missionary journeyman Gale Perkins.

She did not want to cry, especially in front of friends.

So, when it came time to leave Brazil after two years of work there, she chose an airport departure time of 3:30 a.m. Only a few would say goodbye at that early hour, she reasoned.

But 50 people -- Brazilian Baptists, pastors, four missionaries and students -- gathered in the small airport in Teresina to hug, cry and give Perkins letters and cards to read on the plane.

"I started walking around kissing everybody at the airport," Perkins said. "Then we would start crying."

Children from Perkins' Sunday school class sang, "If you're saved and you know it ... " which Perkins had taught them.

Perkins, who returned to her home in Chicago recently, was one of only two black journeymen when she went to Brazil in mid-1987.

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials, especially Victor Davis, director of black church relations, are working to enlist more blacks for missions work.

Perkins plans to interest more blacks in venturing overseas by speaking at Southern Baptist churches, especially black congregations.

Being black was a help in Brazil, Perkins said, because many Brazilians are of African descent.

The first time Brazilian Baptist Didi Rocha met Perkins, Rocha said, "At last a missionary was sent out that can identify with us in color."

Rocha later explained, "Brazilians feel a relationship with people of their own color."

Few Brazilians guessed Perkins was an American, she said, even when they heard her "horrible accent" during her attempts to speak Portuguese. Brazilians assumed she was from another city in Brazil.

Or "maybe she's from Mexico or Cuba," Maria do Socorro Pires thought the first time she saw Perkins. Pires studied English under Perkins at a private language school in Teresina.

Being black was not Perkins' only ticket to the hearts of Brazilians. She also captivated them with her "warm, down-to-earth personality," said another student, Francisco Fonteneli.

She spoke to everyone -- shopkeepers, post office employees and street beggars.

"I just try to make everyone have a happy day," Perkins said.

She "shocked" clerks in stores and the post office at Christmas by giving them roses, she said.

Beggars and others counted on Perkins, who usually lent or gave away \$100 a month.

Seven little boys regularly raided Perkins' trash cans until she paid them regularly to take drink bottles to stores for return deposits. The boys also sold homemade snacks to Perkins.

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Perkins taught English without accepting pay in a private school. She had the school forward her pay to a church and asked that she remain an anonymous donor.

Her reward, however, came in repeated opportunities to share the Christian gospel with language students outside of class and with another teacher, an atheist. Perkins also gave them Christian tracts and New Testaments.

"Everybody likes Gale -- the secretaries, the janitor, the students," said Italo Silva, language school director. "The only thing I have against Gale is that she's going back to the United States," he said before she left.

"I'm going to miss her a lot; she was very important to us," Fonteneli said.

Despite the language barrier, dust, 110-degree Fahrenheit days in Teresina and her jobless status now, Perkins said she has no regret for going to the mission field, adding she is considering appointment as a missionary.

"I'd like to go back to Teresina," she said. "Churches in Teresina said they were going to pray that God sends Gale back to Teresina as a missionary. I think I cry because there is such a remote possibility of going back to Teresina." Teresina already has four Southern Baptist missionaries and many other cities do not have any.

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

Baltimore church
would not die

By Pam Parry

F-CD
Maryland

Baptist Press
3/14/89

BALTIMORE (BP)--Two years after pondering closing a 98-year-old church, a reborn mission congregation at Scott Street Baptist Church in Baltimore has never been more alive.

Constituted as a church in 1891, the congregation was near death. Attendance dwindled from more than 300 people to just 12 during a 20-year decline.

Industry came to the downtown area and changed the neighborhood. Many Scott Street members joined a mass exodus from the community. Eventually, the small group could no longer afford a pastor.

Facing the seemingly inevitable, the members voted in March 1987 to close the church doors at the end of the year if things did not improve.

But the vote didn't represent their desire or dream.

A remnant of members would not stand by and let their church die. They met with Mike Fahey, Baltimore Baptist Association's missions committee chairman and pastor of First Baptist Church of Brooklyn, and explored alternatives. He surprised them with the suggestion they be born again -- reverting to mission status -- to give them a stronger financial and resource base from a mother church.

Scott Street voted to become a new work Nov. 8, 1987. Sponsored by the Brooklyn congregation, the church has grown from 12 to 60 members. With a baptism ratio of one per every four resident members, the mission rated among the top 11 congregations for per capita baptisms in the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware during its first year.

Scott Street has launched a number of programs, ranging from Big A Clubs to an ecumenical Bible Study, which bring scores of people to the church each week. Now, for the first time in recent history, Scott Street is a visible, vibrant part of its downtown neighborhood, says Pastor Lloyd King.

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"When I walked into that building (Scott Street Church), I said to myself, 'With God's help and the right people, we could rebuild the work there,'" Fahey says. "The community has great potential. They did vote to entertain the option of closing the church doors at the end of the year, but it was never (a real) option. I don't think the core group ever wanted to shut the doors, but they were running out of ideas.

"It was a very bold and courageous step; it's extremely hard work and a painful process ... to sacrifice autonomy," adds Fahey, whose congregation was planted with help from Scott Street when it was a mission of Riverside Baptist Church years ago. "A lot of city work is going to have to be new work in old locations."

Fahey credits the quick turnaround to King and his wife, Anita, who work at the church in a shared ministry capacity, and the tenacity of its members. King began supply preaching at Scott Street in July 1987 and officially became the mission's pastor when it reverted to new-work status.

Members credit the new breath of life on Scott Street primarily, if not solely, to the pastor and wife team.

"I think they are working themselves to death; they have started all kinds of things such as Big A Club for children," says Thelma Deifert, who was put on the church's cradle roll in 1910. "They are both working together very hard."

Recalling the days when large crowds filled the sanctuary, the third-oldest member -- in age and tenure of membership -- testifies Scott Street "means everything" to her and always has been a vital part of her life.

"I only see us as being a catalyst of the Lord in turning this around," King says. "They saw us as something they could rally around. In that way we have been instrumental, but they have been as much a part of this church growing."

Targeting a five-block area surrounding the church, the Kings' vision is to reach children, and within five years, they hope for a complete turn-around.

So, they started walking the streets and talking with people, communicating a conviction that they have never met anyone whom God did not love. As a result of Scott Street's openness, about 30 children now attend Big A Club at the church, where the teaching is focused on Jesus Christ.

"It's so hard here because we have fourth generations of people who have no knowledge of Jesus, who don't know who Jesus is except in a curse word," says Mrs. King, who teaches the club and directs a children's choir. "I would just like to tell other churches this (the gradual decline) could happen to them. You have got to reach out and bring people in and not have a social club mentality."

"When the children came for Big A Club, we gave everyone of them a hug, and they got listened to," King says. "When they found out they could have our ears, they wanted to come."

"Some of the parents say, 'What are you doing at that church? I see such a change in my child,'" Mrs. King adds.

Scott Street also initiated a Sunday school outreach, making more than 80 visits every two weeks. Members set 2,000 contacts as a goal for the year. They are training in personal witnessing and evangelism so they can present the plan of Christian salvation when they visit, King says.

"First I believe people need to have Jesus Christ as savior," says King, who was in the U.S. Army for 21 years. "After that, I believe they need to have spiritual growth that only comes through Bible study.

"My idea is to present the plan of salvation and then follow up with Bible study. I don't want people to come and go through the water and out the door."

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The congregation's new-found philosophy dictates its stately edifice be used more often than on Sundays and Wednesday, King says, noting a number of outreach activities occur throughout the week. A mother's club, a longstanding tradition at the church, brings women of different faiths and backgrounds to the building for fellowship. Mrs. King leads an ecumenical Bible study. Scott Street also has had Vacation Bible Schools, youth activities, spaghetti dinners and more.

The facility is a tool to boost visibility in the community, King adds.

"One of the things I prayed for when looking for a church is that the Lord would give me a building that looks like a church that is paid for and group of people willing to do anything to grow," he recalls, adding with a smile, "And he gave me Scott Street.

"This is quite a challenge, but I hear people crying because they would love to have a church like this ... and a congregation that is willing to try anything."

Going to mission status is one example of the congregation's willingness to try new ideas, he says, adding the new status shows a commitment to the gospel: "We are a mission church because Southern Baptists are missions people and because we are missions funded. I am a mission pastor; this is a mission field, and the people are starting to catch onto that idea."

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PBAC's workshop provides
'education of giving'

By Lynn Van Lenten

F-00
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WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Laughter pealed from the little house on the corner. It belonged to an elderly husband and wife, shut-ins due to their health. No one ever visited them, so what caused the laughter? They had no children, no friends.

But several young people were busy putting food in the cupboards. They were talking and carrying on with the couple as if they were old friends, as if they were family.

The only clue to their identity was their T-shirts. Bright blue with black writing, they said, "WORKSHIP" in bold letters with the phrase, "Touching and changing the community thru the love of Jesus Christ."

Similar situations have been reproduced in Palm Beach County, Fla., for 20 years. The name WORKSHIP has become a familiar one to the elderly, handicapped, the sick and the needy.

That's because Palm Beach Atlantic College has cared for its community. Founded 20 years ago, the small Baptist college was designed to be more than a place for academic learning. Palm Beach Atlantic was determined to teach its students one of their hardest lessons -- the education of giving.

Coined from the words "work" and "worship", PBAC founder Jess Moody wanted to enable students to follow the example of Christ by reaching out to others. Moody primarily wanted students to gain booksense, but he also believed the Workshop program also would open their eyes to needs of the community. It was to be an "education in giving."

In December 1968 the Palm Beach Post printed: "The Workshop program is a new dimension in education, a new concept in human understanding and compassion. Today college kids stay on campus, but here a PBAC they get out and get involved in the community, and the world."

Now, 20 years later, Workshop still serves south Florida. Ideas born out of the radical '60's continue to mold the college's standards, despite the narcissism of the '80's observers note. More than 470,000 hours of community service have been given to the Palm Beaches during those years. When multiplied by the minimum hourly wage of \$3.35, \$1,574,500 has been donated to non-profit organizations by the Workshop program.

Each full-time student is required to volunteer 180 hours of service during four years at PBAC. On the surface that seems like a huge sacrifice of time, but broken down, it measures five hours per week.

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"Workshop is a blessing," wrote a student in one of her required journal entries. "Not only have I enjoyed the experience, but I've also learned so much about myself and the ministries the Lord might be calling me into. I urge everyone to pray about their Workshop experience. God might be calling them somewhere they never expected (I'm an example). If you really want to do the Lord's will remember, seek ... ye shall surely find."

Students have an opportunity to choose from more than 103 organizations throughout Palm Beach County in which to do their Worship service. Special group projects have been developed for freshmen and transfer students, enabling them to get involved gradually.

"Each student is required to participate in six projects, three per semester," explains Workshop Director Don O'Bryan. "Instead of being thrown directly into an individual project, these group outings enable them to build relationships with other students and learn about the possible areas of service for the future."

"It's great to watch our students reach out to others through group projects. An event such as the Special Olympics really opens the door for new friendships and a better understanding of the needs of people different than we are," notes Robert Boring, group projects coordinator. As a group, students serve a variety of national organizations, convalescent homes, shelters, parks, beaches -- anywhere to meet a need.

During sophomore through senior years, students are required to give hours in individual projects. Some students remain at the same agency for rest of their Workshop hours. Friendships are built, battles are won and the education of giving continues participants report.

Students' journal entries tell their stories:

Amy Reichardt, a 1988 freshman psychology major writes: "It was a pleasure to serve the music department of Jupiter Christian School. I am glad for the experience. I have a new discipline and a new attitude toward the importance of availability and willingness in being a servant."

Another student's journal expressed how the Workshop program opened her eyes to poverty in the affluence of the Palm Beaches. Assigned to help an elderly couple do their grocery shopping, she describes the first day of Workshop: "The first time I was startled when I found the house because it was nothing more than a shack. To be honest, I expected something like what all of us live in. Workshop that day became something very real in my life."

Workshop is one of the aspects of PBAC," notes Janel Jackson, a freshman psychology major, "I enjoyed every day of this assignment. It is a great way to get to know people and serve God. I would not change anything about Workshop."

This week has been very interesting, but often saddening," reveals Lawson Jolly, a senior psychology major. "Sometimes it is so hard to realize that you can't solve everybody's problem."

Workshop experiences have played out time and again:

A little girl squeals with joy as she crosses the finish line. She's worked hard for this day, the 1988 Special Olympics, and the excitement of the crowd carries her through the race.

Throwing her arms around a young woman she exclaims: "I did it. You told me I could, and I did."

Hand-in-hand, they turn to leave, chatting and laughing. The only clue to their friendship is revealed on the woman's T-shirt. Bright blue with big black letters, it says WORKSHIP.